

The Advocate

Our Lady Queen of Peace Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2016



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"Foundation Field Trips" Help Children Encounter Acts of Mercy

By: Katie Remedios

Although we hear the word "mercy" every Sunday during Mass, it is not always the easiest concept for children to understand. So our objective for the religious education school year was to travel throughout the metro area, encountering different acts of mercy, hoping our youngest disciples will follow by example.

These off campus travels, which we refer to as "Foundation Field trips," brought us to many exciting places where we explored the concepts of respect, forgiveness, compassion, comforting, inclusion, caring for creation, and loving ourselves and neighbors. A few of our favorite stops included: the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church -- the worship place of Abraham Lincoln; the Washington Fountain House -- a visit to the sick and aging; and the St. Lucy Project Warehouse where we supplied and packed chicken casserole meal kits to feed 500 families in need. In addition, we spent a lovely afternoon with members of the L'Arche community talking about inclusion and we did hands-on water conservation activities as we discovered the impacts of water waste on the planet.

Attendance was fabulous each month. OLQP parents commit to being the first and best teachers of the faith. Many sacrifice the afternoon ball game or birthday party, making their faith and lived discipleship a priority in the family.

The OLQP Religious Education school year drew to a close with a "Red Nose Thursday" event on May 19. The special event emphasized

the many lessons our children have encountered this year as they walked with the Pope, celebrating this Jubilee Year of Mercy. Our closing event highlighted service opportunities for children to take part in over the summer months. Ice cream sundaes were served as guest speakers and musicians entertained us under the evening sky.

Next year the program will return to campus. We look forward to spreading out into the many new spaces our plant renovations will provide. The religious education program is growing quickly. Currently, 400 children participated in the general religious education program; 85 children made their First Holy Communion, and 67 children received Confirmation. Registration for the 2016-2017 school year will take place in June.

(Katie Remedios is OLQP Religious Education Director)



Editor's Note

By: Paula Cruicshank

The spring issue of *The Advocate* focuses on the Jubilee Year of Mercy announced by Pope Francis. The biblical passage for the Holy Year's theme is from Luke 6:36, in which Jesus tells his disciples, "Be merciful as your Father is merciful." On the matter of mercy, Pope Francis has said that "A little mercy makes the world less cold and more just. We need to understand properly this mercy of God, this merciful Father who is so patient."

The Jubilee Year of Mercy began on December 8, 2015, and ends on November 20, 2016. In his homily for First Vespers for Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis explained the reason for the Jubilee:

"Here, then, is the reason for the Jubilee: because this is the time for mercy. It is the favorable time to heal wounds, a time not to be weary of meeting all those who are waiting to see and to touch with their hands the signs of the closeness of God, a time to offer everyone, everyone, the way of forgiveness and reconciliation. May the Mother of God open our eyes, so that we may comprehend the task to which we have been called; and may she obtain for us the grace to experience this Jubilee of Mercy as faithful and fruitful witnesses of Christ."

Stories in *The Advocate* explore the Year of Mercy as seen through the eyes of the children. Katie Remedios, who is Our Lady, Queen of Peace (OLQP) religious education director, explains that the 2015-2016 school year focused on "Foundation Field Trips." On these trips, the children explored many concepts of mercy ranging from a trip to the worship place of Abraham Lincoln to a trip to Washington Fountain House – a home for the sick and aging. The theme of mercy is also portrayed in articles on prison ministries; the care -- sometimes heartbreaking -- of cholera victims in Medor, Haiti; and our church as a welcoming haven to refugees.

Interweaved with these stories are features on former OLQP Choir Director George Ainsley Stewart, Thelma Molina and the activities of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation ministry. Our quarterly labor ministry column this time looks at CAN, a nonprofit organization that helps the unemployed and underemployed find jobs.

"I was in Prison and You Came to Visit Me" —Matt 25:36 2 Kairos International Prison Ministry

By: Kathy Desmond

Deacon Jim and Diane Bayne, former members of OLQP, have been involved with the Kairos prison ministry for 20 years. Jim works with the Kairos team that serves at Buckingham Correctional Center, a state prison for men in Dillwyn, VA. Diane worked for many years with the Kairos teams serving the Virginia Correction Center for Women in Goochland, VA and at Fluvana, the women's Correctional Center in Troy, VA.

Kairos International Prison Ministry (www.Kairosprisonministry.org) started as a Cursillo weekend with people doing prison ministry in Ohio who decided to bring the movement to prisons (www.natl-cursillo.org/what-is-cursillo). Following that initial experience, a small group developed an ecumenical structured program in the mid-1970s that spawned the teams now serving in some 400 correctional institutions in 35 states in the US and nine countries.

Female Kairos volunteers work in women's prisons and male volunteers work

in men's prisons. The Virginia Kairos group

works in 13 state prisons for men and 3 prisons for women. In addition, 3 other men's prisons are visited monthly so that the men who made the Kairos weekend can stay connected.



Jim and Diane Barnes

Kairos also supports a program called Kairos Outside, for family members of men and women who have experienced Kairos on the inside. The Virginia group produced several videos and posted them and a PBS program on their website (www.Kairosva.org). The site also lists ways we can help, from becoming a member of a Kairos team to baking cookies.

"The mission of Kairos Prison Ministry is to share the transforming love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ to impact the hearts and lives of incarcerated men, women and youth, as well as their families, to become loving and productive citizens of their communities."

Kairos is an ecumenical, Christian faith-based ministry. For example, in the Buckingham program, volunteers from 4-5 denominations work together (<http://www.Kairos-bcc.org>).

Beginning in 1979, Jim and Diane spent 20 years leading family retreats for the Arlington diocese and for the Christian Family Living (CFL) Center in North Topsail Beach, NC. Diane was first to join the Kairos program. Jim said he was "terrified" when he first visited Buckingham, but the terror turned to love within the first two hours.

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Each Kairos team puts on two 3.5-day Weekends per year. Most new attendees have experienced years of neglect and lack of love, but they quickly learn they are worthy of God's love, forgiveness, and grace. Some 25-30 Kairos volunteers from the "outside community" organize a weekend. Often they are supported by Kairos graduates on the inside. Some act as table servers, bringing drinks and cookies. Others serve in the "chapel" laying hands on and praying over each speaker before his/her presentation. All resident graduates are invited to participate in the closing event. On an average weekend at Buckingham, 40 residents "graduate," 14 serve as helpers, and another 40-50 come to the closing to support their new brothers in Christ.

Each volunteer is asked to bring 100 dozen homemade cookies to help attract prisoners, and to express the love of the greater Christian community. Thus a three day weekend averages from 2500-3000 dozen freshly baked cookies. Each resident and staff member at the institution receives at least one dozen cookies. The overwhelming love that participants experience from this gesture motivates them to continue in the program after the weekend. "We treat them as brothers," Jim says, and this has a powerful effect on men who have long been treated as worthless.

The program continues with a follow up meeting the next weekend to help the new members of the "inside community" set up Prayer and Share groups of 3-6 members. These weekly Prayer and Share groups are the heart of Kairos. They are how the men and women build small Christian communities inside the prison. By participating in them, members nurture each other in their faith journey and foster accountability.

Outside volunteers return for the monthly Reunion of the Prayer and Share groups. A resident leader selects a theme based on a scripture reading and invites three other residents to share how the reading and theme are working in their lives. These sharings are often very moving. The support of their Kairos brothers in the prison augmented by the outside team helps convince the men that God really loves them.

Finally, a 2-day Retreat is held approximately 3 months after each three-day weekend. These retreats are led by a small team of about ten outside volunteers and are open to all residents who have experienced a three-day weekend. Normally about 40 residents attend each two-day retreat.

Over time, the results have been striking. Wardens seek to bring the Kairos program to their prison because of the profound changes where it has been active. Discipline problems decline. There is less violence than before.

In a study of 505 inmates released from Florida prisons, the recidivism rate was 15.7% among those who had

participated in one Kairos session, and 10% among those who had participated in two or more Kairos sessions. The non-Kairos control group in the study had a recidivism rate of 23.4%.

When asked by a resident why he does this, Jim replied. It goes back to what Jesus said in Matthew 25: If you want to experience the kingdom of God on earth, visit me in prison." Jim told of his friendship with one inmate now in his 70s who has been in prison off and on since he was 15. He went to a different church each time he got out, but was rejected because he had been in jail. In Kairos, he found "someone who would accept me as I am." Like others, he found the Kairos program "life changing."

Jim's closing words to the OLQP community: "If you want to experience the Kingdom of God on earth, try serving on a Kairos team."

A Farewell to George Stewart

By: Veronica Dabney

"Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, a weary land, a weary land, Jesus is a Rock in a weary land, a shelter in the time of storm."

Those lines are from a popular, old hymn. In 2004 they were chosen by Paula Cruickshank, now Editor of the Advocate, to introduce an article about George Ainsley Stewart on the occasion of his 20th anniversary as Gospel Choir Director at OLQP. Under George's direction, the song became something of an anthem for the 9:30 choir and also became a favorite of the congregation.

George was director of the 9:30 gospel choir at OLQP where he shared his unique "flavor" and expert musicianship for 33 years. During his tenure at our



George Stewart in his younger years

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church, he also directed the choirs at his own church, the Breath of Life Seventh Day Adventist Church, in Fort Washington, MD, and at other churches, including the gospel choir at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in SE Washington, DC.

George grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, and began his foray into the world of music in the fourth grade, playing the saxophone. His father was a guitarist who encouraged his son's interest in music. As George developed his skills on various instruments including piano and violin, he frequently practiced with his father. His first piano lessons as a young boy, under the tutelage of a former French Canadian nun, Mrs. Grace Gauthier, were fortuitous, and set a course for his life. Many of us want to think that, through the grace of God, those early introductions to Catholicism were what brought George to Our Lady Queen of Peace.



Front Row-Right to Left: Alice Lockett, Joan Major, George Stewart, Janet O'Neill, Paula Cruickshank, Tony Remedios, Jackie Igoe Back Row- Right to Left: Joan Forte, Kathy Manoatl, Bonnie Czekonski, John Thomas, Les Pinchum

The OLQP gospel choir was founded nearly 40 years ago in part as a fitting way to celebrate the African American origins of this church. When, 33 years ago, an expert musician was needed to lead the 9:30 gospel choir, the search included posting job announcements at various locations. Mrs. Lena Alfred (d), one of the original choir members, posted the announcement at Howard University, where George was a student. The secretary of the school of music told

George about the posting, and the rest is history.

For the next 33 years, we all reaped the benefits of George's beautiful and spirit-filled music and direction. The gospel choir became OLQP's most diverse choir, which over the years amassed a repertoire of more than 1,000 songs in the gospel music tradition. The choir's music enhanced the spiritual journey of hundreds of parishioners at what became one of the church's most popular Masses.

While all of that happening, George managed to finish college, embark on a full time career in government at the IRS, get married, and become the father of four wonderful and talented children: Lyle, Jordan, Nina and George II, and two step children, twins Malik and Dare. He made sure that all of them were introduced to various musical instruments at early ages, just as he was.

Every Sunday here at OLQP he could be seen practically sprinting into the side door to his place at the piano and hurrying out at the end of Mass to direct another choir. However, there was nothing "slap-dash" about the way George conducted his business. His product was always delivered to perfection. Yet he always managed to be even tempered and gracious-- a true asset.

George has developed a reputation and a following in the Washington Metro area and often participates in special church and non-church related events. On September 23, 2015, he was honored to grace the stage as one of the musicians for the Junipero Serra Canonization Mass celebrated by Pope Francis at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

With all that, some of his most loyal

"fans" are the members of OLQP, his first Catholic Church "home" in this area. Three of the current 9:30 choir members were in the choir when George came to OLQP in 1984. They remember his skill and professionalism the best. Les Pincham was impressed that,



Alice Lockett, John Thomas, Les Pinchum

"George could conduct a vigorous conversation [while] at the same time...playing and rehearsing a complicated piece of music. This gave me a new perspective on multitasking and his super talent." Les also offered that his son, Todd (a saxophonist) and George had developed "a great musical relationship while playing together at various venues. Todd said that they were in great demand as a gospel group."

Choir member John Thomas remembered the many years of wonderful music they'd made together and recalled with some amusement some of George's expert instruction, "No, no, Higher, Not FLAT!"

Choir President Alice Lockett wanted to offer her thanks to George "for taking a motley little group of people and making a choir we could all be proud of." She went on to say, "George has always said that God has certainly directed his career and has given him the gift of being able to fit into any music program irrespective of denomination or church style. He said, "I can help elevate the worship experience."

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And that he did.

In the 2004 20th anniversary article mentioned earlier, George was quoted as saying, "The people that I think are the masters of their craft are the people who identify with it,



Front Row: Right to Left- Janet O'Neill, Paula Cruickshank, Tony Remedios, Jackie Igoe Back Row: Right to Left- Alice Lockett, Renee Powell, Barbara Harris, John Thomas

too. Now I see that in myself, in my music, the fact that now I have come to this point in my life where it's not only me applying a skill but also identifying with it. That's part of the reason I think I stayed in the religious form." He added, "I identify with the lyrical content....Take "Jesus is a Rock," --one George identifies as a favorite-- "It's not only... the song or the rhythm itself, but again the words....' Has He ever made a way when you didn't have a dime?' I've gone through that cycle of life, and that's a humbling experience. A lot of times God allows you to make crazy mistakes and go through things to get your attention and, in my case, redirect my focus and allow me to recognize that the successes that you have in life are based on opportunities that God expends to you...."

"I've come to the realization that there are times when all you have is God and your faith in God.... You always have God. Even if you have nobody else."

"A Rock in a Weary Land."

OLQP said a fond (and at times tearful) farewell to George at a concert and reception on March 7, and he directed the choir at his last 9:30 Mass on March 13. He began his duties as Music Director at Holy Comforter St. Cyprian's in SE Washington DC on Palm Sunday 2016.

Putting a Face on Haiti's Cholera Epidemic

By: Sue Carlson

Clerzatane, Rebecca, Adele, Baby Joseph, Tiffouri. Five Medor residents. Each contracted cholera. Three died; two lived. Many more people in Medor have contracted cholera, but since I personally met these five, I will focus on their stories.

Cholera is a disease of poverty. It causes severe diarrhea and vomiting, which can lead to dehydration and death if not treated aggressively. It is contracted by drinking water that is contaminated with vibrio cholera bacteria. In a place like Medor where there is no running water and no sewage system, all the water sources are contaminated with fecal bacteria.

Before 2010 there was no cholera in Haiti. Following the January 2010 earthquake, the United Nations brought Nepalese peacekeepers to Haiti, where they worked in a facility with faulty plumbing. Some of these soldiers were carriers of cholera, contracted during a cholera outbreak in Nepal. The UN facility's leaky sewage pipes contaminated the Artibonite River with vibrio cholera. The contamination quickly spread throughout Haiti. The first Haitian deaths from cholera occurred in October 2010. Since then the disease has killed more than 9,000 Haitians and sickened more than 800,000. But the numbers may be significantly



higher. Much of Haiti is rural, like Medor, and accurate records of illnesses and deaths in these places are not available.

Here are stories of 5 people from Medor who had cholera: people I met, one of whom I loved.

This is Clerzatane.

Clerzatane's parents could not take care of her. They could not afford to feed her as well as the rest of their children. They pleaded with Sister Elita, the St. Joseph parish clinic director and nurse, to raise Clerzatane. When Sister Elita adopted her, Clerzatane was so emaciated she was near death. Sister fed her and nursed her back to health. She nicknamed her Lazarus because she seemed to rise from the dead.

This photo of Clerzatane was taken on the day of her baptism, in March 2010. Father Tim was visiting Medor. He and Pere Luckson baptized Clerzatane and over 100 other children at Sunday Mass.

In October 2010, Clerzatane contracted cholera from drinking unclean water while at school. She was dead

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within 24 hours. Clerzatane was among the first Medor residents to die from cholera. Sister Elita lost her



adopted daughter, her little Lazarus. The community was shaken.

This is Rebecca.

Rebecca was in kindergarten in the fall of 2010 when she contracted cholera. She received adequate rehydration and survived. She missed 5 weeks of classes, but was able to return to school. She is doing well.

I was visiting Medor on Rebecca's first day back at school in December 2010 and took this photo. She was thrilled to be back in class.



This is Adele.

Adele was stricken with cholera in December 2010. After a day of constant diarrhea and vomiting, her family carried her on a stretcher to the clinic in Medor. We were conducting a medical clinic then and were able give her intravenous fluids. She began to perk up and even started drinking liquids from a cup.

We thought she would recover. Unfortunately she continued to lose too much of her body fluids. She died after 2 days in the clinic.

Baby Joseph was 23 months old in January 2016 when he came down with cholera. After 3 days of vomiting and diarrhea his parents took him to the St. Joseph parish clinic. Sister Philemise, a nurse and the new clinic director, knew he was very sick and asked the parents to carry him to the nearest hospital, at least a 10-hour walk. Then Sister saw our group walking near the clinic and asked our opinion. Baby Joseph was limp and poorly responsive. He was so dehydrated we could not find a vein to administer IV fluids. He was too sick to drink any liquids. I was afraid that he would not survive the 10-hour walk down the mountain.

I called Haiti Air Ambulance, an organization based in Port au Prince, to transport Baby Joseph to a hospital. Shortly before the helicopter arrived Joseph began having seizures. With each seizure he stopped breathing. We knew he was near death. His family and others gathered around him, praying for his recovery. The medics on the helicopter started an



Haiti Air Ambulance lands in Medor



Baby Joseph and his mother, taken after he returned from the hospital. Joseph's survival is one of many concrete examples of a miracle in Medor due to the twinning relationship between OLQP and St. Joseph parish.

IV, gave him fluids, anti-seizure medicine, and intubated him.

Their transport to a hospital saved his life. About a week after our return to Arlington, we learned that Baby Joseph was doing well and had been discharged from the hospital.



This is Tiffouri.

Tiffouri's story, unfortunately, does not have a happy ending. I have known Tiffouri for at least 10 years. On each trip to Medor, he helped me up and down the mountain, guiding the mule or holding my hand so I would not fall on the rocks. In Medor, he would wait

outside the rectory to escort me wherever I wanted to go. When we ran eye clinics or medical clinics he volunteered to help check patients' vision or help with crowd control. I called him my "Guardian Angel" because he was always there for me, watching over me, guiding me. He called me his "Second Mother".

This photo of Tiffouri and me was taken after Mass on Sunday, January 31, 2016. He was smiling and healthy. He wore the little angel statue I gave him on a string around his neck. He hugged me good-bye when I left Medor on Feb. 1.

I got a phone call on Feb 12, 2016, telling me that Tiffouri had died of cholera on Feb. 10. He had been sick with diarrhea and vomiting for 3 days. He and his family thought he would get better so he did not

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go to the clinic. They did not tell Pere Luckson or the Sisters that he was sick. By the time he lost consciousness from dehydration it was too late to save him. This devoted husband, father of 5, community leader and my Guardian Angel is gone. In the words of Father Tim, may he, and all the others, "rest in peace, in the loving arms of our God!"

Life is fragile in Medor. Most people there do not drink enough water simply because it is difficult to walk to the

stream to collect it. All of the streams are contaminated with bacteria and worms. There are no doctors. The walk to the nearest hospital is long and difficult for anyone who is ill. When people in Medor get a serious illness such as cholera, many die.

I often wonder why I was the lucky one to be born in the U.S. where life is so much easier. I pray that we who enjoy so many advantages, luxuries we take for granted, like clean drinking water and good health care, can work to alleviate the diseases of poverty for those in Medor and around the world.

OLQP Community Offers "Abrazos" (A Warm Welcome) to Refugees

By: Sally Harrs

"I was a stranger and you took me in." Matt. 25:35

It is hard to read news about the international refugee crisis without feeling sadness and despair.

"Over 10,000 refugees are currently stranded in limbo between Greece and Macedonia as a result of recent, unilateral border closures. Conditions are appalling and the needs are immense." (International Rescue Committee)

How will this end? What difference can someone in Arlington make in changing the plight of so many thousands of refugees? What can we do?

Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM, Ministerio Latino at OLQP for twenty-five years, sat down recently to talk about the refugee crisis and the frustration and sadness Christians experience when looking for remedies for the overwhelming problem of migration and refugee resettlement.

Fr. Nangle said that parishioners of OLQP can't allow our inability to do everything undermine our determination to do something for refugees. He spoke with confidence about the compassionate service OLQP has provided to refugees for many years and continues to this day. The parish has welcomed strangers from other countries by answering the many needs they confront as they resettle in Arlington. OLQP's hands of friendship have offered clothing through Matt. 25, groceries from the food pantry, guidance regarding shelter and financial crises, transportation, job counseling, and legal directions.

Spotlight on Thelma Molina: OLQP Hispanic Liaison

By: Jack Sullivan

"I thought you went to America to learn English," was the way the mother of Thelma Molina greeted the news that

Fr. Nangle described the welcoming of parishioners at OLQP as an "abrazo" - an embrace, a greeting, a hug. In Latin American culture, an abrazo breaks down barriers. It introduces trust and friendship between strangers. At the 1:00 p.m. Sunday Spanish Mass, participants greet one another with abrazos, and the Church radiates.

OLQP is truly a haven for refugees. Many come to OLQP desperate and alone. Fr. Nangle offers abrazos to welcome them and give them hope:

- To the mother without documents whose daughter needed heart surgery. She had been turned away several times at the border and endured abuse from ICE officers. She has worked three jobs and is now a citizen.
- To Dulce (Sweetness), a child with multiple handicaps whose one wish to see Pope Benedict was realized through the intercession of Fr. Nangle.
- To the grandmother who pleaded for help for her jailed son who was to be deported, but who received a favorable judgment in Arlington which allowed him to stay in the United States to be with his wife and baby.
- To the despondent parishioner convicted of a felony and facing deportation.

Individual by individual, family by family, crisis by crisis, OLQP does something for refugees in need. No one is a stranger at OLQP. The plight of refugees is not forgotten.

her daughter — now the OLQP Hispanic liaison and receptionist — was planning to be married. Born in El Salvador, Thelma has been a friendly and personal

Thelma Molina, Continued from Page 7

member of the parish for eleven years. She explained that both a strong desire for the language and love for the man who would become her husband were behind her move to the U.S.

Thelma has lived in Northern Virginia with her husband, Miguel, an accountant with the International Monetary Fund, for more than three decades. They raised two children, Miguel, now 31, and Laura, 27. When her husband died in 2003, Thelma sought employment outside the home. Learning that Father Tuzzolo at OLQP was looking for a Spanish-speaking assistant in the parish office, she applied and got the job. For the next several years she was the only staff aide with Spanish skills.



Thelma Molina

“Fr. Joe Nangle, of course, spoke Spanish and was the principal point of contact for the Hispanic community,” Thelma noted. “But many people from El Salvador and elsewhere would come to see me to tell their story and seek help.” She remembered that in 2007 the parish was providing groceries for about fifty families per week and it was considered a high number. The growth of that program to some 150 families today she sees as a sign of the substantial growth of a financially strapped Hispanic community in Arlington and surrounding areas.

Working an eight-hour day from Monday to Friday, Thelma considers her employment to be “a real blessing.” She marveled at the friendly atmosphere of the African-American founding community and the “Anglos,” to use her term, as well as the ever-increasing number of Hispanics making the parish their place of worship.

She noted that a number of OLQP staff members are conversant in Spanish and that the Hispanic liaison responsibilities are distributed. She added that the pastor, Father Tim Hickey, speaks Spanish well. “He has a pronounced Puerto Rican accent,” she said with a laugh, “but that is where he learned the language.” She estimated that at least half of the phone calls received at the parish office daily are in Spanish.

Living in Springfield with her daughter, Thelma is also associated with her local parish, St. Bernadette's, as a Eucharistic minister. Nevertheless, she often attends OLQP. She would like to be a lector, she said, but is concerned that her English is too heavily accented to be well understood in the pews. “English is a very hard language,” she noted several times.

Thelma continues to learn, asking others in the parish administration to use English in speaking to her. Thus, the quest that — at least in part — brought her to America, goes on.

JPIC Committee Takes Action on Climate Change— Urges Parish Community to Reduce Carbon Footprint

By: Bobby McMahon

“Our sister is crying out to us.”

In his landmark encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis begins with this striking image. Invoking the words of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis invites the reader to feel a great sense of connection to our sister, Mother Earth -- “our very bodies are made up of her elements,” he reminds us -- and to reflect on how our indifference and maltreatment has left her in agony.

Rooted in this image, Pope Francis calls for action and dialogue to address climate change and environmental harm. Brian Kane, chair of OLQP's parish's Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee, said that the Pope's message of the climate as a common good belonging to all of us stirred his heart. The Committee works to inspire and inform parishioners about the environment and connect issues of

climate change and pollution to our parish's preferential option for the poor.

“Our actions to improve our common home do not happen for the sheer sake of a percentage reduction or high score, but instead should stem from our deep concern for those who may suffer greatly as our climate warms,” Kane said. “It is very challenging to see this in our daily

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actions, as many of those affected remain unseen to us.”

Kane calls for parishioners to familiarize themselves with where our representatives in Congress stand on environmental regulations and encourage them to support alternative sources of energy. “It is the most significant way that we can begin to impact the health of the planet and reduce carbon emissions,” Kane said.



Food Pantry Garden Program



Food Pantry Garden Program

Parishioners can also find one or two areas within their daily lives to reduce their “personal carbon footprint,” Kane said, like setting tangible goals for decreasing food waste or reducing vehicle emissions. “I truly feel that when we practice carefully in one area of our life, we align our other areas accordingly.”

Kane also serves the OLQP community through the Food Pantry’s Garden Program, which provides a variety of delicious vegetables for the families our pantry serves. Last year, volunteers were able to harvest over 550 tomatoes, he said, along with dozens of heads of lettuce and collard greens.

“I think the families who visited the pantry appreciated these additions to the food each week and I hope we can continue to gain a high yield from our small plot,” he said.

For more information about the JPIC Committee and how to respond to our call to protect our Sister Earth, Kane invites parishioners to visit the committee website at <http://olgpva.org/IntegrityCreation.html>. Kane as well praised the work of Sharon Malley, whom he succeeded as chair of the committee.

Prison Ministry of Catholic Charities Seeks Volunteers



By: Sally Harrs

“I was in prison and you came to visit me.” – Matt. 25:36

A forgotten population of the Catholic Church is often those who are imprisoned. They are frequently without family and friends, and many do not speak English. Reaching out to them is the focus of the Prison Ministry of the Office of Migration and Refugees of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington.

Parish-based volunteers in the Prison Ministry provide pastoral care, spiritual and emotional assistance, and skills to the imprisoned and their families. Volunteer activity includes one-on-one visits with men, women, and youth; religious services including Mass, confession, and sacramental preparedness; and Bible study, faith sharing, and prayer ministry.

Prison Ministry volunteers from OLQP could provide pastoral care to the closest prisons: Alexandria Detention Center and Arlington County Detention Center. Two

priests from the Arlington Diocese staff the ministry, including Fr. Paul Berghout and Fr. David Curran from Missionhurst.

Volunteers are needed in the Prison Ministry because it maintains a busy schedule throughout each month with activities weekly in the local prisons. A prospective volunteer is required to complete an application form and consent to a background check. One-on-one training is available and can last several months.

If interested in joining the Prison Ministry of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, contact Bill Hall. Mr. Hall has provided pastoral care for four years to inmates in area prisons, and he “loves to go into the jail.” He is always inspired by the inmates with whom he works. He says: “All who attend services are there because they want to experience personal contact with the Holy Spirit.”

Bill Hall’s contact number is 703.841.3832.



By: Laura Bandini

Have you ever been through something so hard that it left you feeling alone and out of synch with everyone around you? Maybe it was a death, a serious illness, or a painful rejection. Or maybe you know firsthand how it feels to suddenly become unemployed. According to a Gallop survey, losing a job makes us twice as likely to fall into depression.

And this is on top of the very real financial strains that can accompany job loss – reducing any savings and retirement you may have and possibly causing you to lose your housing. Adding further danger to that stress, if you're long-term unemployed, there's a 40% chance you can no longer afford your prescriptions.

We all know people who are searching for work. These are people we love at our parish, in our families, and among our friends. Or maybe right now, it's us.

Pope Francis understands. In August, he explained that because "work is sacred," and "gives dignity" to people, being unemployed causes "serious social damage" and "damages the spirit."

While there is a special sacredness in lending an empathetic ear and giving a warm hug to someone who trusts us enough to share their troubles, as a parish, we can go a step further. We can tell our sisters and brothers searching for work about Catholic Charities Christians Are Networking (CAN).

The Labor & Income Inequality Team hosted an event with CAN on April 10. Those in attendance learned that CAN is a loving and empathetic community that provides practical help to job seekers for free and regardless of religious affiliation. Since its founding seven years ago, CAN has helped nearly 700 job seekers and has had over 70 volunteers, including 24 regular mentors and coaches.

CAN helps people in varying circumstances: the homeless, long term unemployed, students just out of college and not working in their chosen career, older workers whose jobs were just eliminated, those working a number of different jobs struggling to make ends meet, and both blue and white collar workers.

Every job seeker is immediately assigned a mentor/coach that helps identify and clarify their skills, talents and experiences. Each applicant also learns how to construct a job search strategy and resume. The job seekers practice interview and networking skills and attend monthly presentations on topics, such as finding a federal job, networking at a job fair, working with recruiters, and managing finances while unemployed.

To learn more about CAN, use their services, or explore becoming a CAN volunteer, check out their website at http://www.ccda.net/programs_jobs.php or email CAN at canetworkingva@gmail.com. All are welcome to attend weekly meetings on Thursday nights at 7 pm at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center in Alexandria. Please email me at htlaura1@gmail.com to join the parish Labor & Income Inequality Team.