

Benedictine **C**oalition for **R**esponsible **I**nvestment



Mount St. Scholastica
Atchison, Kansas

St. Scholastica Monastery
Boerne, Texas

Benedictine Sisters of
Virginia Bristow, Virginia

Benedictine Sisters
of Perpetual Adoration
Clyde, Missouri

St. Scholastica Monastery
Fort Smith, Arkansas

Benedictine Sisters
of Baltimore
Lutherville, Maryland

Benedictine Women
Holy Wisdom Monastery
Madison, Wisconsin

St. Gertrude Monastery
Ridgely, Maryland

Benedictine Sisters of
Florida, St. Leo, Florida

Monasterio Pan De Vida
Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico

SUMMER 2010

Issue 6

Peace, Our Quest and Aim

By Sr. Patricia Kirk, OSB

Emmanuel Monastery, Lutherville, MD

What might St. Benedict, the founder of western monasticism and the Benedictine way of life possibly say to the lives of people living in the 21st century? How has his Rule written over 1500 years been able to survive and sustain not only those who live a monastic life, but many other persons who are drawn to Benedictine spirituality? To know Benedict's life and the times he lived in can put some flesh on these questions, especially in the area of peace. This is so contrary to the culture of violence that we live in today. Benedict lived in and was influenced by his culture.

The times into which Benedict was born (480) were fraught with social unrest and political upheaval. The Roman Empire was literally being torn to pieces. In the span of 25 years, 455 to 476, Rome had been sacked 4 times. The final western Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed in 476. With the dissolution of the Roman Empire came the collapse of the Western European social order. Every aspect of life was affected with invasions by the "barbarians" (Germanic and Asiatic peoples, among others) economic stability and physical safety disappeared, as well.

As a young man, Benedict was sent to Rome for an education. As a student, he tired of the decadent culture around him and left to live a simple spiritual life as a hermit in Subiaco and spent 3 years in solitude. During this period he developed the ideas, which lie at the heart of the Rule.

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We would like to extend
an excited welcome
to our 10th member:
Benedictine Sisters
of Florida.

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**SAVE THE DATE! We will meet during the
RCRI (formerly NATRI) MEETING: September 14-17, 2010.**

On Being a Prophet in Today's World

ISAIAH and Luke tell us that God does not want servants only, but he wants PROPHETS, prophets willing to be light everywhere in the community, everywhere in our ministry, everywhere in the world. What does it mean for us to be a light? English poet, Edwina Gately, gives us a hint as she writes:

**We are called to say yes
That the kingdom might break through
To renew and transform
Our dark and groping world...**

**We are called to say yes
That black may sing with white
And pledge peace and healing
For the hatred of the past.**

**We are called to say yes
So that nations might gather
And dance one great movement
For the joy of humankind.**

**We are called to say yes
So that rich and poor embrace
And become equal in their poverty
Thru the silent tears that fall...**

**We are called to say yes
To a God who still holds fast
To the vision of the kingdom
For a trembling world of pain.**

**We are called to say yes
To this God who reaches out
And asks us to share
God's crazy dream of love.**

Psalms of a Laywoman, pg. 15-16

New immigrants are waiting for us to influence our country's "yes" as we not only embrace them as our ancestors were embraced, but also welcome them in the spirit of Christ. People crippled by ridicule and by being shunned are wanting us to grab their hands in the dance of joy and acknowledgment of their worth. Nations that are experiencing violence, extreme poverty, and exploitation of their natural resources to serve the wealthy are eager for our movement toward them in steps of deliberate and direct aid. Our common life gives witness to our accepting **all** as equals. God demands that we who really love sharpen our vision, so we might soften the pain in the world by our words and works.

The sacred permeates the Rule of Benedict. Thirst for the whole begins in the Prologue, "Is there anyone around you yearns for life and desires to see good days?" Is this not the quest for the good life to which we have been called and which we profess in community?

We Benedictines believe the good news because by our fidelity to the monastic way of life, we are the good news. Saying "yes" to the crazy dream of love was the calling of John. It is our call. It cost John his life. It will cost us our lives. As Benedictines who follow this call, we pray that God may bring us all together to everlasting life.

Reflection —Feast of St. John the Baptist

-Sr. Anne Shepard, Mount St. Scholastica



(Continued from Page 1) - Peace, Our Quest and Aim by Sr. Patricia Kirk

Out of the silence and solitude, Benedict learned what must be at the basis of any rule – to listen, a discipline basic to opening to the presence of God. "Listen with the ear of your heart" begins the Prologue to the Rule. It sets the theme for a Rule which is centered in seeking God in community, prayer and ministry.

Benedict became known for his wisdom and holiness and began attracting followers and eventually moved and founded a monastery, locating it at Monte Cassino, a short distance from Rome. The form of life that took shape there was communal – a cenobitic life where the monk/monastic belongs to a monastery and serves under a rule and an abbot or prioress. These monasteries were so countercultural to the individualistic way of life that had grown up in Western Europe. From here, Benedict's rule was written and passed on through all these centuries. It is a rule of balance and temperance, one that includes **all** – young and old for counsel, that de-emphasizes rank and works toward equality and inclusion and respect for each person. This is not a 'hard and fast rule', but as Benedict himself says "a little rule/guide written for beginners". It is a Rule that is less centered on rules or laws but focuses on shaping attitudes. For this reason, it is still contemporary for all who follow it.

Benedict does not directly address the matter of violence in his Rule, although violence was all around him. Benedict's teachings are focused on biblical justice, a matter of establishing right relationships with others. In the Prologue to the Rule he says that the friends of God are those who are "just in all their dealings: (Ps 15:2). What a world this would be if we all worked from that premise of justice and our focus was on the common good of all people! We are using this premise to come together in the Benedictine CRI to make a difference for the common good, using our stock portfolios.

On Being a Prophet in Today's World

Sr. Sylvia Ahr, Boerne Benedictines

Although Sister Susan Mika is the one who directly encounters the Corporations for our Community, I have always been in awe of the Corporate Responsibility work. It is my prayer that God will soften the hearts of Corporate leadership to serve people in a fair and just manner. In the midst of so much greed and Corporate malpractice, those presenting a Godly way of thinking and behaving are a ray of Son-shine and Hope. In this day and time, I think Benedict would be proud of Corporate Responsibility work because he, in his time, was very conscious of justice, peace and good stewardship of the earth. We strive to follow that example.



Sr. Henry Marie Zimmerman, Bristow

The great value I find in working together is the opportunity to work with people who have studied the issues and really know what injustices need to be addressed and how to write the proposals to be filed with the corporations. I have neither the time nor the expertise to do the necessary research to do this, but I can file the proposals/resolutions and send them in. Our community is using our resources to be part of the solution. I am grateful that my community is able to participate in trying to bring about some needed changes because of our Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment.



Anna Falkenberg - Benedictine CRI Staff

Would the ancient prophets have used email today to get out their message? No doubt they would have used any means at their disposal to speak truth to power and so do we.



Sometimes our work in corporate responsibility may not seem to us to be prophetic because we don't stand on street corners and proclaim. More often we work in offices at screens with Excel spreadsheets before us. Some of us do attend annual meetings which can be more dramatic. Here, we do speak truth to corporate power, in what is often intimidating circumstances where we are searched and where we are surrounded by security guards.

If we need to be reminded of our high purpose, we must remember that even when sending out emails, doing web-based research and spreading information to our members, we are prophets. We speak for those who choose to use their investments to advance universal goals of peace, justice and human rights.

Sr. Rose Marie Stallbaumer, Atchison

When I first heard of the idea of working together on corporate responsibility actions, I was excited that we might do this. Over the past seven years, I have seen the growth of our coalition efforts. We have grown from two groups working together to ten groups forming our Benedictine CRI. I believe that Benedict would support these efforts to raise the issues of the day with the corporate leaders. Benedict saw the conditions of his day and wrote a rule which confronted (or challenged) the underlying "rules" of the day.



Brianna Dimas, Intern for Benedictine Sisters, Boerne

I live in the most liberal city in the nation, New York City, and even the most politically active students are astonished when I explain to them the work of the Benedictine CRI. As the ministry continues to take on big companies and steer them back to a path of justice, I don't know how anyone could say we aren't prophets. Throughout the history of the Church, prophets have promoted change in local communities. Prophets were the ones no one wanted to listen to, spreading the message no one was ready to accept. Just as these companies we hold stock in tend to ignore the fight and it is a slow process of change, the prophets in the early Church were shunned and often jailed. In fact, St. Paul's most well known Epistles were written mostly from jail.



The Benedictine CRI maintains this tough message, this prophecy, which companies don't want to listen to and most definitely don't want to pay for. The message seeps through one way or another and change has occurred. There is much in the future that still will change. The BCRI has one of the most important modern-day prophecies to share: we cannot move forward, financially or otherwise, until there is social justice represented in our companies for the workers. With every small battle we help to overcome, whether it's executive say on pay or environmentally friendly practices, or keeping harmful chemicals out of everyday products – this is the prophecy being fulfilled and it is a beautiful prophecy to bear witness to!

Ravi Thiagarajan- Fort Smith

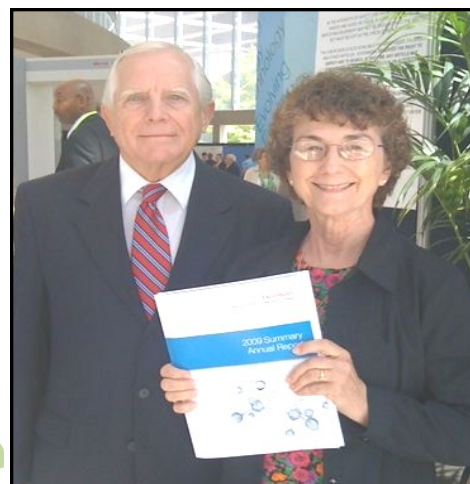
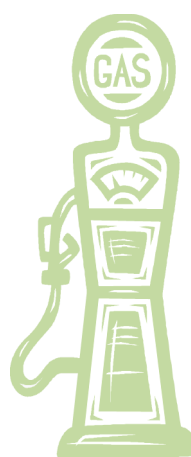
Our monastery in Fort Smith, Arkansas is located near several major corporations; Walmart and Tyson Foods are two well-known ones. These corporations have a major influence on the lives of thousands of people. We hope that our participation in the Benedictine CRI will help to influence companies to change policies that are not socially responsible. St. Scholastica Monastery uses our stock holdings to file stockholder resolutions which are voted on by all stockholders. This is one of many ways that our community is involved in an effort to promote social justice.



Benedictines at Work



Sr. Susan Mika visits with the St. Scholastica Monastery members in late July in Fort Smith Arkansas. (Photo from left to right) Kathy Jarvis (Oblate) Ravi Thiagarajan (Treasurer), Sr. Rosalie Ruesewald, Sr. Ginger deGravelle, and Sr. Catherine Markey



Sr. Susan Mika, OSB and Stewart Frazer, Oblate with the Boerne monastery, attended the ExxonMobil shareholders' meeting in Dallas on May 26. Shareholders voted on eleven resolutions. The Say on Pay received the highest percentage with 41.2%.

Update on Harsh Chemicals in Everyday Products!

*From an earlier newsletter
article on toxics in cosmetics*

Bisphenol A (also called BPA)

What is it?

Bisphenol A is a chemical found in common products such as automobiles, sports equipments, CDs, DVDs, food and drink containers, metal cans, and dental sealants.

What's the problem?

The chemical behaves in a harmful way; it mimics estrogen inside the body and can cause severe health problems such as heart disease, obesity, infertility, diabetes, and cancer. It can also cause behavioral problems such as hyperactivity, impaired learning, and aggressiveness. Recent studies show that about 90% of Americans have some level of BPA in their bodies.

Plastic Container Warning!

Look on the bottom of all plastic containers and **AVOID** those numbered 3, 6, and 7. Do NOT microwave these or put them in the dishwasher! Throw them out. They leach out toxic chemicals including BPA! The safer plastics are numbered 1,2,4 or 5.

— "Cancer in the Kitchen" Nicholas Kristof, New York Times

Want to know more about toxic chemicals in everyday products?

"The Story of Cosmetics: What's really in your personal care products?" is Annie Leonard's new video (YOUTUBE) and as of August 4, 2010 it has received over **200,000** viewers! Her earlier project on consumerism is "The Story of Stuff."

Leonard talks about common everyday products like mouthwash, deodorant, moisturizers, toothpaste, sunscreen, lotions, shaving cream, etc. Check these products for harmful Parabens, Triclosan, Triclocarban, PEG-7, Ethylene, Benzyl Alcohol, and Phenol.

A good resource for learning about toxic chemicals in products we all use is the website for the Environmental Working Group www.ewg.org. This website has several sections including a section on home and health/toxics which highlights issues in children's health such as sunscreens.

Highlights on Resolutions

Goldman Sach's (GS) Moral Obligation to Wall Street

In an editorial from Fortune Magazine, "Goldman Sach's Moral Obligation to Wall Street," the writer mentions Christian Brothers Investment Services and our collective work through stockholder resolutions to bring these issues before the banks. One resolution asked for separation of the chairman and CEO positions at Goldman, both currently held by Lloyd Blankfein. Julie Tanner, Assistant Director of Socially Responsible Investing at Christian Brothers Investment Services, said in a statement: "While separating the positions of Chair and CEO is not a guarantee against future scandals, it does provide another layer of checks and balances and could improve the board's ability to oversee the activities of the company." Julie represented the religious shareholders, speaking on National Public Radio.

We have been asking the hard questions about conflicts of interests and collateral for derivatives, long before it was fashionable.

2010 resolutions results at GS:

19% voted in favor of separation of CEO and Chairperson Roles (Lead filer: Christian Brothers)

33% voted in favor of disclosure of collateral for derivatives (Lead filer: Maryknoll Sisters; Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison co-filed the resolution)

31% voted in favor of semi-annually reporting political contributions and expenditures (Lead filer: Domini)

5.5% voted in favor of addressing the pay disparity between top management and lowest paid workers (Lead filer: Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel, Oregon)

Withdrawn – resolution to have a "say on executive pay". Goldman was a recipient of TARP funds and was required to allow a vote on this. (Lead filer: State of Connecticut Treasurer's Office)

COCA-COLA RESOLUTION

Domini Social Investments and Trillium Asset Management Corporation filed a resolution on Toxic Chemicals in Products - Bisphenol A (BPA) with Coca-Cola. It received 21.92% of the vote. This effort is the **first resolution** filed of this type. We, as shareholders, are urging the company to share information with the investors on how it is responding to the new findings of the harmful chemical BPA in aluminum cans and the dangers it causes.

CATERPILLAR RESOLUTION

The resolution titled Human Rights - Amend and Adopt Policies which requested a review of Caterpillar's policies related to human rights guiding international and US operations received a surprising 25% vote. The resolution leads were As You Sow Foundation and Jewish Voice for Peace. A demonstration preceded the annual meeting and tight security at the meeting limited attendance. At issue is the production of the armed D9 Bulldozer used in the Gaza Strip.

SOUTHERN COMPANY RESULTS

The Electric Power - Emissions Reduction which asked the company to report to shareholders actions the company would need to take to reduce total CO2 emissions, including goals for existing and proposed plants based on current and emerging technologies. It received 9.87% of the vote. The safe coal ash / waste disposal resolution received 21% of the vote.

NUNS vs. BANKERS

THE SHAREHOLDER PROXY WARS by STEPHEN GANDEL in TIME MAGAZINE April 21, 2010



(Courtesy photo)

"What did the Nun say to the Banker? Do a better job of disclosing your over-the-counter derivatives market risk...

It's not a joke."

Notes for 2010 Shareholder Resolutions filed

SHAREHOLDERS VOTES FOR THE RESOLUTION ARE LISTED NEXT TO THE TITLE OF THE RESOLUTION.

ABBOTT LABS

Say on Executive Pay- FOR 43.50%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia
Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

BANK OF AMERICA CORP

Collateral for Derivatives - FOR 39%

Benedictine Sisters, Torreon, Mexico
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

BEST BUY

Principles to combat Global Warming - no result

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

BB&T FINANCIAL

Overdraft Fees - FOR 23.60%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia
Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

BOEING CO

Ethical Criteria for Contracts - FOR 5%

Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

CAPITAL ONE

Banking Overdraft Fees Practices - withdrawn

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

CASH AMERICA

Payday Lending - FOR 9%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

CATERPILLAR, INC.

Human Rights - FOR 25%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

CHEVRON

Comprehensive Human Rights Policy- adopted

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

Environmental Oversight - 26.77%

Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

CITIGROUP INC

Collateral for Derivatives - FOR 30%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

COCA COLA CO

Say on Executive Pay- FOR 34.14%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

COLGATE-PALMOLIVE

Say on Executive Pay- withdrawn

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

CONOCOPHILLIPS

Adopt Env. Policies/Wetlands Restoration - FOR 6.55%

Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia
Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

Oil and Gas Emissions Reduction - FOR 25.54%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

CORRECTIONS CORP of AMER

Political Contributions - withdrawn

Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

DOW CHEMICAL

Remediate the Midland Area - FOR 9.78%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia
Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

DuPONT

Amend Human Rights Policy- FOR 6.09%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

EOG RESOURCES

Safer alternatives - Natural gas exploration - FOR 30.90%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

EXXONMOBIL

Greenhouse gas emission reduction- FOR 27.20%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

Notes for 2010 Shareholder Resolutions filed

GENERAL ELECTRIC

Pay Disparity - FOR 42.20%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

GOLDMAN SACHS

More Collateral for Derivatives- FOR 33.40%

Pay Disparity
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

HALLIBURTON

Comprehensive Human Rights Policy - FOR 36.92%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

HOME DEPOT

EEO Disclosure - FOR 27%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

IBM

Say on Executive Pay - FOR 45.30%

Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia
Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

JOHNSON AND JOHNSON

Say on Executive Pay - FOR 47.94%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas
Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

LOCKHEED MARTIN

Weaponization of Space - FOR 5.73%

Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

MCDONALDS

Say on Executive Pay- FOR 42.88%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

NUCOR

Political Contributions - FOR 31.90%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

PEPSICO

Say on Executive Pay - withdrawn

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

ST. JUDE MEDICAL

Sustainability Report - Climate Change - FOR 42.81%

Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

SOUTHERN CO

Reduction of emissions - 9.87%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Bristow, Virginia

TYSON FOODS

Sustainability Reporting - FOR 8.35%

Benedictine Sisters, Ft. Smith, Arkansas

WAL-MART STORES INC

Say on Executive Pay - FOR 19.6%

Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas
Benedictine Sisters, Atchison, Kansas

Other BIG NAMES -- BIG VOTES

ON SAY ON PAY

EXXON MOBIL - 41.20%
TIME WARNER - 44.00%
DISNEY CO - 51.34%
ALLSTATE - 58.90%
ELI LILLY - 27.70%
HOME DEPOT - 43.49%
RAYTHEON - 47.34%
TARGET - 52.00%
UNITED TECHNOLOGIES - 49.15%



ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

EXXON MOBIL - Restore Gulf Coast Wetlands
Vote: 9.10%
MASSEY ENERGY - GHG Emissions Reduction
Vote: 53.10%
EXXON MOBIL - Hydraulic Fracturing
Vote: 26.30%

ON BISPHENOL - A

COCA-COLA - Toxic Chemicals in Products - Bi-sphenol - A (BPA) Actual Vote 21.92%

Photo (above): Stainless-steel eco friendly water bottle given out at the Disney meeting.

PROPHET

Not to be confused with Profit.

In religion, a prophet is an individual who has been contacted by, or has encountered, the supernatural or the divine, and serves as an intermediary with humanity, delivering this newfound knowledge from the supernatural entity to other humans. The message that the prophet conveys is called a prophecy. Claims of prophets have existed in many cultures through history, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and many others. Traditionally, prophets are regarded as having a role in society that promotes change due to their messages and actions. In the late 20th century the appellation of "prophet" has been used to refer to individuals particularly successful at analysis in the field of economics, such as in the derogatory "prophet of greed". Alternatively, social commentators who suggest escalating crisis are often called "prophets of doom."

In Judaism the Hebrew word נָבִיַּי(navi), "spokesperson," traditionally translates as "prophet". The meaning of *navi* is perhaps described in Deuteronomy 18:18, where God said, "I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him." Thus, the *navi* was thought to be the "mouth" of God. The root ("navi") is based on the two-letter root nun-vet which denotes hollowness or openness; to receive transcendental wisdom, one must make oneself "open".

In Christianity a prophet (or seer — 1 Samuel 9:9) is one inspired by God through the Holy Spirit to deliver a message for a specific purpose. It is often associated with predicting future events, but in Biblical terms it is wider and can include those given the power to preach repentance to those who do not want to hear the message and to warn of God's wrath for disobedience. God's calling as a prophet is not considered to elevate an individual for their glory, but for the glory of God and to turn people to him. The reception of a message is termed revelation and the delivery of the message is termed prophecy.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Benedictine **C**oalition for **R**esponsible **I**nvestment

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