

**March 2015**  
**Issue 15**

*Mount St. Scholastica*  
Atchison, Kansas

*St. Scholastica Monastery*  
Boerne, Texas

*Benedictine Sisters of*  
Virginia Bristow, Virginia

*St. Scholastica Monastery*  
Chicago, Illinois

*Benedictine Sisters*  
*of Perpetual Adoration*  
Clyde, Missouri

*Benet Hill Monastery*  
Colorado Springs,  
Colorado

*Benedictine Sisters of*  
Erie, Pennsylvania

*St. Scholastica Monastery*  
Fort Smith, Arkansas

*Benedictine Sisters*  
*of Baltimore*  
Lutherville, Maryland

*Immaculata Monastery*  
Norfolk, Nebraska

*Benedictine Women*  
*Holy Wisdom Monastery*  
Madison, Wisconsin

*Monasterio De San Benito*  
Mexico, D.F.

*Mount Saviour Monastery*  
Pine City, New York

*St. Gertrude Monastery*  
Ridgely, Maryland

*Benedictine Sisters*  
*of Florida*  
St. Leo, Florida

*Subiaco Abbey*  
Subiaco, Arkansas

*Monasterio Pan De Vida*  
Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico

# Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment



## Many Firsts ...

At times, it seems like justice will never come. These past months have seen a number of “firsts” in our ministry — both negative and positive firsts.

### WAGES

- ✓Walmart announced that the company would raise employee starting wages to \$9 an hour in April and to \$10 an hour in 2016.
- ✓IKEA, GAP, TJX (which includes TJ Maxx, HomeGoods, Marshalls) and Target announced similar wage increases.

### ENVIRONMENT

- ✓2014 was the hottest year on record, according to scientists (New York Times January 16, 2015).
- ✓As of March 15, 2015, Boston set an all-time record for snow – 108.6 inches. Records date back to 1872. (WCVB.com)
- ✓Four insurance companies have earthquake insurance policies in Oklahoma which exclude coverage for those earthquakes triggered by hydraulic fracturing or waste-water injection wells.

### JUSTICE

- ✓The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) held its first ever gathering of those persons working for justice and peace.
- ✓Three Benedictine Monasteries joined the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment (CRI), including our first men’s monasteries.

### FEDERAL REGULATIONS

- ✓The Federal Communications Commission announced its decision to regulate the internet as a “utility”.
- ✓Federal Judge James E. Boasberg ordered the Obama administration to stop the practice of detaining women and children caught crossing the border illegally.

### FOOD Supply Chain

- ✓McDonald’s announced and outlined its “new menu sourcing initiatives including only sourcing chicken raised without antibiotics that are important to human medicine.” (Press Release, March 2015)

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When we see the incremental steps listed above, we think of Archbishop Oscar Romero’s words, “This is what we are about: We plant seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold **future promise.**”

Yes, we collectively are planting those seeds each day, watering them with our actions, our prayers and our tears.

On many days, we long for progress to be made—at a faster pace.

On days when we see movement towards the positive, we rejoice and renew our thirst for justice.

## BCRI Meeting Minutes November 5-6, 2014

The annual meeting of the Benedictine CRI was held on Wednesday and Thursday, Nov. 5-6, 2014 at the RCRI National Conference in St. Louis. Membership has increased to 17 monasteries, with the addition of Subiaco Abbey in Subiaco, Arkansas, Mount Savior Monastery in Pine City, NY, and Monasterio de San Benito in Mexico City, Mexico. Subiaco and Pine City are the first two men's communities to join the coalition. The members are listed on the cover of the newsletter. Areas of discussion and concern included:

**Support of the Benedictine CRI:** Sr. Rose Marie reminded the group that non-members are always welcome to attend and/or to support the Benedictine CRI financially to help promote the corporate responsibility ministry.

**Benedictine CRI brochure:** Sr. Susan Mika distributed a packet, including a first-ever brochure for the Benedictine CRI. The group approved the brochure. It was available at the RCRI booth sponsored by all the coalitions. This is the first time for the coalitions belonging to the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) had a booth at the RCRI meeting.

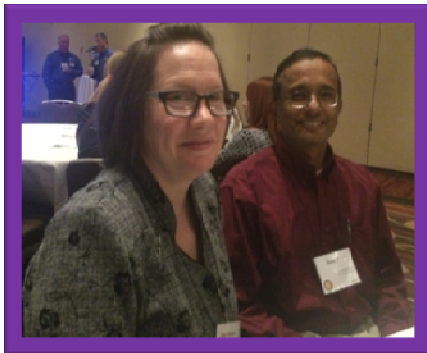


**Update on Corporate Responsibility Actions:** Susan reviewed articles from the latest CRI newsletter, noting the 2014 resolutions filed by various coalition members. She reminded the group about guidelines for filing a resolution:

- ownership of \$2000 worth of shares held continuously for one year;
- first-year resolutions must receive at least 3% of the vote to be filed again for the second year;
- second-year resolutions must receive at least 6% ;
- third-year resolutions must receive at least 10% to be filed again the following year.

She noted that companies are trying to change these limits to make it more difficult to reach voting minimums. Some resolutions are withdrawn because of dialogue with the company and agreement or progress toward agreement reached. Finally, she stressed the importance of voting our proxies each year. She encouraged all to read the resolutions carefully as some of our opponents may file trick resolutions to try to get votes opposing our resolutions. Members commented that the Benedictine CRI newsletters are helpful tools that are being shared with our investment committees, helping them to understand the work of the coalition and the impact that the resolutions are making.

**ICCR meeting:** Susan presented goals and areas of focus as identified by ICCR. These include food and water, health, human trafficking, climate change, sustainable and ethical apparel, political lobbying and spending, and financial services. She distributed a handout explaining these areas of focus in greater detail and the 2015 calendar of filing dates—when resolutions are due to the company.



**Questions, Stories, Comments:** Sr. Susan invited coalition members to send her copies of (links to) articles that they find interesting and applicable to the work of the coalition. Sr. Rose Marie shared a resolution by the Atchison community to **exclude fossil fuels** from their portfolio and invited others to use the resolution — in keeping with the LCWR resolution calling us to move from fossil fuels to sustainable sources of energy. *[This resolution is included on p. 10 of this newsletter.]*

**Green Construction and Solar Panels:** Sr. Sylvia Ahr reported that the Boerne community is preparing to build a new monastery, with efforts being made to make the monastery as green as possible which will include solar panels.

# BCRI Meeting Minutes November 5-6, 2014

Sr. Lou Whipple reported that the Atchison community is also adding solar panels. The Madison, Wisconsin community added eco-friendly features when they built their monastery, which is now LEED-certified. Sr. Veronica from Bristow mentioned they are looking at eco-friendly features for the new addition which will be built.

**Immigration:** Sr. Susan distributed handouts on immigration. A coalition has been formed in San Antonio to work on immigration concerns. They have established a **Bond Fund** to assist with the costs of legal assistance to reunite children with family members in the U.S.. In the summer of 2014, lawyers had a 95% success rate in accomplishing this. Very high bails, especially for women and children, are being set in the range of \$4,000 to \$15,000. These must be paid in full for the persons to be released. The work of the lawyers is falling under the radar as family detention centers are being moved further away from large cities to keep these detentions out of the news. Reporters reserve most of the day to travel to, interview persons and feature stories from the detention sites.



## Selective Purchasing Opportunities:

The group also discussed opportunities and suggestions for making purchasing choices that are aligned with coalition values.

*Minutes submitted by Rose Marie Stallbaumer, OSB*



On November 13, 2014, women religious from more than 100 communities in the United States and Canada met for a first-ever national conference in Cleveland, Ohio. The event, **“Entering the Transforming Future: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry in the Coming Age of Religious Life,”** was sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). This brought together over 150 working in the ministry

of justice and peace. Participants met to strengthen their work on critical global and national issues, exchange innovative strategies and best practices to respond to issues that impact creation, establish a network for intentional collaboration, and share prayer, education and action resources.

Keynote speaker Marie Dennis, co-president of Pax Christi International, commented, “Effective peacemaking acknowledges the interdependence of communities around the world.” Sr. Ann Scholz, SSND, Associate Director for Social Mission for LCWR, observed, “Women religious take seriously the gospel call to stand with those who are marginalized and forgotten... We remain faithful to the call to transform structures that oppress and to build the reign of God.”

The culmination of the conference was the group’s decision to strengthen collaboration around justice and peace issues. Under the title **“Justice Conference of Women Religious,”** the group has called for networking, using existing tools and developing new tools and strategies to create momentum in the ministry of justice and peace.





# 2015 Shareholder Resolutions

**This is a list of 2015 resolutions filed and our members who filed:**

## **AMERICAN EXPRESS**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore-Emmanuel Monastery

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

## **APPLE COMPUTER**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure (withdrawn by filer)***

Congregation of Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

## **CAPITAL ONE FINANCIAL**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **CATERPILLAR**

### ***Human Rights-Amend & Monitor Policy***

Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica

Benedictine Sisters Virginia

## **CHESAPEAKE ENERGY**

### ***Director with Environmental Expertise- Fracking***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **CHEVRON**

### ***Adopt Quantitative GHG Reduction Targets***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

### ***Quantitative Risk Management: Shale Energy Operations***

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore - Emmanuel Monastery

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

Congregation of Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

## **COMCAST**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **CONOCOPHILLIPS**

### ***Risks Associated With Rail Transportation of Crude Oil***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore-Emmanuel Monastery

## **DOW CHEMICAL**

### ***Herbicide-Resistant Seeds & Grower Compliance***

*(withdrawn by filer)*

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

## **DuPONT**

### ***Herbicide-Resistant Seeds & Grower Compliance***

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore-Emmanuel Monastery

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

## **EBAY**

### ***Board Diversity***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **EXXON MOBIL**

### ***Adopt Quantitative GHG Reduction Targets***

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore-Emmanuel Monastery

### ***Director with Environmental Expertise-Fracking***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

### ***Risk Associated with Rail Transportation of Crude Oil***

Benedictine Sisters Charitable Trust, Boerne, Texas

## **GILEAD SCIENCES**

### ***Sustainability reporting***

Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica

## **GOOGLE, INC**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters, of Baltimore-Emmanuel Monastery

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MACHINES CORP. (IBM)**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters Charitable Trust, Boerne, Texas

Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

## **MCDONALD'S**

### ***Non-Therapeutic Use of Antibiotics in Animals***

Congregation of Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, Texas

## **OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM**

### ***Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **SOUTHERN Company**

### ***Adopt Quantitative GHG Reduction Targets***

Benedictine Sisters of Charitable Trust, Boerne, Texas

## **TIME WARNER**

### ***Monitor Company's Smoking in Movies Policies***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## **VALERO ENERGY**

### ***Adopt Quantitative GHG Reduction Targets***

Benedictine Sisters Charitable Trust, Boerne, Texas

## **WALGREENS**

### ***Link Executive Compensation to Sustainability Performance***

Benedictine Sisters - Mount St. Scholastica

## Updates on Issues Which Members Pursue

### FCC RULING ON NET NEUTRALITY:

Members of the coalition identified Net Neutrality as an important part of shareholder proceedings. As defined by Wikipedia, network or Internet neutrality “is the principle that Internet service providers and governments should treat all data on the Internet equally, not discriminating or charging differently by user, content, site, platform, application, type of attached equipment, and modes of communication.” Coined by Tim Wu, a Columbia University media law professor in 2003, the term identifies how proponents of net neutrality recognize the potential dangers of a closed Internet. These include creating web standards that favor certain users and government entities, artificially degrading some Internet services, and filtering out user content by Internet providers.

In 2012, the Benedictine Sisters of Atchison, Kansas, as well as Pan de Vida Monastery, Torreon, Mexico, filed a shareholder resolution with AT&T asking to preserve Net Neutrality. That resolution garnered 5.9% of the vote. It was re-filed in 2013, with seven additional co-filers including the Benedictine Sisters of Bristow, Virginia, and the Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, Texas. The resolution was later withdrawn, in part because the FCC was expected to rule on the issue that year.

In May 2014, the FCC decided to consider two options: permitting fast and slow broadband lanes (thereby compromising net neutrality) or reclassifying broadband as a telecommunication service (thereby preserving net neutrality). Finally, on a 3 to 2 party line vote, the FCC ruled in favor of net neutrality on February 26, 2015, by reclassifying broadband as a common carrier. According to the International New York Times article by Rebecca R. Ruiz and Steve Lohr (Feb. 26, 2015), the FCC voted “to regulate broadband Internet service as a public utility.” Included in the FCC order are “provisions to protect consumer privacy and to ensure that Internet service is available to people with disabilities and in remote areas.”

### HOME DEPOT:

Religious shareholders and allies have filed a shareholder resolution with Home Depot since 1998, asking that Home Depot report publically on its EEO-1 data. Over the years, the resolution has consistently received 20-25% of the vote. The company released the data in 2001 and for a few years, if shareholders requested it. Then, the company stopped – without explanation.

For the 2015 proxy season, the religious shareholders – on purpose – did not file the resolution. Some strategies that will be followed:

- ✦ That we give the company some further suggestions about their current report on Diversity and Inclusion.
- ✦ That we discuss how other corporations have made the decision to implement this type of resolution and have more of a culture of transparency.
- ✦ That we discuss the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)-type reporting where companies establish benchmarks and report against those benchmarks. This often includes reporting/acknowledging problems which exist and moving toward a remedy.

As mentioned in a March 22, 2013 conference call with Home Depot, Sr. Susan Mika stated “that because of the lack of disclosure of the EEO-1 data, we cannot tell if Home Depot has the **worst record** and does not want it to be revealed OR if it has the **best record** and is worried that other companies will be envious.”

### NON-THERAPEUTIC USE OF ANTIBIOTICS IN ANIMALS:

Religious shareholders have been dialoguing with the McDonald’s Corporation since 2002 on its use of meats treated with non-therapeutic antibiotics. In March 2015, McDonald’s indicated a breakthrough by announcing that its “new menu sourcing initiatives including only sourcing chicken raised without antibiotics that are important to human medicine.”

A review of the **BE IT RESOLVED** portion of the resolution filed by the Congregation of Benediction Sisters of Boerne, Texas, McDonald’s USA was asked to “prohibit the use of antibiotics in classes of drugs used in human medicine for purposes other than treatment or non-routine control of veterinarian-diagnosed illness” in the **poultry** supply chain. Additionally, “for suppliers of **meat** other than poultry,” the company was challenged to “phase in a prohibition by 2018 on the use of antibiotics in classes of drugs used in human medicine for purposes other than treatment or non-routine control of veterinarian-diagnosed illness.” Although the move by McDonald’s represents a shift towards the shareholders’ expectations, there is still much work to be done.

## IMMIGRANT DETENTION: One Woman's Story

*The following is information condensed from an article by Melissa Fletcher Stoeltje, a reporter for The San Antonio Express-News, January 18, 2015, printed with the approval of the newspaper.*



Alejandra and her son Stevonn are immigrants from Honduras who have recently been released from the Karnes County Residential Center — a detention facility for undocumented immigrant women and children. Their journey to the United States had its roots in the military coup in Honduras, where Alejandra was an outspoken member of the leftist Libre party. She and family members were attacked by members of the new regime, and she received threats of rape and death because Stevonn's father refused to pay a gang's extortion fee.

This past June, Alejandra — fearing for her family's safety — began the arduous and treacherous trip to El Norte. On the way, she was kidnapped by a drug cartel in Mexico. There, she was forced to pack cocaine for the cartel with Stevonn by her side, his mouth taped shut so his cries wouldn't draw attention to their location. Alejandra's mother borrowed \$3,000 and gave it to her to pay a smuggler who guaranteed her and Stevonn's safe trip to America. Riding a train that immigrants have named "La Bestia — The Beast," they got as far as Tampico, Mexico. The smuggler, Alejandra and

Stevonn got on board a bus for a daylong trip to a safe hotel, but drug cartel members stopped the bus and kidnapped about 20 men, women and children. Stripped and searched for money, they were then demanded to provide the names of family members from whom the cartel could extort another \$3,100 for the hostages' safe release. Alejandra's parents had already taken out the loan to get her to Mexico, so she was forced to work alongside other immigrants packing cocaine and marijuana. While there, she witnessed a most brutal murder of a 14-year old boy, a pregnant woman and an older man from a rival drug gang. Stevonn and Alejandra were eventually rescued in a daring raid by the Mexican police.

Alejandra agreed to testify against the cartel, but she and Stevonn spent the next month in a Mexican detention center, where inmates lived in filth and ate rotten food. A sympathetic official there allowed Alejandra to contact a friend in Bryan, Texas, who sent money to her to ride the bus to Monterrey. Another smuggler placed her in a warehouse near the Texas border town of Roma, requiring another \$1,500 to grant her freedom to cross the Rio Grande. She carried Stevonn through chest-high water before daylight to "come to America." The smuggler gave her \$5 and sent her to a nearby McDonald's to wait for him. Instead, a mud-covered Alejandra surrendered to a Border Patrol agent who was driving by. For the next five days, Alejandra and her young son stayed at a detention center in McAllen known as the "ice house" because of its extreme cold and lack of warm blankets.

Finally, they arrived at the Karnes City facility. It took three months for her to convince authorities that there was a three-pronged "credible fear" that her deportation back to Honduras could result in her death: her political persecution there, the danger posed by the gang from her Honduran neighborhood, and the possibility of retaliation from the Mexican drug cartel that kidnapped her. Once she passed the credible fear interview, she had to post an \$8,500 bond (provided by RAICES) to be released.

She now lives with family in New England awaiting her court hearing to apply for asylum. When asked about her dreams for living in America, she told the reporter she "just wants a life without fear for herself and her son."

Alejandra says that she wants to become a lawyer some day so she can help other women at the detention facility in Karnes City.

### **RAICES Bond Fund**

Consider making a donation to this fund, which provides bond money for detainees. Checks can be sent to:

### **RAICES**

1305 N. Flores St.  
San Antonio, TX 78212  
210-226-7722

# Immigration

## “MOTHERS FIRST” — An Eyewitness Account

For three months, I served as the coordinator for the Karnes City Immigrant Family Pro Bono Project. In this role, I represented women and children refugees seeking asylum who were detained in a government facility in Karnes City, Texas. These families were fleeing horrific gang violence and domestic violence in their home countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

I found it incredibly disturbing that our government considered these women and children a national security threat and felt the need to detain them after they had experienced such trauma in their home countries. Day after day, I met countless women who told me harrowing stories about escaping physical, emotional and sexual abuse at the hands of their spouses; fleeing from violent gang members threatening them with death if they did not meet their demands for extortion payments; and witnessing loved ones tortured or killed before their eyes. The pain and anguish these women felt was genuine and I could tell that being detained only reinforced and heightened their trauma.



But, beyond the stories of pain and suffering, it was the little things I saw daily that equally inspired me. Every day, I saw women acting as mothers first, and putting aside their own pain and discomfort, in order to put on a brave face for their children and maintain a sense of normalcy in spite of the living conditions. I was completely blown away by their resilience, strength, and bravery. Every day, inspired by their courage, I did my best to be a source of comfort and strength, and to let them know that someone was there for them, too.

*Lauren B. Tenness*

**Akin Gump — New York Office**

Two recent articles highlighting Federal immigration actions represent small successes in the work.

**Judge Orders Stop to Detention of Families at Borders**, by Julia Preston, [International New York Times](#) Feb. 20, 2015

Judge James E. Boasberg of the Federal District court for the District of Columbia ordered the Obama administration to stop the practice of detaining most women and children caught crossing the border illegally. The ruling “invalidates a central piece of the administration’s strategy to curb illegal immigration across the Southwest border.” The judge’s preliminary injunction “barred the administration from detaining migrants solely ‘for the purpose of deterring future immigration.’ He ordered immigration authorities to consider each asylum case to determine if migrants would present risks to public safety” if released.

**Bond granted for Karnes detainees** by Jason Buch, [San Antonio Express-News](#) Feb. 26, 2015

Halted by a Federal judge last week from the practice of not issuing bonds to immigrant women and children, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency has reversed the policy. “Lawyers showing up to Immigration Judge Glenn McPhaul’s court ... were surprised to learn that ICE had given their clients bonds between \$4,000 and \$7,5000.” Before the ruling, “ICE was refusing to release women and children on bonds who had already been found to have a credible fear of persecution in their home countries as a deterrent, saying it needed to protect national security by discouraging others from illegally immigrating.”



Judge Boasberg wrote that the detention policy administered by the Department of Homeland Security harms asylum-seeking families from Central America “in myriad ways, and as various mental health experts have testified, it is particularly harmful to minor children.”

Jonathan Ryan, Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) director, is quoted as saying the ruling may not help the women “because the bonds they are setting are still prohibitively high.”



## Environmental Issues

Our monastic calling reminds us that each of us must treat all things with the same care and respect as the sacred vessels of the altar. [RB 31:10] Recent media presentations continue to draw attention to why the work of caring for the earth is at such a critical juncture. Links to the articles are included for further study and review.

**The New York Times:** “Pentagon Says Global Warming Presents Immediate Security Threat,”

by Coral Davenport (October 13, 2014) <http://nyti.ms/1rqPnjQ>.

In this article Ms. Davenport draws from a Pentagon report “asserting decisively that climate change poses an immediate threat to national security, with increased risks from terrorism, infections, disease, global poverty and food shortages.” Former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel is quoted as stating, “The loss of glaciers will strain water supplies in several areas of our hemisphere. Destruction and devastation from hurricanes can sow the seeds for instability.” He went on to say, “we have already seen these events unfold in other regions of the world, and there are worrying signs that climate change will create serious risks to stability in our own hemisphere. Two of the worst droughts in the Americas have occurred in the past 10 years.” Ms. Davenport concludes that Mr. Hagel’s “increasingly prominent role in pushing for a new global climate change treaty is a sign of how urgent the issue has become.”



**Tulsa World:** “Shifting Ground: Surge in Earthquakes Has Oklahomans Taking Sides in Search for Causes,” (Feb. 8, 2015); “Seismic Signs: Scientists Say State Should Heed Earthquake Warnings,” (Feb. 9, 2015); and “Quakes create insurance problem,” (Feb. 10, 2015) by Ziva Branstetter and Curtis Killman <http://tulsaworld.com/quakedebate>

This three-part series presents clear and concise data, includes expert testimony, and raises questions and concerns about the impact of fracking on daily life in Oklahoma. Excerpts include:

- Oklahoma had more magnitude 3.0 earthquakes (585) in 2014 than in the previous 35 years combined.
- Since 2010, Oklahoma’s annual volume of oil-field wastewater increased 35% to 1.1 billion barrels — equal to the amount of oil 576 petroleum supertanker ships could hold.
- OSU Geology professor Todd Hulihan states, “In terms of the peer-reviewed data sets, I don’t know of a [research] paper that’s not attributing our seismicity to injection.”
- Grant County, near the Kansas border, had 1,071 earthquakes of all magnitudes last year, more than one for each of the 990 residents of Medford, the county seat.
- The Oklahoma Corporation Commission created a “traffic light” system in 2013 to monitor the pressure inside injection wells within a six-mile radius of any magnitude 4.0 earthquake. This system issued 18 “yellow light” warnings when certain seismic conditions were present, and two active wells were issued “red light” warnings and were forced to close. “The commission permits, oversees and inspects wastewater injection wells. Because the federal law was passed before scientists widely understood such wells could trigger earthquakes, the law’s requirements relate only to protecting water sources and not earthquakes. According to the EPA, most oil and gas injection wells are in Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and California.”
- In January 2015, Oklahoma recorded 190 earthquakes of magnitude 2.5 or higher.
- At least four companies offering earthquake insurance in Oklahoma have excluded coverage for earthquakes triggered by hydraulic fracturing or wastewater-injection wells.



**The Corporate Examiner** “Praying for Rain in San Antonio, Texas” by Anna Falkenberg and Sr. Susan Mika, Jan.2015

Texas is experiencing one of the five worst droughts in the past 500 years. The data that follow illustrates “first-time” realities identified on the website of the Edwards Aquifer [San Antonio’s principal water source]

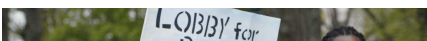
- J-17 starts year at lowest level since the 1950’s, at just above 740’ (**Jan. 2014**). The lowest reading ever recorded was Aug.1956 at 612.9’ Four of the last eight summers were hotter and drier than the worst of the 1950s drought.
- The Edwards Aquifer Authority declares Stage IV water restrictions for the first time ever (**Aug. 2014**). These restrictions require pumpers (cities and businesses) to reduce water usage by up to 40% of normal levels.
- J-17 level triggers first-ever implementation of the Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program for 2015 (**Oct. 2014**). This program compensates farmers to suspend agricultural irrigation. <http://www.iccr.org/praying-rain-san-antonio-texas-0>



## Wages - Walmart

Beginning in April 2015, most hourly-wage Walmart employees will receive additional income when the company raises its minimum wage to \$9 an hour. Although the amount of increase is not sufficient to bring hourly employees above the poverty line, ICCR issued a press release on February 19, 2015, entitled, **“Walmart Shareholders See Decision to Raise Workers’ Wages as Positive Step Forward.”** ICCR indicated that its members “were heartened by Walmart’s announcement today of measures it is taking to improve both wages and opportunities for advancement for its 1.3 million U.S. employees.”

Follow-up editorials in the International New York Times weigh in on the significance of the company's decision. **“Walmart Gives a Raise,”** by the Editorial Board, Feb. 20, 2015, attributes the increase to be Walmart's “attempt to stem employee turnover and to respond to pressure for higher wages from politicians, labor groups and employees.” The editorial board also states, “And raises at Walmart could well lead to raises elsewhere as competitive pressures force Target, Home Depot and other low-wage retailers to follow suit.” The editorial concludes that a profitable corporation like Walmart could easily afford a much larger increase in pay, “But it is very unlikely to do that voluntarily, without government action,” and since the Republican-controlled Congress is not likely to do so, President Obama “must continue to move forward by executive action” to boost minimum wages.



to have didn't evolve as a result of impersonal market forces [*supply and demand*] — it was created by political action, and in a brief period of time.” America in 1940 was an unequal society. However, what economists Claudia Goldin and Robert Margo labeled the **Great Compression** dramatically reduced disparities in income by 1950, which “didn’t go away as soon as the war was over.” This resulted in a strong middle class, full employment and “unprecedented economic growth.”

higher productivity.” <http://nyti.ms/1ChbEvC>



## Updates in our Ministry

**Mount St. Scholastica Monastery, Atchison, Kansas:** The impact of climate change has brought about an international discussion concerning investing in companies that utilize fossil fuel. The Benedictine community of Atchison has resolved to redirect its portfolio to become one that is “fossil-fuel free.” Here is their statement, approved by the Finance Committee in October of 2014:

Mount St. Scholastica strives to work for a sustainable world and has chosen to divest our portfolio of the destructive fossil fuel sector. MSS instructs our investment managers to divest our portfolio from any current holdings of the “Carbon Underground 200” and to make no further purchases of any of the “Carbon Underground 200.” These top 200 fossil fuels companies are listed at <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/the-carbon-underground-2014/>.

Mount St. Scholastica further instructs Merrill Lynch to transfer from the manager accounts to a custodial account a small amount of stock in the following companies for the sole purpose of participating in shareholder resolutions with these companies to work toward greater responsibility and care of our earth by these companies: Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil, Occidental Petroleum, Phillips 66, and Marathon Petroleum. The transfer of these shares shall be made prior to instructing the managers to divest our portfolio of the “Carbon Underground 200.” The custodial account shall hold enough stock to meet the minimum of \$2000 SEC requirement for filing a shareholder resolution.

We further direct our managers to seek to invest in companies involved in the development of clean energy to the extent consistent with their existing investment mandate.

Approved by Finance Committee 10.15.14

Sr. Rose Marie Stallbaumer, OSB, provided this statement as a follow-up to the Mount St. Scholastica decision to redirect its investment portfolio to become fossil-fuel free: “The Benedictine Sisters in Atchison have divested their investment portfolio of the ‘Carbon Underground 200’ fossil fuel companies, with the exception of six oil companies.” She explained that the community maintained minimal investment amounts in those companies to be able to remain active in filing future shareholder resolutions.

After consulting with the monastery’s investment custodian, the finance committee believes that this divestment will have no major impact on their investment earnings. One of the portfolio’s managers was not able to follow the directive because of how heavily dependent on fossil fuels his portfolio was, and the manager was subsequently dropped from the Mount St. Scholastica portfolio.

**Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Erie, Pennsylvania:** Members of the monastery continue to hold monthly prayer vigils until an immigration law is enacted that protects the dignity of the person and recognizes the sanctity of the family unit.

**From the Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore:** Sr. Patricia Kirk reports that Emmanuel Monastery used an Oblate meeting to “focus on resources and how better to use what we have.” The Earth Day theme, “Reuse, Refuse, Recycle, Reduce,” was a central part of the reflection and discussion on environmental issues. Sr. Patricia sent out a packet for the Oblates to view ahead of time. This included a copy of a talk given at the annual Archdiocesan Social Ministry Convocation by Fr. Jacek Orzechowski OFM, “*Care of the Earth, Care of the Poor – Listening to Pope Francis*,” to prepare for the discussion. Other components of the day of reflection included an “Earth Stewardship Survey,” as well as the Lenten Carbon Fast 2014 calendar compiled by Interfaith Power & Light and a suggestion sheet for energy savings. Next, the Oblates watched a DVD, **Passion of the Earth**, created by the Cottonwood, Idaho monastery. The day ended with “*The Sun Come Up*,” which shows the human face of climate change.

The community extends a regular invitation to celebrate Vespers followed by 30 minutes of quiet prayer for peace. Upcoming dates are April 14, May 12, and June 9, 2015. The monastery website draws attention to the work of seeking peace with two quotations from the Rule: “Your way of acting must be different from the world’s way. Never give a hollow greeting of peace or turn away when someone needs your love.” (RB 4) From the Prologue are the words, “Let peace be your quest and aim.”



## For More Information

### *The Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment*

P. O. Box 200423 San Antonio, TX 78220 Phone: 210-348-6704

Members of the Benedictine CRI work to influence corporate practices on issues relating to basic human rights. Seventeen monasteries now comprise the Coalition. For further information about the coalition's work, please complete the following and mail it to the coalition at the address above:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
MONASTERY (or other affiliation) \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Question or Area of Interest? \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Mission of the Benedictine CRI**

*Recognizing the directive from the Rule of St. Benedict that distribution should be made to each according to need, the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment works to build a world in which corporate policies and practices reflect just and equitable distribution of resources for the common good.*

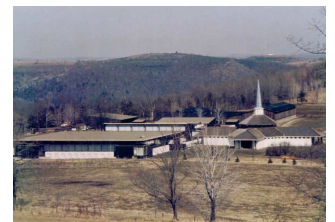
#### **WELCOME TO OUR THREE NEW COALITION MEMBERS:**

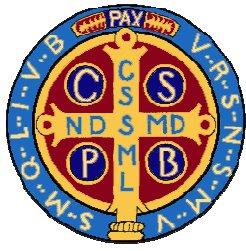
**Subiaco Abbey**, Subiaco, Arkansas — Abbot Jerome Kodell describes the reasons his monastery has joined the coalition in these words, "We have few opportunities to influence the policies and directives of large organizations in our world, and we feel blessed to be able in this way to support the work of those dedicated to this ministry. Abbot Jerome and Glenn Constantino are the coalition's Subiaco representatives."



**Monasterio de San Benito**, Mexico, D.F. — Prioress Sr. Josephine Markiewicz will represent her community in the work of the coalition. She comments, "We joined the coalition to be part of a plan to fight against injustice in the world, which is so rampant. It is important to join other Benedictines in working to bring about a just and peaceful world."

**Mount Saviour Monastery**, Pine City, New York — The monastery's coalition representatives are Fr. Joseph Gabriel Cusimano and Brother Pierre. Brother Pierre writes, "With our small number, we are not going out much but we are concerned for the welfare of the company we invest in. My biggest complaint is the compensation for (corporate) officers. It is outrageous, to say the least. One day, I was in France on a tour. A former president of Corning Glass was with us. I brought up the topic of compensation; I quickly realized it was an untouchable subject."





Members of the Benedictine CRI work to influence corporate practices on issues relating to basic human rights.

Seventeen monasteries now make up the Coalition, whose goals include:

- ✚ to promote Benedictine values in the day-to-day conduct of corporations and government entities.
- ✚ to educate members of the coalition and their affiliates about issues and actions relating to corporate accountability and corporate responsibility.
- ✚ to effectively change corporate policies through Strategies, such as filing shareholder resolutions and dialoguing with companies on issues of social justice.
- ✚ to utilize the strength of networks formed to promote responsible investment on local, national and global levels.



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Linda Murphy

## Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment

P.O. Box 200423 San Antonio, TX 78220

### 2015 Meeting Dates

#### National Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) Meetings:

June 1-5 in San Antonio, TX  
Side trips to Mexico and  
Eagle Ford (Shale  
Fracking Area).

September 28-October 2  
In New York City, NY.



#### Resource Center for Religious Institutes (RCRI) Meeting :

October 27-30 in Orlando,  
Florida

*When power,  
luxury and  
money become  
idols, they take  
priority over the  
need for a fair  
distribution of  
wealth. Our  
consciences thus  
need to be  
converted to  
justice, equality,  
simplicity and  
sharing.*

**Pope Francis**  
**11/26/13**