



Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment

August 2016

Issue 18

Our Drop of Water in the Sea of Corporate Responsibility

There is always so much happening in the corporate world which affects us on a daily basis. We pause to reflect on the actions of our Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment (CRI) members. We assess our actions in view of the larger corporate responsibility picture. Our world continues to change dramatically and we respond to those changes, while seeking to maintain our Benedictine sense of balance and trust in God. We go forward—full speed ahead, in spite of obstacles.

◆ In the realm of shareholder activity, the votes for the shareholder resolutions we file, make an impact to show the company that there are many who care about the issues facing our times not just company profit. Three resolutions in 2016 voting received a majority vote.

◆ In speaking with companies together as a group, we have an impact far beyond what an individual or one monastery alone might have. The research and input that is needed is great. Companies often comment that our religious groups of shareholders present some of the most thoughtful and thoughtful questions they receive. We challenge the company to think long-term, not just the next quarter.

◆ When one large company makes a change in policy, we see that others in the field follow. We asked companies to consider phasing out certain chemicals (Walmart and Johnson & Johnson). We asked other companies to phase out antibiotics used by humans in their chicken, beef and pork supply chains (McDonald's, Wendy's, Subway, Chipotle). We asked companies to reveal what their lobbying dollars are funding so we can see where inconsistencies might lie (multiple companies). We have asked companies to take responsibility for their actions (ExxonMobil and Chevron on climate change and fracking).

◆ In computer-dependent world, the decision whether the internet is a luxury or a utility has implications that will affect us every day. It seems the U.S. Supreme Court will make the legal determination.

◆ Our Pope Francis calls us to "... realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach. It must integrate questions of justice in the debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor." (Laudato Si, #49) In April, he brings 12 Syrian refugees back to Italy. "It is a drop of water in the sea. But after this drop, the sea will never be the same," he said, quoting Mother Theresa.

◆ In the life of our monasteries, there are actions which we take daily which will have a lasting impact on our world and our preferred future. We pray ... We act on multiple levels through our ministries to make a difference in our local areas and beyond. We believe our drop of water in the sea will influence the next seven generations.

We thank you for your continued support of these efforts.

Inside This Issue:

| | |
|--|---------|
| ◆ Votes on Shareholder Resolutions | Pg. 2 |
| ◆ How to File a Shareholder Resolution | Pg. 3 |
| ◆ Shareholder Meetings | Pg. 4-5 |
| ◆ Family Detention and Fracking Update | Pg. 6-7 |
| ◆ Laudato Si Reflections | Pg. 8 |
| ◆ Benedictine Volunteers Visit | Pg. 9 |
| ◆ Updates—Walmart, J&J, Climate News | Pg. 10 |
| ◆ Updates from Monasteries | Pg. 11 |
| ◆ Members/Donors | Pg. 12 |

2016 Shareholders Resolutions

ALPHABET-GOOGLE, INC. -- *withdrawn*

Human Rights Risk Assessment
Monasterio Pan de Vida, Torreon

AMERICAN EXPRESS -- *withdrawn (company agreed to expanded lobbying disclosures)*

Lobbying Expenditures – Climate Policy
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

A T & T -- 33.89%

Lobbying Expenditures – Climate Policy
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Monasterio Pan de Vida, Torreon

CHEVRON – 8.8% (Greenhouse) 31.0% (Shale)

Greenhouse Gas Reductions – Science Based Targets
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Shale Operations – Fracking Quantitative Risk Mgmt.
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore
Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

COCA-COLA – *withdrawn/greatly expanded disclosure*

Report on Renewable Energy Goals
Primary Filer: Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

COMCAST -- 16.7%

Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica

CONOCOPHILLIPS -- 24.8%

Review Public Policy Advocacy on Climate Change
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore

DUKE ENERGY – 34.3%

Lobbying Expenditures – Climate Policy
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

EXXONMOBIL – 18.5%

Acknowledge Moral Imperative to Limit Global Warming
Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

GENERAL ELECTRIC – *omitted by the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC)*

Hudson River Cleanup
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

The GEO GROUP – 18.0%

Human Rights Policy Implementation and Performance
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica

HOME DEPOT – 29.99%

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO-1) Report
Primary Filer: Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

MCDONALD'S – 22.0%

Phase Out Routine Use of Antibiotics Used
Primary Filer: Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX

MERCK – 5.7%

Safe Disposal of Prescription Drugs to Prevent Water Pollution
Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore

OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM – 27.0%

Review Public Policy Advocacy on Climate Change
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica

PEPSICO – 8.88%

Pesticide Pollution to Curtail Pollinator Decline
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

PHILLIPS 66 – *withdrawn (dialogue)*

Greenhouse Gas Reductions – Science Based Targets
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

SOUTHERN COMPANY—34.0%

Business Plan for 2°C Warming Scenario
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

SPECTRA ENERGY -- 30.3%

Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure
Benedictine Sisters of Virginia

TIME WARNER – *withdrawn (further dialogue)*

Fostering Healthy Nutrition for Children (licensing of brand characters in movies and merchandise)
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica

WALMART – *withdrawn (company agreed to disclosure)*

Lobbying Expenditures – Climate Policy
Benedictine Sisters, Boerne, TX

WALT DISNEY COMPANY – 31.86%

Lobbying Expenditures Disclosure
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica

WHOLE FOODS MARKET – *withdrawn (agreement reached)*

Impact of Palm Oil on Deforestation and Human Rights
Benedictine Sisters – Mount St. Scholastica
Monasterio Pan de Vida, Torreon

How to File a Shareholder Resolution

In 2017:

The guidelines for filing a shareholder resolution that would meet the criteria of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) are specific.

These include:

- ✕ An institution or individual must own a minimum of \$2,000 worth of shares.
- ✕ An institution or individual must hold the stock continuously for a minimum of a year in order to file a resolution.
- ✕ The stock must be held through the date of the annual shareholder meeting.
- ✕ Each resolution must be written in 500 words or less.
- ✕ Filed resolutions must receive a minimum of 3% of the vote by all of the shareholders the first year in order to be brought back the following year. During the second year, the resolution must receive 6% of the vote and in the third year, at least 10% of the vote. In the fourth year and every year after that, the resolution must receive 10% to continue.

If the resolution does not receive the needed vote or is not presented at the annual shareholder meeting, we cannot raise that issue on the proxy ballot for the next three years.

+++++

During these three decades, there have been challenges to the 1934 SEC rules for filing shareholder resolutions.

In 1982, you could own one share of stock for any length of time and file a resolution.

In 1985, the religious groups sued the SEC for violating its own rules. The SEC had mandated that resolutions receive 5% the first year, 8% the second year and 10% the third year. This had not been put out for the 60 day comment period. A judge ruled in the favor of the religious groups and the voting percentages were rolled back to 3%, 6% and 10% the next year. The rule went into effect that one had to own \$1,000 worth of the shares for one year continuously.

In 1999, there was a challenge by the SEC as to whether or not such topics as maquiladora wages should be raised on the proxy ballots. The SEC ruled that maquiladora wages could **not** be raised on the ballot. The topic of wages (labor-related issues) was considered “ordinary business” and was the purview of management. One had to own \$2,000 worth of the shares for one year continuously.

In 2004, there was a proposal by the SEC to raise the needed votes on resolutions to 8% the first year, 15% the second and 30% the third year. The SEC received 38,000 responses to these changes—by letters, faxes, emails. The SEC backed off. The rule for votes remains the same as the 1934 rules: 3% the first year, 6% the second year and 10% the third year.

This is one example of perseverance and raising our voices to be heard. The interfaith community and its allies were persistent in pushing back through lawsuits, briefs, alerts, letters, faxes and emails to preserve the right to shareholder engagement.

2016 Proxy Season Progress at a Glance:

| |
|--|
| 102 of 270 of the ICCR resolutions filed went to a vote by the shareholders |
| 82 resolutions have been withdrawn, nearly all due to agreements |
| Companies challenged just 15 of our resolutions at the SEC, 6 of which we won. |
| The average vote has been 24.14% |
| 53 resolutions received votes of 25% or greater |
| 13 resolutions received votes of 40% or greater |
| 3 resolutions received votes of 50% or greater |

McDonald's Meeting

For the 2015 proxy season, the Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, Texas filed a shareholder resolution with McDonald's, asking the company to update their 2003 Global Policy on Food Animals. McDonald's did publish an updated policy and the Sisters withdrew the resolution.

For the 2016 proxy season, the resolution was re-written and re-filed, asking McDonald's to update the 2015 policy to prohibit the use of antibiotics important to human medicine globally in the meat supply chain (including chicken, beef and pork), for purposes other than disease treatment or non-routine control of veterinarian-diagnosed illness. From the September 2015 press release on the 2016 filing, there were at least 83 unique stories in the U.S. media and 33 in international media. The interest in this topic is great.

McDonald's declined to commit to a timeline for pork and beef. At the shareholders' meeting, Sr. Mary Ann O'Ryan from St. Scholastica Monastery (Chicago) represented the filers and presented the resolution which received **22%** of the vote. This vote was very high, as the resolution needed 3% of the shareholders to agree in the first year. The chart below represents some actions taken by various companies:



| | |
|--|---|
| CKE (Carl's Jr. Parent Company) | All-Natural Burgers, beef patty made from grass-fed, free-range cattle, raised with no added hormones, antibiotics, or steroids. |
| Chipotle Mexican Grill | Antibiotic free |
| Panera Bread | All of their chicken, turkey, and pork is raised without antibiotics |
| Subway | By the end of 2016, all of their chicken will be raised without antibiotics, turkey by the end of 2019, and all beef and pork by 2025 |
| Chick-fil-A | Their goal is to remove all of the antibiotics from its chicken supply chain by 2019. |
| McDonald's | <p>From an August 2016 press release from the Company:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🌟 Menu offerings free of artificial preservatives: Our new Chicken McNuggets, omelet-style eggs, scrambled eggs served on our breakfast platters and pork sausage patty no longer contain artificial preservatives, and still do not contain artificial colors or flavors. 🌟 Antibiotics commitment: We have met our commitment nearly a year ahead of schedule to serve chicken not treated with antibiotics important to human medicine. 🌟 Removing high fructose corn syrup (HFCS): We have removed HFCS from the buns on our national food menu that roll out this month. |
| Wendy's | Will start using chicken without antibiotics in 2017. |

RE/MAX Holdings ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS' MEETING

Dalit Baum, with the San Francisco office of the American Friends Service Committee, attended the RE/MAX shareholders' meeting in Denver, using the proxy of one of our members. Dalit is an Israeli researcher who wanted to ask questions about property rights at the Israeli settlements in occupied territories as being a risk for buyers and investors. Her report offers an insight into how the shareholder proposal process unfolded.

Dalit shared the meeting, scheduled to begin at 3:00 at a large hotel near the RE/MAX headquarters, was held in a small hotel room with only 29 persons – including RE/MAX staff, in attendance. She was then ushered into the meeting accompanied by three police officers. A revised meeting agenda was distributed that

eliminated any time for questions/answers/comments. This agenda said (large printed warning) - Any videos or photography during the meeting were forbidden.



The CEO, brought in through a back door with the rest of the board, went through the main points, allowed a representative from the Heartland Institute to present their shareholder resolution, called for remote casting of votes, and adjourned the meeting. The entire shareholder meeting took **eleven** minutes!!

Hopeful Signs

BOEING AND HYATT Sr. Mary Ann O’Ryan OSB attended the Boeing Shareholders’ Meeting at the Field Museum in Chicago on May 2, 2016. Resolutions included: more transparency as to money spent on lobbying received an 18% vote, for allowing special shareholders meetings received 37% vote, for separate CEO and board chair received 31% vote, and to stop selling weapons to Israel received 5% vote. Other comments concerned human rights in the supply chain. She was admitted this year to the Hyatt Hotels Corporation shareholders’ meeting on May 11, 2016 at the Standard Club in downtown Chicago. There were no resolutions except those routinely proposed by the board, concerning board membership, auditors, and executive compensation.

RULINGS ON NET NEUTRALITY

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 Boerne, Texas. The resolution was later withdrawn, in part because the Federal Communications Commission (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.”

Continued Struggle: Utility vs. Luxury

In June 2016, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that high-speed internet can be defined as a utility. The decision affirmed the government’s view that broadband is as essential as the phone and power and that it should be available to **all** Americans, rather than a luxury that does not need close government supervision. There has been a decade-long struggle over the need for regulation to ensure that web users get full and equal access to all content online.

The cable and telecom industries have signaled their intent to challenge this type of decision. AT&T signaled, “We have always expected this issue to be decided by the Supreme Court” and they will continue to fight. (NYT, June 14, 2016)

This question of net neutrality affects all of us who use the internet—everyday, everywhere.

VICTORY On March 29, 2016, CLARCOR Inc. hosted its Annual General Meeting, at which a shareholder proposal for environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting received 61% support from shareholders. CLARCOR joins a small minority of companies to ever experience a majority vote in support of an environmental or social resolution. According to proxy advisor ISS, just one environmental or social proposal passed out of 474 submitted in 2015.

HOME DEPOT PROPOSAL RECEIVES 29.99% At the annual shareholders’ meeting of The Home Depot, held May 19, 2016 in Atlanta, Lyn Conley of the Unitarian Universalist Association presented a shareholder proposal on behalf of the Benedictine Sisters of Atchison, Boerne and Bristow, seeking a board review of the company’s policies regarding disclosure of equal employment opportunity data (EEO-1) and a public reporting of diversity issues. EEO-1 data is routinely collected by all companies which have government contracts. The proposal asks this routine collection of data be made public.

Citing that the company has paid out more than \$100 million in discrimination lawsuit settlements over the past 16 years (while the resolution has been filed), Ms. Conley urged shareholders to adopt the proposal in order to identify successful diversity efforts and effectively measure diversity throughout the company.

A key line in Ms. Conley’s presentation at the AGM was, “To manage diversity, companies have to be able to measure it.” There was a **record** vote of 29.99% shareholder vote FOR the request. The Sisters will continue to press The Home Depot to report its diversity record to shareholders. “We have repeatedly said that — without disclosure — we cannot tell if Home Depot has the best record or the worst record on diversity.”

IMMIGRANT FAMILY DETENTION UPDATE– August 2016

South Texas Family Detention Centers - Karnes and Dilley

FAMILY DETENTION STATISTICAL REALITIES:

- ❖ 21,500 families apprehended by Border Patrol agents between October and December, 2015 (187% increase) and 17,300 unaccompanied minors (117% increase) (*San Antonio Express-News*, January 13, 2016).
- ❖ Only 900 of 6,200 detained adults with children had cases resolved in immigration courts between July 2014 and November 2015.
- ❖ U.S. Congress allocates \$750 million to aid Central America's Northern Triangle (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) and authorizes 55 new immigration judges and additional layer of congressional oversight of conditions at the South Texas detention centers in Dilley, Karnes County and elsewhere (*San Antonio Express-News*, January 9, 2016).
- ❖ FY 2016 Congressional budget allocates \$712.9 million to Custody Operations for salaries/benefits and an additional \$1.7 billion for general expenses to fund adult detention beds, with **\$342.73 per family/per night** appropriated funding.
- ❖ The Department of Homeland Security reported that more than 23,000 families have been apprehended in the first five months of 2016 compared to about 13,400 in 2015 and around 30,600 in 2014. Most are from Honduras, El Salvador or Guatemala. (*Associated Press*, July 7, 2016)



U.S GOVERNMENT RATIONALE FOR DETENTION OF MOTHERS/CHILDREN

- ❖ Deterrent for future immigrant crossings
- ❖ Ensure appearances at immigration court proceedings
- ❖ Protect legal resident community from security threats

LEGAL ACTIONS regarding FAMILY IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS:

- ❖ July 24, 2015 ... Judge Dolly Gee of the Central District of California ruled current U.S. family detention policies violate the 1997 Flores Settlement, which set standards for detention, release, treatment of all immigrant children in detention.
- ❖ August 6, 2015 ... The Justice Department asked Judge Gee to reconsider, asserting that federal authorities are not violating the ban on holding immigrant children in secure facilities. (*New York Times*, August 7, 2015)
- ❖ August 21, 2015 ... Judge Gee ordered the swift release of immigrant children held in detention centers, giving the Administration until October 23 to comply. (*New York Times*, August 22, 2015)
- ❖ October 2015 ... Detention Centers at Dilley (operated by Corrections Corporation of America) and Karnes (operated by The GEO Group) applied to be licensed as residential child care centers, possibly receiving six-month provisional licenses from the State. Child advocates and immigration lawyers rigorously oppose such a move. (*San Antonio Express-News*, October 17, 2015)



- ❖ December 9, 2015 ... A public hearing was held in Austin, Texas, to take testimony on whether to license family detention facilities as residential child care centers. All who testified publicly **opposed** the agency's licensing of these facilities as child care centers.
- ❖ January 26, 2016 ... MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund) filed a legal challenge to the constitutionality of Texas law, House Bill 11, on behalf of landlords and non-profits, who could be charged with a felony "for harboring immigrants in the country illegally."
- ❖ February 12, 2016 ... The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) announced a new category --"family residential centers"-- has been created to allow Karnes and Dilley detention centers to apply for licensing. In April, the required DFPS hearing in the local community of Karnes City was held regarding the licensing of the existing detention facility as a residential childcare center; the one in Dilley was held on April 26, 2016. A license was granted to Karnes on April 29.

❖ May 2016 ... *From GEO press release*: Revenues in first quarter of 2016 increased to about \$510 million from \$427 million. *From CCA press release*: Total revenue for first quarter of 2016 was \$447.4 million, compared to \$426 million in 2015.

❖ June 2016 ... Grassroots Leadership and detained mothers filed a lawsuit in state court in Austin, asking the judge to stop licensure of Karnes and Dilley. Austin Judge, Karin Crump, issued a temporary restraining order, stopping the state from licensing Dilley. There will be a final hearing in September to determine whether DFPS has authority to license Dilley as a residential childcare center.

❖ July 2016 ... The 9th Circuit Appeals Court said that lengthy detentions of migrant children violated a 19-year-old legal (Flores) settlement ordering their quick release after processing. The three-judge panel ruled that immigration officials aren't required to release the parents detained along with the children. (*Associated Press*, July 7, 2016)

IMMIGRANT FAMILY DETENTION UPDATE– August 2016

South Texas Family Detention Centers - Karnes and Dilley

Backpacks: Donations

There is a daily need for specific items to fill the backpacks for these journeys. A typical backpack can be prepared with a donation of \$25, providing such items as drinks, snacks, blankets, toys, toiletries. Sponsor a refugee backpack at <http://bitly.com/refugeepack>.

Other Donations

Donations are needed to support La Casita (House) utilities, food, household supplies, travel money for the women who must make the two- to four-day journey with no money to feed their families. For example, during April 2015-June 2016, the Mennonite House hosted a total of 4,798 individuals.

Make checks payable to: University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78212, ATTN: IWC (Interfaith Welcome Coalition).

Family Defense Fund

Some detainees are being issued ankle monitors for their release while others still must post bonds. The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) is providing pro bono legal assistance to those who must bond out. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/familydefensefund>. Make checks to RAICES, 5121 Crestway Drive, #105, San Antonio, TX 78239. Sign the Petition: "DFPS (Texas Department of Family Services) Don't License Baby Jails!" <http://bit.ly/stopbabyjails>.

Advocacy

Call the White House at 202-456-1111 and the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121. Make the message: "End Family Detention!" heard. Ask your state representative to co-sponsor HR 2808, which would prevent ICE from signing contracts with for-profit entities that include detention quotas. Choose to BE A VOICE to our legislators on behalf of these women and children. Ask your representative to get involved -- visit the Karnes or Dilley facilities, tweet, write an op-ed, do a floor speech in their respective chambers to show support for #EndFamilyDetention.



Visit to Eagle Ford Shale Fracking Area



In January 2016, Josh Zinner became the new Executive Director of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). He came to San Antonio in April to attend a sustainable banking seminar and to visit the Eagle Ford Shale area. Sr. Elizabeth Riebschlaeger, a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, arranged a tour of the small towns of Karnes, Kenedy, Hobson, Falls City, Nordheim — areas where fracking is occurring. Sr. Elizabeth is a tireless advocate in the area, raising questions about procedures, rules/regulations and impact on families' health. Anna Falkenberg with the Socially Responsible Investment Coalition and Sr. Susan Mika with the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment joined the tour and visits.

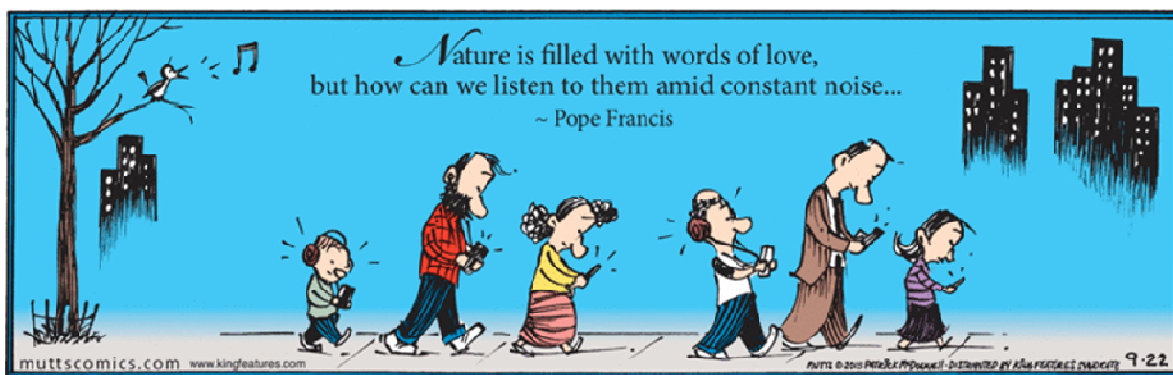
Josh shared, "We met with residents of Nordheim who are fighting to prevent a dump near their school and homes." In the San Antonio Express-News August 2, 2016, the residents of Nordheim (numbering 307) sued the Railroad Commission in Texas state court to prohibit the permit for the 204-acre waste pit which was issued by the commission in May.

"The problem of waste in the Eagle Ford and where to put it is a vexing one. Drilling generates a lot of water and solid waste which must go somewhere, but no one wants it to end up next to them. Many communities have fought sites because they worry about getting a reputation as a dumping ground. In this case, the safety issues are the increased truck traffic on a narrow road, ability of the volunteer fire department to deal with a fire at the landfill, proximity to the K-12 school. The state agency says these concerns are beyond its purview." (SAEN—August 2, 2016)



Next Door Neighbors — farm animals and the rigs

Laudato Si'



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On the other hand, no one can cultivate a sober and satisfying life without being at peace with him or herself... Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life.

Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?... This too affects how [people] treat the environment.

An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us...

Pope Francis
Laudato Si' # 225

In the Spring 2016 AIM USA newsletter, Sr. Pat Lupo, OSB, of Mt. Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania, contributed a powerful article on Pope Francis' call for mercy. Here is an excerpt from her reflection, reprinted with permission:

Throughout his ministry, Jesus ... was filled with compassion. This is the compassion we need to exhibit today if we are going to conquer the globalization of indifference. This is the compassion that must fill our being when we find ourselves face to face with the poor, the outcast or the degradation of the Earth. Yes, the Earth is also part of this equation – in order to survive on this Earth we must have compassion for its sacredness and the interconnections that bind us together.

If we turn away from the dire issues threatening the Earth, we are turning away from life. Mercy is the force that awakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope. So let us all be a sign of the primacy of mercy – a sign of mercy always, everywhere and in every situation no matter what!

Let us all love recklessly and be that sign of mercy to the world.

The Holy Father's words in Paragraph 225 of **Laudato Si'** remind us that Benedictine balance is critical in a noise-filled world. He identifies so many of the values contained in the Rule -- listening, moderation, living in community, peace.

A few reflection questions follow, focusing on the connections between Pope Francis' message, passages from the Rule, and daily Benedictine living in the **noise** of the modern world.

Let peace be your quest and aim.
(RB Prologue:17)

As a Benedictine monastery, what are the circumstances and instances which we create peace for each member?

What does peace look like in our daily routine and our ministry—individually and corporately?

So that in all things God may be glorified.
(RB 57:9)

Are we reflecting with the "capacity for wonder" that Pope Francis indicates is necessary to get to a deeper understanding of life?

Listen with the ear of your heart.
(RB Prologue:1)

What personal and communal strategies are in place to filter out the "constant noise" so that we are able to hear nature's "words of love"?

All things are to be done with moderation.
(RB 48:9)

How can we recover the harmony with creation to which Pope Francis calls us?

What future strategies and goals by our monasteries can enhance this balance and harmony with the Creator and creation?

Benedictine Volunteers



Sr. Hannah Vanorny OSB (Annunciation Monastery), Sr. Idelle Badt OSB (Annunciation Monastery), Natalie Brown (volunteer - Mother of God), Sr. Susan Mika OSB, and Patricia Nguyen (office at Mother of God Monastery)

In late May 2016, the Benedictine Volunteers visited South Texas for a two- week experience to learn about trade, immigration and U.S. Mexico concerns. Patricia Nguyen, the director, works with this collaborative live-in volunteer program among three Benedictine communities in North and South Dakota. "As part of developing our service and discernment program, we would like to offer our volunteers who commit to 6 months - 2 years of service the opportunity for a 2-week immersion experience. Our hope is that this immersion experience will teach our volunteers about U.S. border-related issues and expose them to urban issues that might supplement their experiences. We believe it is important for them to be immersed in and serve the multicultural Church."

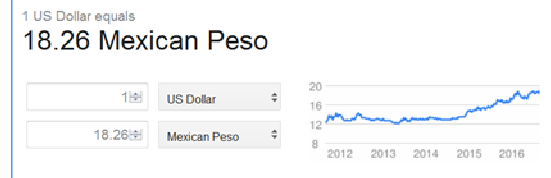
Some of the educational topics included:

❖ Trade issues and workers' wages (see chart below)

❖ Peso to U.S. dollar – When the North American Trade Agreement went into effect in 1994, the peso traded at 3,100 pesos to \$1. The zeros were deleted to make 3.1 "new" pesos to \$1. The chart shows that as of 8/17/16, the peso traded at 18,260 new pesos to \$1. This speaks to purchasing power of workers.

❖ Studying Kohlberg's Moral Stages of Development
These stages help us to understand the climate in which we operate in today's society and what factors shape our moral decisions.

The Benedictine Volunteers went to the Boerne Benedictine house in Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras to continue their immersion experience. From all indications, the group hopes to continue this type of education next year.



Comparison of the purchasing power of Mexico maquiladora worker average take-home wages in U.S./ Mexico border cities vs.

Approximate UAW take-home wages in U.S. cities in minutes of work necessary to purchase items.

First Quarter 1994

| Categories | Amount | Minutes of work necessary for purchase: Maquiladora take-home salary | Minutes of work necessary for purchase: Approximate UAW take-home salary |
|----------------|---------|--|--|
| Chicken– fresh | 1 lb. | 87.0 | 4.5 |
| Coca Cola | 6 pk. | 107.1 | 10.1 |
| Eggs- large | 1 dzn. | 69.8 | 4.1 |
| Flour– white | 5 lbs. | 11.9 | 5.4 |
| Milk– whole | 1 gal. | 142.9 | 12.2 |
| Toilet Tissue | 4 rolls | 50.0 | 6.1 |
| Water– spring | 1 gal. | 48.8 | 3.1 |

❖ Trade Issues and Workers' Wages

This chart is an excerpt from a Market Basket Survey published in **1994** — to show the number of minutes a worker in the Mexican maquiladora factories would need to work to buy certain items. Purchasing power is crucial because we only have 60 minutes in an hour.

The second column shows the minutes a United Auto Worker (UAW) in the U.S. would work to purchase the same item.

We selected a few items, including Coca Cola because the country of Mexico is the largest consumer of Coke due to the poor quality of the water.

We consistently raised the wage concerns with the corporations which operate factories in various countries. What is a sustainable living wage for the workers?

Market Basket Survey researched and written by Ruth Rosenbaum in 1994

Updates

WALMART ASKS SUPPLIERS TO LIST CHEMICALS/FIND ALTERNATIVES

Since 2013, the ICCR group that meets with Walmart has been asking Walmart for a list of the chemicals which the company is asking suppliers to phase out. Walmart said the list was confidential.

Now, according to Bloomberg News (July 20, 2016), under the Walmart policy, manufacturers must list the targeted ingredients on packaging by 2018 and work to find alternatives. The program affects about 90,000 items made by 700 manufacturers. Already, Walmart suppliers have removed 95% of the chemicals on the list, by volume weight, from products sold in U.S. stores that are covered by the policy.

1. **Formaldehyde**, a carcinogen found in resins for wood products, building materials, paints and some consumer products like cosmetics.
2. **Triclosan**, is a chemical used in antibacterial soaps, toothpaste and some cosmetics, not known to be hazardous to humans, but some animal studies have shown that it alters hormone regulation, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
3. **Toluene**, a colorless liquid that is used in paint thinners, nail polish and fragrances
4. **Diethyl phthalate**, used to make plastic more flexible and in cosmetics, insecticides and aspirin
5. **Nonylphenol exthoxylates**, surfactants in industrial applications/consumer products like laundry detergent
6. **Butylparabens**, used as a preservative in cosmetics
7. **Dibutyl phthalate**, a solvent
8. **Propylparaben**, another preservative

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-20/wal-mart-asks-suppliers-to-remove-eight-chemicals-from-products>

CLIMATE CHANGE DATA — NASA

According to an August 15 article in *The Guardian*, July 2016 was the 10th straight month to break monthly temperature records. Using a combination of sea-surface and air temperatures on land, the NASA data revealed JULY was the “hottest month in recorded history.” The data showed that air and sea temperatures for July 2016 were a combined 0.11C hotter than the previous record set in July 2015. The NASA data is supported by the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), whose results will be formally released later this month.

July's data means that 2016 is “virtually certain to be the hottest year on record,” David Karoly, climate scientist from the University of Melbourne, concludes. He does acknowledge that both global warming and El Niño are causes for the July increase, global warming contributing an increase of 1.1C and El Niño about 0.2C.

The article emphasizes that July 2016 “broke the absolute record for hottest month since records began in 1880.”



JOHNSON AND JOHNSON PHASES OUT PARABENS

ICCR members who meet with Johnson and Johnson in dialogues have raised the issue of parabens in their products, especially in **the baby products**. During the February 2016 Super Bowl, J&J ran an ad which mentioned that the Bedtime Baby Lotion was now paraben-free.

Above, in the pictures you see where in the older product (on the left), there were three parabens listed. Now, in the newly-formulated product, it says on the front that it is paraben-free and no parabens are listed in the product on the right. This product is meant to be used daily on the baby.

Updates from Monasteries

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. For further information about the coalition's work, please complete the following and mail it to the coalition at the address above. The Coalition staff includes: Sr. Susan Mika OSB, Vanessa Lopez and Linda Murphy.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL _____

MONASTERY (or other affiliation)



Welcome to our newest member, Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Alabama. We will feature the community in our next newsletter.

BENEDICTINE CRI Supported EITC/CTC LAW

Last fall, Sr. Patricia Kirk from Emmanuel Monastery, Lutherville, MD, urged the members of the Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment to endorse federal legislation known as the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015. This bicameral, bipartisan bill proposed making the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) **permanent** tax relief for working families with children. Thanks to the support of BCRI and other like-minded coalitions, the bill is now law.

Robert Greenstein, President of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, remarked that "making the EITC and CTC improvements permanent would rank among the biggest anti-poverty achievements, outside of healthcare reform, in years. These improvements lift about 16 million people, including about 8 million children, out of poverty or closer to the poverty line each year."

This is another example of the power that networking and coalition building have in bringing about the Gospel's call for justice and peace.

NUNS on the BUS in Erie: Brief but Amazing

In a recent blog, Sr. Marlene Bertke of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie wrote about the visit of **The NUNS on the Bus** tour to the Erie area. She observed, "NUNS on the Bus were in Erie less than 24 hours but the impact will last much longer." During the visit, the group visited a local soup kitchen and held a town hall meeting at a local parish. Sr. Marilyn Schauble OSB added, "The turnout was great, the process even greater, and the end result was enlivened hope."

The focus of this year's NUNS on the Bus tour is "Mending the Gap," an effort to raise awareness and develop solutions toward mending both the wealth and income gap and the access gap for marginalized communities. These gaps include, but are certainly not limited to: tax justice, living wages, family-friendly workplaces, democracy, healthcare, citizenship and housing. To participate: [Mend the Gaps \(https://networklobby.org/bus2016/\)](https://networklobby.org/bus2016/).

Morally Commendable ...

Just last week I was thinking about your monastery when attending a meeting of the Thomas More Society at the law school. They were having a "Stump the Priest" session. Someone asked about whether it is morally permissible to invest in companies that are known to support immoral activities. I related a summary of the story you told about the Sisters purchasing just enough stock in some companies to be able to go speak at their meetings and give input to influence corporate policy. The story seemed to surprise most of the room at the novelty of the approach and Fr. Beseau said it might even shift from the realm of morally permissible to morally commendable! Needless to say, I was amused that my past conversations with you resulted in a meaningful contribution to the discussion.

Written by Bradley Hook, friend of Sr. Diana Seago (from Atchison) - used with permission



Benedictine Coalition for Responsible Investment

P.O. Box 200423 San Antonio, TX 78220

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.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

**ICCR- September 26-30, 2016 in New York City, NY*

**ICCR- February 6-10, 2017 in New York City, NY*

**RCRI: October 11-14, 2016 in Anaheim, CA*

We give heartfelt thanks for our generous donors. This work would not be possible without your continued support!

Our Members 2015-16:

- **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)
- **Sacred Heart Monastery** (Cullman, Alabama)
- **Benedictine Sisters of Erie** (Erie, Pennsylvania)
- **St. Scholastica Monastery** (Fort Smith, Arkansas)
- **Sacred Heart Monastery** (Lisle, Illinois)
- **Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore** (Lutherville, Maryland)
- **Benedictine Women — Holy Wisdom Monastery** (Madison, Wisconsin)

- **Monasterio de San Benito** (Mexico, D.F.)
- **Immaculata Monastery** (Norfolk, Nebraska)
- **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)
- **Mother of God Monastery** (Watertown, SD)

Supporting Monasteries:

- **Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict** (St. Joseph, MN)
- **Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict** (Rock Island, IL)
- **St. Paul's Monastery** (St. Paul, MN)
- **Mount St. Scholastica** (Atchison, Kansas)

- **House of Bread** (Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada)
- **Our Lady of Grace Monastery** (Beech Grove, IN)
- **Benedictine Sisters** (Warren, OH)
- **Benedictine Sisters** (Ridgely, Maryland)
- **Benedictine Sisters** (Bristow, VA)
- **Missionary Benedictine Sisters Immaculate Monastery** (Norfolk, NE)
- **Benedictine Sisters Benevolent Association** (Duluth, MN)
- **Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont** (Weston, VT)

Supporting Individuals/Oblates:

- Fr. Douglas Fater
- Eugenia Schuler
- Aloys and Gertrude Mika family