

Claver Jesuit Ministry Newsletter

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Step By Step, Partner By Partner Agendas Move Ahead

by Joe Folzenlogen, SJ

The last couple of months have been an exciting time as groups I participate in have mobilized to push forward promising agendas. I could offer a long list, but I decided to focus on three areas.

Environmental Justice

The impact of pollution on the health of neighborhood residents has been a major concern of the communities in the Millcreek Valley. The people living in that area have fought many battles about landfills and air quality, and they have secured several settlements.

Recently the strategy has shifted to prevention. Is it possible to keep new polluting industries from being placed in communities that are already overburdened by pollution? Studies have shown that low-income and minority neighborhoods receive an unfair share of the kind of industries that put them at risk. Health records show a disproportionate amount of asthma and respiratory ailments, cancer, skin ailments, and similar diseases.

There are standards that indicate the safe levels of various pollutants that can be released. But it is also possible for a company to obtain a permit that will allow them to exceed that limit. Claver Jesuits work with organizations and churches in the Winton Hills area of Cincinnati. Within a mile radius, there are six companies who have permits allowing them to go over the limit. Two of the companies regularly go over even the permit levels. They pay their fines and keep

on polluting.

In an effort to prevent adding to this kind of concentration or creating new clusters, Communities United For Action (CUFA), a network organization of community groups, has developed and is calling for an environmental justice ordinance for the city of Cincinnati that would require community review and input into any application to bring in a new industry that would release pollutants in that community.

A proposed ordinance was prepared and brought to City Council and City officials. It has been reviewed and revised. It has been watered down along the way, but it would still be helpful if passed. Right now indications are that five of the nine City Council members support the ordinance, so it would pass if it came to the floor. However, those in opposition are in the majority on the committee that must bring it to the floor.

So CUFA has convened a committee that is mounting a concerted effort to free the ordinance from this roadblock and to get it passed within the next couple of months. Various teams have been formed to visit all council members individually. Other committee members are visiting potential allies to help convince council members to become supportive. Still others have prepared a petition and are seeking signatures to indicate the level of support among the citizens. And other committee members are seeking the endorsement of key organizations and asking their help to gather signatures on the petitions.

All this is an indication of how much hard work it takes to get needed protection for a community's health.

Beyond the Collaborative

Cincinnati has a long, sad history in its attitude toward and treatment of African Americans. Starting in the early 1800s and continuing into the present, there have been many forms of discrimination and periodic outbreaks of violence. In the more recent past, there have been several incidents that have elicited expressions of concern and promises of change, but very little has come



Sister of Charity Barbara Busch and Working in Neighborhoods staff person DeNeisha Calvert prepare a grid indicating which City Council members are for or against an environmental justice ordinance.

about as time has passed.

So when the Timothy Thomas incident occurred in the spring of 2001, there was firm determination not to accept just more hand-wringing and promises. The efforts for a plan for real change backed up by structures of accountability resulted in the Memorandum of Agreement dealing with use of force, training, and other procedural matters. The Collaborative Agreement dealt with a new way of doing policing incorporating a cooperative evidence-based problem solving approach in which police and community residents would work together. Both of these were court supervised.

When the five year time frame drew to a close, the Memorandum of Agreement was allowed to lapse because there was consensus that the major goals had been achieved. The Collaborative Agreement was another matter. There clearly had been progress, but there were major items that needed more work. A one-year extension was negotiated to work on those issues.

As that time limit approached, there was a sense that sufficient progress had been made so there was no need to seek another extension. However, that does not mean that we are done. There is a lot of work still ahead of us. And so various groups are working on strategies for building greater trust between police and citizens, particularly in the African American community.



Joe Folzenlogen prays over the gifts during a Mass to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his entrance into the Jesuits.



Al Gerhardstein, a lawyer who played a key role in the Collaborative Agreement process, presents the *Witness to Change* booklet that will be an educational tool going forward.

Three Issues from pg. 1

In late October, there was a gathering at New Prospect Baptist Church in the Over the Rhine area of Cincinnati. This is where the initiative that resulted in the Collaborative Agreement began, and so it seemed an appropriate place to come together again to reflect on what had happened in the last seven years. Early on there had been a lot of sharing of stories, and that evening those stories were updated. Deep feelings were expressed, and the consensus was that there had been progress, but much more needed to be done.

We need to take steps to build trust, and that will mean bringing groups together, especially the police and young African Americans, to listen to each other, to learn each other's reality, and to shape a common future. Another step will be a long weekend from February 19 to 22 when Rev. Nelson Johnson and his wife Joyce will come to Cincinnati from Greensboro, North Carolina. They will



Tim Hipskind chats with Carmen Busch, an artist friend of Jim Hasse who exhibited with him at Xavier University's Gallagher Center.

share their experiences with the Beloved Community Center inspired by the writings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A third step will be the *Witness to Change* booklet.

Much other work will need to be done if we are to build a collaborative community.

Economic Inclusion

Although the rhetoric of the American Dream talks about equal opportunity for all, the reality is such that many people in our society have far fewer opportunities than some others. Those might include opportunities for education, for employment, for fuller participation in various aspects of life.

Twenty-five years ago a group of faith-based organizations came together to form Interfaith Business Builders to try to create employee-owned cooperative businesses in low-income communities in the Cincinnati area. The past quarter century has had its successes and failures, but during that time IBB has learned a lot about the formation and development of cooperatives.

It celebrates the achievements of Cooperative Janitorial Services. CJS sales for the month of November topped \$18,000 and there is a reasonable expectation that early in 2009 the monthly sales will be over \$20,000. Right now there are 14 employees, and the growing sales volume will open employment opportunities for more workers. In addition to a job, CJS empowers its members to have a



The employee-owners of Cooperative Janitorial Services meet regularly to conduct the business of the company.

say in the running of the business, voting on all the important decisions and participating in the overall economy in a whole new way.

IBB has launched the process of planning for a new cooperative business. A series of recent meetings has started to gather a group of prospective partners ranging from the head of the Cincinnati Central Credit Union, a faculty member from the Williams College of Business at Xavier University, a member of that university's Community Building Institute, the head of the Peace and Justice Institute there, and the social ministries director of Bellarmine Chapel. Each of these people in turn have named others to talk with as the project unfolds.

In some ways it is only fitting that a cooperative business be developed through a collaborative effort of multiple partners.

Winton Hills Survey Finds Neighborhood Tech Needs

by Tim Hipskind

Volunteers with the Winton Hills Seniors Computer Project were able to document some stark realities facing the residents by means of a survey completed in November. Among their findings were the following facts:

- 68% did not have a computer in their home
- 85% could not access the internet at home
- 44% wanted a class in basic computing
- 51% wanted a class in preparing a resume and applying for jobs online

The last result seems to indicate not only that over half of the residents were either out of work or not happy in their work, but also that they felt they lacked the skills needed to effectively apply for work. All the results underscored the need for our project, and

thus will be very helpful data as we begin our fundraising push early next year. It is also a poignant reminder that many trends in modern society (like online job applications) really disadvantage large sectors of the population



Ms. Eugenia Wilburn and Ms. Betty Gazaway are two of the leaders of the Winton Hills Seniors Computer Project.

Prayer Booklets, Schedules, Shows, Calendars Spread Hasse Art Talent

A church in Australia sent an email asking for permission to use Jim Hasse's painting of the Annunciation scene superimposed on a circular map of the world as the cover for its Advent and Christmas schedule. The Pax Christi organization requested the OK to use one of Jim's Magnificat paintings on the cover of its Advent reflection booklet, *Be Watchful and Alert--Seek God's Spirit in the World*, authored by Dominican Sister Dr. Jamie Phelps, and Jim was also invited to write the opening reflection. Jim has completed his mural in the Canticle Café in Detroit. This Franciscan ministry serves street people in downtown Detroit. He sent a copy of the Josephite African American History and Heritage Calendar featuring his paintings to former provincial Dick Baumann in Zimbabwe.

While spreading his art talent around the world, Jim has not neglected the home front. He currently has paintings at the Drake Hospital, Art Beyond Boundaries, Secret Art Works (which resulted in his picture appearing on the society page of *The Cincinnati Enquirer*), the Northside Gallery, and Anton's Coffee and Ice Cream Shop.

Recently Jim completed two larger and longer exhibits. For over three months Jim had 40 of his paintings on display at the Gallagher Center at Xavier University. He was joined by Carmen Busch, an artist who has a studio in the same building Jim works in. Jim had 25 pieces at the Nordheim Gallery at Holmes High School in Covington. He also had a weekend show at the Essex Gallery.

Mary Ran, the owner of a gallery in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Cincinnati, continues to be a valuable mentor for Jim



Jim Hasse discusses an idea with Mary Ran, a gallery owner who has been promoting his work.

in the business dimension of the art world. She has some of his works on display at her gallery, and she helped negotiate some of the exhibits for Jim to participate in.

Jim will continue to share his talent as 2009 gets underway. The Northern Kentucky Community Action Gallery will have a two-month solo show of Jim's paintings starting January 9. Later in January he has been invited to participate in an exhibit at the Kennedy Heights Arts Center in a show entitled, "Prelude 2009 Exhibition: The Human Spirit Revealed." The opening reception is Saturday, January 17, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

"Two of a Mind" is the third annual Changing Perspectives Exhibit running at Art Beyond Boundaries until January 16. These are paintings Jim did of an artist friend creating and being created by God.

Jim writes, "My art is part of the Claver Jesuit Ministry. It is my attempt to reveal the beauty and sacredness of the African American people I have been privileged to live and work with for over 40 years."

"Dare to Hope"

Reported by Tim Hipskind

Walter Hammond, a young adult member of the Mother of Christ community was so profoundly impacted by the election of Barack Obama that he wanted to testify about it. So at the Sunday service following the election, he stood up and challenged the congregation to "Dare to Hope." He was equally enthusiastic about having his comments recorded here. "Barack Obama's election was a big deal for everyone," he said, "but even more so within the African American community. A lot of African Americans dismissed his candidacy saying, 'America is just not ready for a Black man to be President.'" For Walter it was a kind of break through moment that went far beyond the election itself. It made him realize, "There are a lot of things that we always wanted to do, but thought they were impossible: go to school, lose weight, etc." The election, "moved me to begin to make a plan and execute my desires instead of accepting things as they are." Thus he felt moved to challenge everyone in the congregation to, "dare to hope, to believe that whatever we want to do, we can accomplish it."



Jim Hasse answers questions about his paintings for visitors to his exhibit at the Essex Gallery.

Ferone Leads IVC Retreat

Fr. John Ferone, SJ, Faber House superior and a member of the Chicago Province vocation team, led the winter retreat for the members of the Cincinnati region Ignatian Volunteer Corps. John enhanced his talks with paintings, photographs, and music. For more information on the IVC program, contact Sam Schloemer at 513-608-5551.

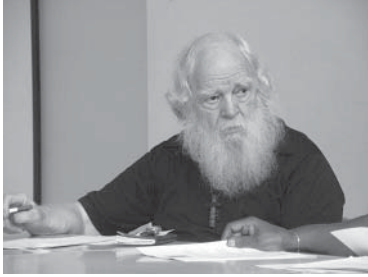


Tim Hipskind and Walter Hammond

SUPPORT FOR CLAVER

Claver Jesuit Ministry works with churches, community organizations, and individuals in low-income neighborhoods. It depends on financial help from the Chicago Province, Jesuit Communities, and generous benefactors. We need help with the two projects Fr. Tim Hipskind is developing in Winton Hills: teen/elder dialogue and mentoring an expanded neighborhood computer center. Fr. Joe Folzenlogen recommends assistance for the planning process that will result in Interfaith Business Builders creating a new cooperative business. Make out the check to Claver Jesuit Ministry and send it to 3838 Llewellyn Avenue, Cincinnati, OH, 45223-2352.

America Magazine Publishes Letter From Fr. Lou Lipps



Fr. Lou Lipps was very moved by an article in the November 27 issue of *America* magazine. With an assist from Joe Folzenlogen, he submitted a letter to the editor online. His letter was printed in the December 8 edition. Here is the text:

Divine Love

I found “Dragen, Here is Your Letter” by Lyn Burr Brignoli (11/27), very moving, but was touched even more by Brignoli’s religious experience and her ability to reflect on it in true Ignatian fashion. She moves from an “abstract God” to a “deeper experience of God beyond mere logic,” then starts “to transcend the boundaries of doctrine and enter into the heart of God” and finally “to catch a glimpse of the compassion of God.”

I am an 87-year-old Jesuit who has been blessed with ministry in spiritual direction and retreats, and found this story to be a wonderful reflection on the experience of God revealing himself and befriending us.

Louis J. Lipps, S.J.
Cincinnati, Ohio

Fr. Jim Grummer, SJ, Visits Chicago Province for Rome

Fr. Jim Grummer, SJ, regional assistant for the United States to the Jesuit Fr. General Adolfo Nicolás, visited the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus from mid-November to early December. Although a special occasion for area Jesuits, Fr. Grummer’s visit is a routine part of his job to touch base with all the U.S. provinces in a regular cycle. He spent a morning with the community at Claver, visiting both the ministry center and the residence, talking with both the superior of the community, Jim Hasse, and the director of the ministry, Joe Folzenlogen, and having an engaging conversation over lunch with all the members of the community. They particularly enjoyed his up-close-and-personal description of the personality and vision of the new Fr. General.



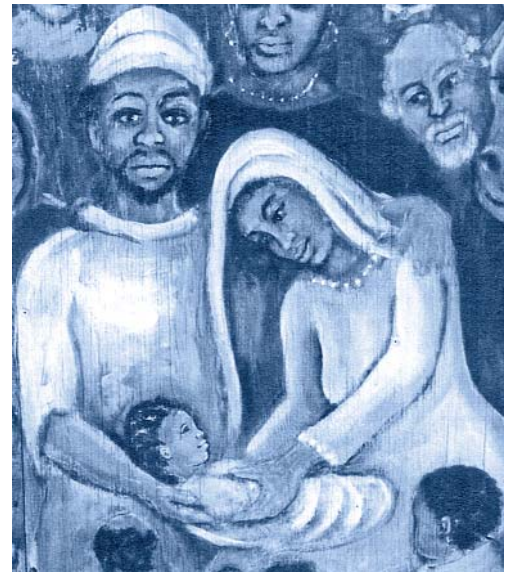
Folzenlogen Picked for MLK Award Jan. 19

Fr. Joe Folzenlogen has received notice that he is one of the recipients of the 2009 Martin Luther King Jr. “Keep the Dream Alive”

Award. The presentation will be made during a ceremony at St. Mark Catholic Church, 3500 Montgomery Road in Evanston, on Monday, January 19, beginning at 3:00 p.m. The program includes music by a gospel choir, praise dancing, and a keynote address by TV personality Curtis Fuller. After the event, those present are invited to come to the church hall for a buffet supper.

This will be the eighth annual presentation of the Keep the Dream alive awards. In receiving it, Joe joins such previous recipients as fellow community member Fr. Jim Hasse, Fr. Jim Shappelle, pastor of Mother of Christ Church, Ray West, executive director of Interfaith Business Builders, and Fr. Tom Bokenkotter, IBB board member.

Peace and Blessings



The Claver Jesuits pray for God’s blessing for you and yours now and throughout the New Year.

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