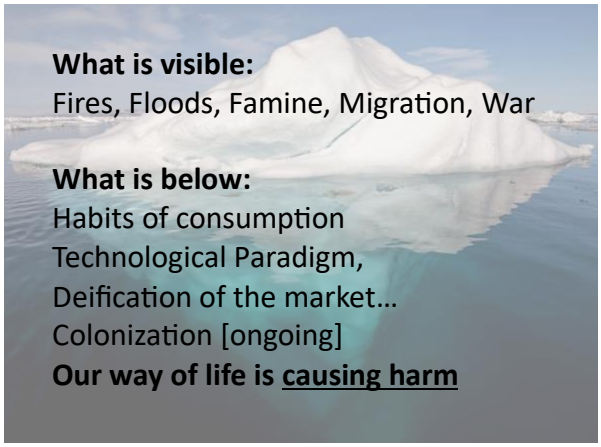
Luke 10, 29: “And who is my neighbor?”

Laudato Si week:

May 24 is the 10-year anniversary of *Laudato Si* and the beginning of *Laudato Si* Week. There are many ways to honor care for creation at this auspicious time. The Laudato Si Movement is a good place to locate ideas, connections and resources. Also, the Catholic Climate Covenant and USCCB have resources for parishes, schools, etc. I will be presenting at the Boston Franciscan Justice Circle using Fair Trade chocolate to show how to get a parish thinking about *Integral Ecology*.



Integral Ecology means understanding the interrelated aspects of the environmental crisis. One way of looking at it is like an iceberg. We see the tip of the iceberg (Disasters, migration, war, etc.) but we need to see the causes, which include our own habits as consumers. It isn’t just the extractive industries that destroy the environment; it is the customers who buy their products. Catholics are looking to the Franciscans to lead on this in the parishes. It can be done without sowing discord. If we don’t, who will?

Immigrants and refugees:



On May 8-11, JPIC animators from around the country gathered at Holy Cross retreat center near Las Cruces, NM to pray, to learn, and to build and renew connections and commitment. This photo was taken just after a prayer service on May 9, led by Fr. Ignatius Harding, OFM, at the border wall near El Paso, TX. It was the first day of the retreat. Our group also visited *Annunciation House*, and heard from its director, Ruben Garcia, who stressed the need for help with *policy* at the current time.



We shared a beautiful mass at San Martin de Porres church in Sunland Park, NM, followed by a bilingual gathering with local fraternities from the El Paso area, where we heard from Marco Raposo, Director of Peace and Justice for the diocese of El Paso. Marco gave a compelling picture of the frustrations of serving immigrants, and putting on activities like the annual cross-border mass, in the current climate. Robust discussions and loving dialogue followed.

Brother Iggy also requested OFS members to get more involved in the Franciscan Network for Migrants USA. You can get connected through an email

to me at the address below, or through Franciscans International. One way to learn more could be to remotely attend the USCCB sponsored World refugee day webinar (June 18 at 2PM Eastern) at this registration link.



We heard from Bob Kee, a guest from Tucson Samaritans, the organization that our spiritual assistant, Brother David Buer, has been working with for many years. Bob’s accounts were first hand, and had the immediacy of the desert encounters that make up the work of the Samaritans, of meeting people who needed water and food and medical attention, of finding remains.

An organization called No More Deaths has an online map of where remains have been found in the El Paso sector. A quick look at this map will show the reason for the prayer service and its location. We must not look away from what is happening to our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers.

In the battle of conflicting narratives, I’ve been asked for accurate sources of information. For a firsthand look on what is happening with deportation, the Kino border initiative is a good Catholic source. You may have heard their executive director, Joanna Williams, speak at the Quinquennial in 2022. This organization serves and accompanies migrants on the Mexican side in Nogales, including those who have been deported. They have an intake process that collects first hand stories. One action we can take is to listen to these stories. Joanna wrote in June 2024 that we need “fewer statements and more listening.” https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/the-day-that-needed-fewer-statements-and-more-listening/#comments. From a recent KBI bulletin: “People ICE has deported to Nogales, MX in the last two weeks report inhumane conditions both in detention in Arizona and in the deportation process, including using shackles as restraints during long flights, medical neglect and verbal abuse.”

For comprehensive information, Brother Iggy directed us to a recent and very thorough report from the Hope Border Institute entitled “A prophetic response to the urgent challenge of migration.” It is so important for that shrinking number of us not directly affected, that we are able to discern and access reliable sources of information. JM







I have done what was mine to do…