

April 20, 21 and 22  
Meeting of the Members of the  
SSA Social Justice Network

Were present at this meeting :



Sr. Denise Leroux, (N.-D. du P.-S. Prov., Haiti)  
Sr. Alberte Madore (Esther-Blondin Prov.) and  
Sr. Denise Breault, (Esther-Blondin Prov.)



Sr. Madeleine Lanoue (Gen. adm.)  
Sr. Denise Caron (Social Justice Office),  
Sr. Sheila Moss (Saint Joseph Prov.),  
Sr. Marie Zarowny (Social Justice Office)



Sr. Carol Proietti  
(Saint Marie Prov.)



Diane Boudreault  
(Social Justice Office)

Sr. Céline Dupuis (Gen. Adm.) was not able to join the group because her flight from Africa, via Paris, was delayed.

To enable these beautiful people to be on the same wavelength, we called upon the talent of three interpreters who took turns during the weekend to facilitate communication between participants.



Alionka Skup



Michel Côté, o.p.



Isabelle Martiliani

Sr. Denise Caron, Coordinator of the Social Justice Office, opened the session with a brief word of welcome. Among the new faces present were Sr. Denise Leroux (Notre-Dame du Perpétuel-Secours Province), and Sr. Sheila Moss (St. Joseph Province), who returned to the group after a few years of absence.

Each one then gave a report of the activities carried out in each province within the framework of the two themes chosen by the Network for 2006-2007: the *trafficking in human beings* and *water*.

## **Trafficking in women and children.**



### **N.-D. du Perpétuel-Secours Prov.**

- Awareness and formation : If the topic regarding the trafficking of human beings was not studied in detail, the « kidnapping » of women and children that occurs almost daily in Haiti, hides a reality within the context of the country. There are rapes; prostitution and children are sold as domestic workers in the country or in the Dominican Republic. It continues to be very important to create awareness by means of activities in the province.

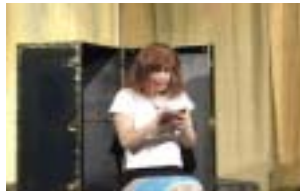


Servants Anonymous Society who work with trafficked women gave examples of situations they had dealt with. A booklet on Human Trafficking is being made available free of charge through this agency.

- Workshops facilitated by Marie Zarowny : Marie Zarowny has done a number of workshops on the issue incorporating her experience in Haiti and with the UN. Victor Malarek, author and news reporter from Toronto, joined Marie as a resource person for one of the workshops.

### **Saint Joseph Province**


- Theater Production : Promotion of « Lost in Traffic », a theater production created by *Théâtre Parmi-nou*, to which a number of sisters participated. The province supported financially this project.



- Workshops : People's Law School offered regional workshops on trafficking which a number of sisters attended. The sessions included presentations by a RCMP officer on the role of police in dealing with this criminal offense, a staff person from the Ministry of Children and Family Development spoke about the ministry's dealing with child victims of trafficking and a staff person from the

### **Esther-Blondin Province**

- Formation : participation of the Committee members at the North-American premiere of the film *Les clients* by Hubert Dubois and Elsa Brunet followed by a panel :
  - Rose Dufour : anthropologist, conference speaker, and author of the first survey on clients in Quebec, etc...
  - Aurélie Lebrun : sociologist, teacher at St. Paul University (Ottawa)
  - Claudine Legardinier, author of the book "Les trafics du sexe"
  - Maria Mourani, criminologist, député of the Bloc Québécois in Ahuntsic, author of "La face cachée des gang de rues".

- Actions : **WANTED**  
Within the framework of the provincial elections in Quebec, the candidates in the constituency of Lachine and Gouin were asked questions to know if they were thinking of opposing an upcoming federal law on the legalization of prostitution and how they would work to bring poverty under control, which is one of the causes of prostitution and the trafficking of women.
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- Prayer : The sisters were invited to unite their prayers to the International Prayer weekend of September 30 - October 1 against the trafficking of persons.
  - CATHII Lobbying Sub-Committee :Members of the provincial justice committee participated in meetings organized by the lobbying sub-committee.
  - Information and documentation : Different means - province bulletin, e-mails, posters, meetings with superiors - are used to inform sisters.

### Saint Marie Province

- Day on Immigration : Seeing the interconnection among immigration, trafficking, and sweatshops, the Social Concerns Committee hosted a *Day on Immigration* last fall. The guests presenters were Tess brown, SCN and Marie Prefontaine, SND de Namur. Tess, who works as an Assistant for Special projects at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA, is an immigrant herself. She had lobbied on behalf of immigrants. Marie, a legal expert on immigrations, has worked with immigrants, refugees, and migratory populations. She gave a "small course" on U.S. immigration law and policy.

- Interfaith Summit for Immigrant Justice : In March 2007, the Sisters of Saint Anne endorsed the *Interfaith Summit for Immigrant Justice* which was held at the State House, in Boston, on April 12. Sister Carol Proietti attended the event., a part of which highlighted the many difficulties faced by the immigrants, among them trafficking and inhumane conditions in sweatshops.
- Friday Afternoon, the Newsletter of St. Marie Province, has continued to print articles about Trafficking. It also prints the addresses of websites and newsletters which deal with the issue. For example, the *Stop Trafficking Newsletter*, a monthly electronic newsletter is edited by Sr. Jean Schafer SDS (Sisters of the Divine Savior). This Congregation is committed to their Anti-Trafficking Awareness Project.
- Corporate Stance against Human Trafficking: The Social Concerns Committee members realize that trafficking is a global phenomenon where victims are sexually exploited, forced into labor and subjected to abuse. They know that immigration and sweatshops are interconnected with human trafficking. Therefore they have begun a process for the Province to take a corporate stance against Human Trafficking.

- Law against Trafficking : Sister Carol Proietti made a research to know if there is a federal law in the United States regarding Trafficking of human beings. Yes, such a law exists.

### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

SSA's, wherever they are, found different ways to struggling against trafficking in women and children.



# WATER



The theme of water  
was also taken into consideration...  
Let us look at it more closely.

## Esther-Blondin Province

- Workshop on November 9 and 11, 2006 :  
Using a participative methodology, Sr. Denise Caron and Ms. Diane Boudreault of the Social Justice Office of the Congregation made approximately one hundred participants reflect on :
  - \* the richness of water ;
  - \* the dangers that threaten it and
  - \* the means that can be used to preserve it for future generations.
 The drawings used in this workshop were sent to all the communities with documents from Development and Peace, posters and documentation.
- Information goes around : television reports, suitable prayers, mini-cards and quizzes, the Youth Charter for water, etc.
- Several sisters respond to the invitation to *make drops of water speak* in the provincial bulletin, Horizon.
- On the 22nd of each month, the sisters are invited to wear a necklace on which is written a prayer regarding water and to prepare posters on this theme.

## N.-D. du Perpétuel-Secours Prov.

In Haiti, water is so rare that it is given the name: **blue gold**. The sisters are becoming more and more aware that water has become a lucrative business. Bags of fresh water are being sold in the streets; trucks with reservoirs are pumping groundwater without limit. Young girls from the countryside transport water on their heads to sell it instead of going to school.



## Saint Marie Province

- In cooperation with the efforts of Corporate Accountability International, located in Boston, MA, the Sisters and Associates were asked to send postcards to The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo. The postcards asked both companies to “stop the misleading promotion of bottled water brands, like Dasani (Coca-Cola) and Aquafina (PepsiCo)”. Both use tap water which depletes municipal water supplies, and at times, the water has been contaminated. The two companies have spent “millions on lobbyists to defeat
  - \* water bills, and
  - \* legislation that would require greater recycled content.”



Another postcard was sent out to Nestle USA Inc., asking them “to stop the misleading promotion of bottled water brands like Poland Spring, Ice Mountain and Nestle Pure Life.” The company “has faced a series of class action lawsuits charging the corporation with fraudulent labelling and misleading advertising of its water products.” It has also been “charged with depleting ground water with its massive water takings.”



Some Sisters participated in a National day of Action to generate phone calls to Nestle Waters USA prior to the day of their shareholder meeting, April 19, 2007.

## Saint Joseph Province

- On World Water Day March 22<sup>nd</sup> Sheila was involved in a joint educational event hosted by Kairos Kelowna and UBCO. Displays, videos and presentations explored the challenges facing the world regarding water.
- Queenswood Centre has made a commitment not to purchase bottled water and provides safe filtered water for all groups using the centre. Special bottles have been purchased for distribution to the sisters attending the Forum and these will be filled with local water.
- A letter of complaint was sent to City Council and to the management of a public recreational facility with regard to the wastage of water in the showers.



*It is clear that the activities related to social justice are well rooted among the SSA's. In fact, in this report, only the activities related to the themes chosen by the Network for 2006- 2007 are mentioned. Draw your own conclusions.*

The following morning, the members of the Network welcomed a few guests into their circle. SSA's, SNJM sisters and associates and one sister of Providence joined the group to receive formation and information regarding UNANIMA International.



Lise Gagnon, snjm  
Judith Desmarais, sp



Denise Leroux, ssa  
Lorraine LaMarre, ssa  
Claudette Bastien, snjm

## UNANIMA International

Sisters Catherine Ferguson, SNJM' Executive Director of UI facilitated the morning meeting.



In the photo, she is in the company of Sr. Marie Zarowny (left), and Michel Côté, op, interpreter (right).

The whole process took place within a prayerful context: a journey towards justice. Catherine spoke about the genesis of UI, a dream become reality, that of giving religious communities the right to speak to an international body. The information gave the participants the opportunity to better grasp the objectives, the activities and the challenges of the UI. Catherine asked Marie Zarowny to say a few words to illustrate the opportunities given to the members of the UI. Marie shared her experience with Roodnir Joseph and Renise Alce from Haiti (see April issue of Just News) and underlined the hopes that were raised in these two women who attended a session at the UN and who experienced similar events in parallel. The anti-demand campaign that will be held next September was of course brought up. The members of the network hope to get involved. When tools will have been prepared by the UI, they will see how the SSA's can use this dossier in their commitment against the trafficking of women.

At the end of the morning, it became evident that it was necessary to stay within the ranks of such an organization so that our action would have a greater impact.



Vera de Sousa, assoc. snjm.  
Julie Tétreault, assoc. snjm



Marie Zarowny, ssa  
Catherine Ferguson, snjm, UI  
Carol Proietti, ssa

Saturday afternoon was set aside for the evaluation of the Office and the Social Justice Network. Strong points and weak points were mentioned alternatively to offer a bank of suggestions for the future. Considering that the Congregation has invested a great deal of energy in Social Justice issues since the 1992 Chapter and that the SSA's are creative in actualizing this commitment within the context of specific milieus, the participants discussed how the 2008 General Chapter could consolidate this aspect of the mission of the Congregation. Time will tell... Finally, the participants tried to imagine a structure that would allow them to meet the expectations of the Social Justice Office and of the Network. As time is going by very quickly and many questions are being raised, a committee was set up to continue the research. The committee is made up of Sr. Sheila Moss (St. Joseph Province), Denise Breault (Esther Blondin Province) and the permanent staff of the Office, Denise Caron and Diane Boudreault. To be continued ...

After a short break for the Eucharistic celebration at the local parish and for supper, there was an evening of information on Haiti. Other SSA joined the group to hear Sr. Marie Zarowny speak about the complex situation of Haiti and to share her enthusiasm for the natural beauties of that country.



S. Marie Zarowny



S. Carol Proietti  
S. Doris Gagnon

Everyone enjoyed the evening in spite of the fatigue of the day.

Sh...  
Sh...  
Sh...

*They go to sleep...*

The members of the Network will meet on Sunday morning for a final working session before returning home.

After a good night's sleep and a brief moment of reflection, the members of the Network resumed work.

Planning for the coming year was on the agenda. Everyone spontaneously agreed that the theme Trafficking of women should focus on anti-demand. The members will wait for the tools put out by UNANIMA International before suggesting ways in which the SSA provinces can deal with this theme. The second theme is left to the discretion of each province.

**2007 - 2008**  
**Trafficking in women** : anti-demand  
**Other theme** : at the discretion of the provinces  
 Environment ???  
 Poverty ???  
 Canadian mines ???  
 Other ???

In ending, there were other elements of an organizational nature and a send-off ritual that focussed on World Earth Day.



*Will the earth go on without us?*

The participants were invited to come and touch the globe and to express the concrete gesture they were willing to do for the survival of the earth. The final song reminded everyone that living justly consists of making a commitment in view of more life for human beings and all of creation.

The ritual ended, it is but an AU REVOIR!

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

The SSA's are involved in many social justice issues. The proof of this is that responsible investments and/or investments related to the mission are always on the agenda of the finance committee of the Congregation at their meeting held in June. The leadership of the Congregation know that it is important to be good stewards to ensure the wellbeing of members and to continue the mission, but they also believe that profitable returns should never be made



1st row, from left to right : André Vaillancourt (Esther-Blondin Prov), Chantal Demers (Gen.Adm.), Sr. Rachel Agnes Bushey (Gen.Tres.), Sr. Denise Pilon (Esther-Blondin Prov.), Sr. Rita DeRoy (Saint Marie Prov.) Sr. Claire-Thérèse Alexandre (N.-D. du P.-S. Prov.). 2e rangée : Bill Boothman (Saint Joseph Prov.)

at the expense of the respect of human rights and the environment. In all the provinces, money is invested to offer assistance to those in need, whether it is through donations or alternative investments. A country where such actions are surely taken is Haiti. The provinces are also taking specific actions in relation to investments in business enterprises. Here is what has been done by the SSA's concerning the social responsibility of business enterprises in 2006-2007.

### Saint Joseph Province

The leadership team of St. Joseph Province authorized Bill Boothman, provincial treasurer, to support a proposal made by the Sisters of St. Joseph of St. Hyacinthe regarding the Elisabeth Bergeron Fund that was presented to EnCAna Inc. last December. The wording of the proposal reads as follows: "That the Administration Council agree with the initiative regarding the Transparency of Extractive Industries (EITI) and contribute to its implementation in countries where this enterprise has activities or interests and this, within reasonable costs and delays." (Visit the EITI web site for more details: <http://eitransparency.org>). The proposal was not



accepted because of technical details regarding the date when it was presented. However, there was a telephone conference with the business leader of the company, representatives of the RRSE and Bâtirente and Bill Boothman of St. Joseph Province. During the course of their discussion, the two parties expressed their points of view and discussed issues raised by the proposal. The company does not intend to sign EITI because it wishes to focus on activities in North America and to leave the other regions where it is now operating. The project in question was located in South America.

## Esther-Blondin Province



Sister Denise Pilon, Provincial Treasurer, met with representatives of the RRSE to discuss the follow-up to be given to the dossier of Pascua Lama. Following the publication of the independent report on the Web site of Barrick Gold, regarding the environmental impacts of the project, the Committee made a thorough study of the report. Thanks to the collaboration of specialists who work mostly in the field of glaciology, hydrology and geology, the Committee was able to identify the issues they wanted to raise with the company and to see to the follow-up of this dossier. Then, Diane Boudreault, Lise Parent, Laetitia Tankwe (Bâtirente) and Ian Thomson (Kairos) attended the meeting of shareholders in Toronto to question the company and to create awareness among other shareholders. Although all of them could not intervene, everything is not lost. They will continue to dialogue with the enterprise. To be continued...

## Saint Marie Province

By investing through a firm that specializes in socially responsible investments, Saint Marie Province is able to have a voice in trying to change the policies and actions of companies who are exploiting the poor, damaging the environment, creating harmful health conditions, and violating basic human rights. In this sense, this is the positive way in which the administrators of Boston Common Asset Management filter the companies in which they invest. Here are two concrete examples of this.

- Reed Elsevier Gr. Plc (an information publishing company) which incorporates the U.N. Global Compact's ten principles regarding human rights, labor and the environment into company's code of conduct;
  - Toyota Motor Corporation who has impacted the environment with their hybrid technology.
- More, Sœur Rita vote the proxies for the annual meetings of the companies and support the shareholder's proposals presented by other religious congregations.



Sr. Rita DeRoy  
Provincial Treasurer

## General Administration



Sr. Rachel Agnes  
Bushey  
General Treasurer



S. Céline Dupuis  
Delegate from the Gen. Administration  
at RRSE

The General Administration of the SSA's is very active at the level of responsible shareholding. The corporation of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne works closely with the Regrouping for social responsibility and equity (RRSE) of which it is a member. We are aware that we can have recourse to different means to create awareness in social responsibility, which is growing among enterprises. The members of the general administration have used the different corporations of the Congregation, at the general level, to intervene. Here is how this practice was established in 2006-2007 in greater detail.



## December 2006

- Bombardier: In 2006, a shareholder proposal, backed by the corporation of the *Congregation*, was submitted at the company's Annual General Meeting. This proposal, which was presented by the *Franciscans*, requested that the company's board adopt a policy that would respect human rights in all the countries where doing business, and also to give a progress report to the shareholders as the policy was implemented. A follow-up was assured following the commitment made by the company. A letter and telephone calls led to a meeting with the members of the RRSE representing the two congregations involved. At this meeting, they were able to take stock of the process undertaken by Bombardier. Then, the Administration Council accepted the policy presented to the shareholders. A British Columbia Pension Fund has also chosen as its objective to ensure that the policy is implemented and respected. Working together is what gives an impact to responsible shareholding.
- TD Bank: Two proposals by shareholders, presented by the Conseil syndical national de retraite *Bâtirente* and which is supported by the *Esther Blondin Fund*, were a topic of discussion with this enterprise. The discussions regarding the first proposal between *Bâtirente* and the TD Bank were so fruitful that the company made a commitment to endorse the Principles of Ecuador<sup>1</sup>. The second proposal, which was maintained, requested that the criteria of sustainability in the remuneration process of its corporate executives be taken into consideration. It was submitted to a vote of the shareholders at the annual assembly of the TD Bank on Thursday, March 19 and received the support of 12.8% of the shareholders. The bank leaders made a commitment to get involved in the setting up such a process.
- Transcontinental: The *Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne* presented another proposal as shareholders, this time with Transcontinental, to ask the company to make a commitment to increase its offer for certified paper FSC<sup>2</sup> (Forest Stewardship Council). The proposal was withdrawn following the commitment made by the enterprise to meet, as early as in January, with representatives of the RRSE and the shareholder to discuss possible solutions to their demand. In April, Transcontinental held a meeting with the paper industry. The meeting should bring about convincing results regarding the FSC certification of forests. In fact, Transcontinental has already indicated, by communiqué, that it would improve its offer of FSC paper in the near future.

## March 2006

- Canadian Natural Resources Ltd: The *Esther's Dream Foundation* has accepted to give its backing to a letter sent to Canadian Natural Resources Ltd, asking the company to alter a decision and to publish the two proposals presented by The Ethical Funds on climate change and the respect of human rights, in the circular letter of the annual assembly. The company had alleged that the person who had made the proposal had less than 5% of the shares in the company. The name *Esther's Dream Foundation* was not mentioned as such, but it was included among the collective Catholic religious congregations, shareholders of company.

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<sup>1</sup> Principles (10) to determine, to evaluate and to manage the social and environmental risks in the financing of projects. These principles, used by the World Bank are applied voluntarily by the companies that subscribe to these principles

<sup>2</sup> The certification of the FSC is recognized worldwide and it is based on the principles of sustainable development, on various international agreements and on the best practices in the forestry sector to guarantee that the methods of exploitation of forests, the production and consumption of paper will respect, among other things, local communities, the First Nations and the boreal forest.

## May 2006

- Barrick Gold: The *Congregation of the Sisters of St. Anne* and the *Esther Blondin Fund* ceded their proxy voting to the members of the RRSE for the annual assembly of shareholders. In their name, these delegates questioned the data contained in the report prepared by Barrick Gold to obtain answers to the concerns of the shareholders who, in 2006, had presented and withdrawn a proposal regarding the Pascua Lama project. *The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary*, the *Durocher Fund* and the *Sisters of St. Anne of Quebec* also accepted that those who intervened speak on their behalf. This is an ongoing dossier! The discussions with the company are made in the name of those who made proposals in 2006, that is The Sisters of St. Anne of Quebec and the *Conseil syndical national de retraite Bâtirente*.

Many other actions that could be mentioned. For example, some administrators were asked not to sell certain bonds, because the RRSE was intending to intervene in the dossiers of the said enterprises. Lately, it was confirmed that we should keep a minimum of shares in a Quebecer company in which the RRSE was going to intervene. The grouping also asked an investments manager regarding the "ethical" filtering of companies.

As mentioned above, these actions are taken with the RRSE. The Congregation's involvement with this grouping promotes collaboration with other congregations and/or organizations that promote the same values. The examples above confirm this.

It is indisputable: the SSA's are involved in social justice issues at all levels. In the footsteps of Mother Marie-Anne, the SSA's wish to continue "*together, to chose life for themselves and for the world*".

*Happy Holidays  
filled with sun  
and nice surprises!*

**Deadline for articles  
for next bulletin :  
September 25.**

### **To contact us**

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