

The following reflection was written by Sr. Ita Duffy, CSJP on the occasion of her 70th anniversary with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace.



In the book of Leviticus, which introduces us to Jubilee, we read:

*And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim
Liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.
It shall be a jubilee for you:
You shall return,
Every one of you,
To your property
And everyone of you to your family.
—Leviticus 25: 10*

Jubilee is a time of celebrating, proclaiming forgiveness and reconciliation—a time of restoration when slaves would be freed, forfeited lands returned and debts forgiven.

Through the ages, this Jubilee message has re-echoed. In 1983, it reverberated and motivated members of the Tri-State Coalition for Responsible Investment to establish the Leviticus Fund. (This coalition, composed of church groups from Connecticut, New Jersey and New York, had previously utilized its power as shareholders to hold corporations accountable to social and environmental concerns.)

The founders of the Leviticus Fund envisioned the creation of this new investment as a way to directly respond to need in low-income community neighborhoods by providing flexible capital and financial services for the development of affordable housing and community facilities throughout New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Investments into Leviticus are made by individuals, organizations, and financial institutions. The generosity of these investors has enabled the fund to:

- build quality, affordable housing
- develop child care facilities
- set up health and social services centers
- generate new jobs by harnessing local talents and skills

At this time I wish to thank and commend the leaders of our province who have maintained membership in the Coalition for Responsible Investment since its inception to the present, and who continue to invest in the Leviticus Fund.

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Happy, too, am I to have had the opportunity to play some small role in the furthering of *Peace through Justice* as a representative of our province at the Coalition for Responsible Investment.

Sr. Ita was born in County Roscommon, Ireland and entered her religious community in 1937. She taught in various schools in New Jersey until 1953, when she was assigned to teach high school in the Philippines. Sr. Ita worked in the Philippines for 25 years and upon her return to the United States served an additional 25 years at the St. Joseph Magazine Office in Jersey City. During these years, she also served as Province representative to the Coalition for Responsible Investment. In 1998 she retired to St. Michael Villa in Englewood Cliffs, where she is peace and justice facilitator.