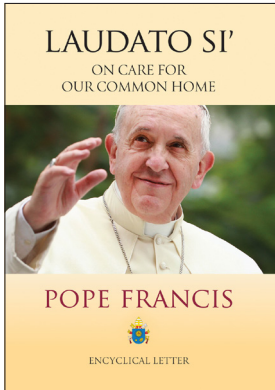




NEWSBRIEF

A publication of the USG-UISG Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

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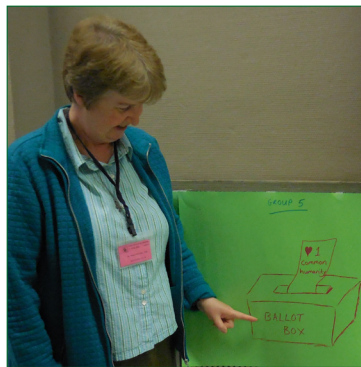


EDITORIAL: This month's Newsbrief shares more deeply our efforts to work in solidarity with one another in the ways we care for the human dignity of every person and promote the common good of all. By consciously integrating our responses, we create a deeper and broader understanding of how our concerns are interconnected. This issue considers our global developments in interculturality, peace building in conflict, collaboration and care for creation.

Laudato Si inspires our responses as Pope Francis reminds us that: "Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and 'take into account the nature of each being and its mutual connection in an ordered system'. Accordingly, our human ability to transform reality must proceed in line with God's original gift of all that is." (LS 5)

LINKS: [Click underlined blue text to open a link or copy and paste the url on your browser window](#)

INTERCULTURALITY: LIVING AND MISSION



Anne McCabe, SM shows the drawing of a ballot box in which we can vote for a united human family.

The focus of the May SEDOS residential seminar was to provide opportunities to reflect on the experience of being in intercultural settings. This entailed two main concerns: one of 'living' in intercultural setting, and the other of doing 'mission in an intercultural way.

As we gathered together in the "upper room" ... a number of participants carrying different coloured pieces of cloth for our opening liturgy... we had in our view the SEDOS logo! The cloths, the logo, the assembled people, so many different nationalities, cultures and languages—everything spoke of the "Culture of Encounter"—a reaching out, a fostering of dialogue and friendship across wider circles... an energetic "back and forth" that connects, enhances, harmonises and is always creating something new and dynamic.

And so the seminar opened! Brother Emili Turu, FMS, President, gave the opening address, inviting us to break down the walls that divide and to enter into "the mystique of living together" which makes of our lives a sacred pilgrimage.

Two questions emerged at the start of our time together; questions that surfaced again and again during the following days:

How does interculturality affect us, transform us even? How do we learn from it?

Diversity can enrich us only when we see it, not as a threat, but as an opportunity to learn... so we must be prepared to listen to and learn from others... to keep starting over and over again as different peoples, different cultures are welcomed into our communities... We need to build together and there are many steps along the way to conversion and transformation!

Acceptance, adaptation, motivation, sensitivity, openness, appreciation, commitment, desire, dialogue... all are needed if we are to truly meet the other. And meeting the other is, we were reminded, not simply an option but an obligation.

We need to have the courage to leave or step out of our own culture... re-view our reality and way of thinking and allow ourselves to be questioned by the relationship we establish with the other. Elisabetta Flick, SA used the example of Jesus and the Canaanite woman, where Jesus was pushed to open up his mission and discover new ways and paths. We need to constantly re-evaluate our own judgements and criteria.

Through our unique charisms we are invited to let go and be open to the new, to live the art of proximity, pulling down the barriers and borders that are an obstacle to change and to the call of the Spirit. We are called to dare to share resources and skills in order to create new projects in dialogue with others—making the least and the poor the principal characters and respecting their space and needs.

For me... the seminar was an invitation to a change of perspective and a change of heart. It brought to mind

that American Indian proverb: “Great Spirit, help me never to judge another until I have walked in his moccasins.” Put very simply, it was all about right relationships!

I want to revisit the question: “How can people from different countries, cultures and languages feel called to belong to a Congregation with a Charism that comes out of a particular country, context and time? How can Charism become universal? I want to revisit this question...continually.—Contributed by Sr. Anne McCabe, SM

For more information and access to the wonderful presentations, please go to: <http://www.sedosmission.org/web/en/news/185-sedos-seminar-2016>.

UISG: WEAVING GLOBAL SOLIDARITY FOR LIFE



JPIC Promoters supervised the JPIC Commission display table at the UISG Plenary Assembly in Rome, May 9-13, which was held at the Ergife Palace Hotel. Much of their time was spent connecting with the superior generals in attendance, with whom they shared recent developments in the areas of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

According to Sr. Alphonsa Kiven, TSSF, “It was an energizing experience for me. Sharing the aims and the various initiatives of the JPIC Commission, I realized that my emphasis on the importance of solidarity and networking got the interest of the African Superiors more than the others. I took the opportunity to emphasize that no congregation, even with 2,000 members, can make it today alone. I encouraged them to make use of the various initiative groups to make the voice of Africa be heard. A smile to all was the gift I offered.”

Those who stopped by our table told us they were happy with the website. Some have attended JPIC seminars and meetings and some identified themselves with JPIC issues, etc. It was a chance to exchange experiences and share information about the work being done by the JPIC working groups.—Contributed by Sr. Ignatia Asoh, TSSF

For more information and access to these inspiring and challenging talks please go to: <http://www.internationalunionsuperiors-general.org/meetings/assembly/>.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND DIALOGUE SKILL-BUILDING

A Peacebuilding Workshop on “Conflict Analysis and Dialogue Skill-building” was held on May 16, at St. Thomas Aquinas University–Angelicum. It was sponsored by the United States Embassy to the Holy See in conjunction with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue. The presenters, PalwashaKakar, Dr. Illana Lancaster and Ariana Barth, lead the participants through group discussion, videos, exercises and lectures taking them deeper into the skills for effective conflict resolution. Sessions to introduce a basic understanding of conflict analysis and how to identify signs of conflict that could have the potential to escalate into violence were facilitated by trainers from the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, DC. They also introduced possible intervention strategies.



Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love, Catholic University of America professor.

A video of Catholic University of America professor, Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love, who was unable to be join the event due to an injury, was presented. She reflected on the pervasive presence of conflict in all parts of the world and the value of women and men religious in addressing the causes of the conflict and the possible solutions of the conflict, as well as the

needs of those caught in the conflict. Men and women religious have a significant role because they are seen as not being a part of the conflict and are trustworthy. The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 further supported their work in assisting to resolve conflicts in countries where religious freedom was at stake. Dr. Love explained that conflict risk is greatest if a country has suffered a previous cycle of violence in the past five years, is suffering from poverty and there is a declining economy. She cited the Dominicans of Iraq as an example of women religious who have met the needs of the peoples in areas of violence. The key to the Sisters success seems to be their long-term and sustainable relationships with the violated.

Following Dr. Love’s presentation, USIP trainers led participants through a framework of conflict analysis:

- Self-Assessment—What is your role in this conflict?
- Actors—Who is a part of the conflict?
- Power/Resources—Who has power/resources and what kind of power/resources do they have?
- Root Causes—What are underlying reasons for the conflict?
- Stage of the Conflict—What stage is the conflict in? (Latent? Emerging? Escalation? Stalemate? Settlement?)

- History of Peacemaking Efforts—What past efforts have been made to manage the conflict?

“Dinner for Two,” a video cartoon characterizing these six traits, was presented, followed by a discussion and application.

Participants also learned about ways of communicating that can support transformation of conflict. Debate versus dialogue was defined and explained. Active listening was key to conflict resolution. Participants were given the opportunity to share examples of conflict and practice in roles of listener and observer.



Sr. Joann Bendar at the chart.

Men and women religious are encouraged to play significant roles in the need for reconciliation of conflict in all its manifestations around the world in each of their ministries. This involvement can take place as observation or witness, education or formation, advocacy or empowerment, conciliation or mediation. The facilitators finally offered examples of “best practices” in the field of conflict resolution.—

Contributed by Joann Bendar, SCC

For more information please go to <https://www.usip.org/>.

COLLABORATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN THE CHURCH



CWG members (L-R): Patrizia Morgante; Felix Mushobozi, CPPS; Kate McElwee, Ken Thesing, MM; Christine Anderson, FCJ; Tess Horvath, SUSC.

The English JPIC Promoters meeting on May 18 centered on issues and ideas that arise from the work of the Collaboration of Women and Men in the Church Working Group.

The presentation began with thoughtful reflections and prayer using sacred scripture and music. How do we in the Church see the reciprocity that is in the relationship of women and men in Church and in the broader society? Are we able to image a balanced, equal relationship? Participants reflected after the experience of two movements of modelling an exchange of reciprocity; the reflections spoke to the participants own past experiences, whether positive or negative of collaboration in their ministry or in their congregations.

A slide show presented some quotations and ideas from Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia* and his Question & Answer Assembly with the UISG Superiors. Pope Francis uses words familiar to and used by modern women and men, words and phrases such as ‘women’s rights,’ ‘roles of decision making,’ the extremes of patriarchal culture that considered women inferior. Pope Francis called on the Church to take up a new way of relating to modern men and women. The equal dignity of women and men speaks for a growing reciprocity. Some forms of feminism are considered inadequate and gender is culturally determined. Gender and complementarity are part of the Church’s teachings, but not gender stereotypes: ‘masculinity and femininity are not rigid categories.’

There is a ‘tonal shift’ in the way the Church relates to feminism; Pope Francis insists this is the work of the Holy Spirit. And Pope Francis speaks to the issue of decision making processes in the Church. For him, the influence of decisions is very important, but also the development of decisions is key and women must enter into this process of development and into discussion.

The participants had a lively exchange of their own thoughts and reactions to the ideas presented. Much more needs to be done in the Church and in our own congregations of men and women.—*Contributed by Ken Thesing, MM*

Some resources for follow-up: <http://americamagazine.org/issue/look-margins> by Meghan Clark, April 8 2016; <https://millennialjournal.com/2016/04/09/pope-francis-the-feminist/> by Christopher Hale; <http://americamagazine.org/issue/article/francisc-family-and-feminism> by Megan McCabe; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/catholic-women-react-to-pope-franciss-initiative-for-women_us_5734cf39e4b08f96c1827ee5, comments; <https://zenit.org/articles/popess-q-a-at-meeting-with-international-union-of-superiors-general>.

HELPING VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT ZONES

The secretariat of the JPIC Commission is working with the United Kingdom (UK) Embassy to the Holy See to help victims of sexual violence in conflict zones. We continue to look for religious congregations present in the lake region, specifically in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to collaborate in helping the victims of sexual violence.



Baroness Anelay and Sheila Kinsey, FCJM. *Photo courtesy of the UK Embassy to the Holy See.*

The UK Human Rights Minister and the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Baroness Anelay, was the main speaker. She was accompanied by Ambassador Nigel



(L-R): Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Holy See, Nigel Baker, Baroness Anelay and Tom Woodroffe with the head office of PMSR on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. *Photo courtesy of the UK Embassy to the Holy See.*

Baker and Tom Woodroffe with the head office of PMSR on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict. Over 50 religious women and men from different congregations, mainly those who have a presence in Congo DRC attended the event. The Secretariat of the Vatican State and the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace were also present.

The Baroness spoke about the project on sexual violence in conflict, with particular emphasis on efforts in the DRC. She shared her experience in dealing with this very delicate issue in different parts of the world (Colombia, DRC, Somalia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Syria, Iraq, Nepal), first by giving the background of the UK government initiatives that started in 2012. This led to the Protocol which set basic standards of best practices on the documentation and investigation of sexual violence as a crime under international law. Although the protocol is non-binding on states, it has been a useful tool, she said, to support efforts by national and international justice and human rights practitioners. The Baroness was appreciative of many initiatives and work religious women and men do by providing for basic needs and psychological and spiritual counseling to the victims. She commented that frequently the religious “are the only ones who remain on the ground during and long after conflicts have ended. Religious communities have an extremely important role to play in ending sexual violence in conflict. One of the UK’s priorities for 2016 is to address the stigmatization of survivors that leave them ostracized from their families and communities” she said.

During the second session one sister and a missionary priest told stories of the involvement of religious in working with the victims of sexual violence. Both are working in the eastern part of the DRC. The sister spoke about their work of compassion which often is about restoring human dignity to the victims and making them feel they are loved and helping them live with whatever had happened to them. She cited health care services, support for children born of this horrible experience and integration into communities. The missionary priest spoke of the center of rehabilitation for girls who were abducted and abused for years by

fighters, and how such a work was live giving for them. He described the formation program that helps them progressively become self reliant by empowering them to have a life of their own. He spoke of collaboration with other faith based communities doing the same ministry. And, noted the resilience that the girls and women have in their struggles to build new hope for their future. He also spoke of preventive measures that he and others are taking to educate society, especially the youth on the issue of sexual assault and respect of human dignity. There were challenges mentioned in this ministry of compassion: widespread impunity in the society, which makes it important that the protocol be known. At the legal level, impunity is complicated by the failed status of the political structures with multiple actors who have vested interests in a failed state. Local people feel helpless because they are left alone without consistent support.

During the third session Danae van der Straten Ponthoz, an official from the UK government, presented the International Protocol on the investigation and documentation of sexual violence in conflict (available in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish). After the presentation of the protocol a rich discussion followed elicited by questions and comments from the participants. Some of the themes that were discussed included: making the Protocol more known; building trustful relationships between peacekeepers and local community; collaborating between all stakeholders working on this issue and sharing best practices.

Some religious participants at the conference expressed their interest in joining efforts for the project, We sincerely hope we can turn the engagement and desire to be involved into a concrete partnership that joins our efforts to make a difference.

For more information: United Kingdom Ambassador Baker’s blog, reflecting on the main (and public) elements of Baroness Anelay’s visit, <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/nigelbaker/2016/05/26/catholic-religious-on-the-front-line/>; Lucetta Scaraffia’s L’Osservatore Romano, ‘Contro la violenza sessuale’ <http://www.osservatoreromano.va/it/news/contro-la-violenza-sessuale>; Vatican Radio interview, ‘UK supports religious combating sexual violence in conflict’ http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/05/23/uk_supports_religious_combatting_sexual_violence_in_conflict/1231859.

NONVIOLENCE AND JUST PEACE CONFERENCE STATEMENT RELEASED

The Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference continues to stimulate conversations and engagements around the world. A number of articles have been written in support of the efforts to promote nonviolence: English (27) French (6) and German (10). Catholic Working Group for Nonviolence (CWGN) has been formed to carry the Gospel initiatives forward. Soon, a process will be developed, which will allow organizations and individuals to sign-onto the statement from the conference, “An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Com-

mit to the Centrality of Nonviolence.” For access to the articles and statement go to <http://www.paxchristi.net/news/appeal-catholic-church-recommit-centrality-gospel-nonviolence/5855#sthash.RkIk6WZX.q2eZCn5.dpbs>.

GEOLOGISTS AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION WORKING GROUP DISCUSS GEOETHICS



(L-R): Dr. Silvia Peppoloni and Dr. Guiseppi di Capua of the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG) and Sr. Stefanie Lucchesi, OP. All are geologist. Sr. Stefanie is also a member of ICWG.

Drs. Silvia Peppoloni and Guiseppi Di Capua, co-founders of the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG), joined members of the Integrity of Creation Working Group (ICWG) on May 26 in a very rich and engaging conversation on the environment. Their commitment to the scientific methodology of earth sciences, combined with the development of ethical values, has led to their promotion of geoethics. This is creating a new narrative about care for the earth. They spoke of respect of life, the environment and humankind along with professional values of transparency and honesty in research and practice. They take into account national and regional differences in their narrative. Dr Peppoloni said that their organization puts a lot of effort in communicating their aims and values to colleagues and scientists, the media, local grassroots populations and, in a particular way, to the companies who need to maintain credibility in the face of an increasingly environmentally-aware public. The fact is that economics drives much of the harmful effect of environmental activity. The aim of IAPG is to encourage cultural awareness of the environment and a key tool in this goal is education. They seek to empower communities to understand the social costs of mining and other industries connected to their environment. For more information about IAPG, visit <http://www.geoethics.org>.—Contributed by Anne Corry, RSCJ

IMPACTS OF MINING IN THE NEWS

The *National Catholic Report* (NCR) has begun to publish a series of articles on the impacts of mining. Participants who completed the 2013 Mining Survey developed by the ICWG continue to be an important

resource for this research. We contributed to articles which referred to the United Nations and to the mining in Ghana and Guatemala. We are grateful for the excellent coverage of the journalists in bringing to light this critical issue. For more information: <http://glo-balsistersreport.org/series/mining>.

REQUEST FOR PRAYERS



(L-R): Teresa de Jesús Pelancios, FMA and Areliz Martinez, Capuchin.

Venezuela. The Spanish and Portuguese JPIC Promoters' prayer service in the month of May was for all of the persons affected by the situation in Venezuela. The country is suffering from economic decline, shortages of food and water, electrical blackouts, government shut downs and increase in violent crimes.

By reflecting on the critical situation in the country through thoughtful readings, personal testimonies, songs, scripture and petitions a very moving experience of being in solidarity with those suffering in this country was created. We asked for social justice and peace throughout the land.



Veronika Theresia Racková, SSpS. It is with sadness that we ask you to remember in your prayers Sr. Veronika Theresia Racková, SSpS, and for all those who knew and loved her a special way. On May 14, while driving an ambulance, she was attacked by a suspected group of soldiers and died from all of her injuries on May 21. It is the hope and prayer of her Sisters, that the self-giving life of Sr. Veronika will herald a new beginning of peace and reconciliation in South Sudan. For more information on this beautiful Sister, please go to <http://worldssps.org/solemn-requiem-mass-sr-veronika/>.

JUNE INTENTIONS FOR POPE FRANCIS

Universal: Human Solidarity—That the aged, marginalized, and those who have no one may find, even within the huge cities of the world, opportunities for encounter and solidarity.

Evangelization: Seminarians and Novices—That seminarians and men and women entering religious life may have mentors who live the joy of the Gospel and prepare them wisely for their mission.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- June 4: International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (A/RES/ES-7/8)
- June 5: World Environment Day (A/RES/2994 (XXVII))
- June 8: World Oceans Day (A/RES/63/111)
- June 12: World Day Against Child Labour
- June 15: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (A/RES/66/127)
- June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (A/RES/49/115)
- June 19: International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict (A/RES/69/293)
- June 20: World Refugee Day (A/RES/55/76)
- June 26: International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (A/RES/42/112)
- June 26: United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture (A/RES/52/149).

JPIC EVENTS IN JUNE 2016

- June 6: English CORE Group Meeting, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Fratelli de Cristiane
- June 12 - 19: *Laudato Si* Week <http://laudatosi-week.org/index.php/resources/> and GCCM Resources at <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/resources/>. Also available in English and Spanish on <http://www.jpicroma.org/#!laudato-si/ccaz>.
- June 14: Forum—The Church: Today, Tomorrow, and the Next Day. A reflection on the front line of work, family and society, 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane, Via Aurelia, 476. Translations in English, Spanish and Italian. For more information, please go to http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a_e708e54e323f49e69ede09f-ce2e8dd4b.pdf.
- November 9 - 12: JPIC Formation Workshop in the Spirit of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. For more information and to register, <http://www.jpicroma.org/#!workshop-registration/c1s1o>.

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