



HERMANAS DE LA CARIDAD  SISTERS OF CHARITY OF
DE VERBO ENCARNADO THE INCARNATE WORD

December 2016

Seeds | By: Katty Huanuco, CCVI and Jennifer Reyes Lay |

Through various events, information, and commemorations of the Declaration of Human Rights, we are renewed in spirit to continue promoting the human dignity of every person. It has been very encouraging that many in our Congregation organized themselves, fasted, and prayed for the care of creation this past December 10th. Thank you for joining together in this way!

In the face of both old and new challenges in the world, we are called to continuous action. Poverty, corruption, violence, exclusion, and discrimination call us to greater commitment, solidarity, ethics, respect, and dialogue. We must love even more the way of the Incarnate Word. Therefore, in this edition we offer you resources about peace and nonviolence that seek to strengthen the foundations of a more inclusive, peaceful, and tolerant world.

We journey together singing, “May our struggles and concerns for this earth not take away the joy of our hope” (LS 244). Merry Christmas! Thank you for all we have shared together in 2016! We count on your faith, commitment, and creativity to continue sowing seeds of justice, peace, and care for creation in 2017.

Human Trafficking

REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK. December 2016 offers us an occasion to look back and see how collaborative efforts within the anti-human-trafficking community have reaped concrete successes.

There are more residences and programs dedicated to providing safe havens for women and children coming out of situations of sexual exploitation and providing them healing from physical and psychological abuse.

Tech companies are designing tools to help enslaved workers be able to anonymously report on their plight and get help via their cell phones.

Consumers and retailers are growing in awareness of the importance of monitoring the supply chains of goods manufactured and brought into the country for sale. The tragedies of collapsed garment factories or of fish caught at the expense of enslaved men on fishing boats far out at sea is less and less tolerated.

Children, forced to work in dangerous mineral mines so we can buy new electronic devices every year, are no longer so easily ignored.

Parents are demanding that social media companies provide real online safety for their children.

Travelers expect hotels to prevent access to porn on their in-room cable channels.

Documentaries and fictional films have brought the reality of human trafficking into our vision and consciousness at increasingly meaningful levels.

These important achievements are the results of creative efforts by experts, as well as in response to expectations of concerned citizens.

We ought to feel a real sense of accomplishment and gratitude for these signs of progress, thanks to hard work, perseverance and creativity. Our global community becomes more compassionate as these efforts extend outward toward the vulnerable.

December 2016 can equally be an occasion to look ahead to the new year 2017 with resolve to continue our efforts, to invite more people to get involved, and to hold accountable those responsible for exploitation within labor sectors of every sort all over the globe.

More needs to be done to help parents find the information they need to protect their kids from tricks of online predation or Internet lures into pornography.

More needs to be done to help men realize their responsibility to help end the demand for the sexual exploitation of others.

More needs to be done to require businesses to monitor supply chains and discontinue contracts with suppliers who exploit workers.

More needs to be done to recognize sporting events as occasions of labor exploitation and sexual exploitation.

More needs to be done to see clearly how human trafficking advances when we ignore the interconnections among global climate change, political unrest and war, and the mass migrations of people. Being forced to leave home, culture, and means of a livelihood makes people prey to exploiters, who profit from their vulnerability.

Let us make it our collective resolve that in 2017 we will find groups with which to collaborate for the benefit of our global community, with special attention to lessening the harm and exploitation of the vulnerable. By Sister Jean Schafer, SDS (Compiler/Editor of the 'Stop Trafficking' newsletter and a member of the USCSAHT Board of Directors.)

JANUARY: NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH. Although January is the beginning of a New Year, the topic of human trafficking is not new nor will it offer millions of women, men, and children across the globe, including the United States, an opportunity for a new lease on life.

The month ensures visibility on the issue of trafficking but January 31st cannot be the end of reminding the public that the slavery of people is intolerable in any society that calls itself human. In some parts of the world, January is a month that is dark and cold, an apt parallel to the millions whose lives have been relegated to commodity status, to slavery, and live in a world darkened by the selfishness and greed of those whose own lives are without light.

Who are these slaves who live in the shadow of death, whose dignity is abused and ignored and whose lives are given in obedience to money makers and evil doers? They are children who will never see the inside of a classroom because they work like "little adults" day in and day out, harvesting the cocoa for chocolate they will never taste.

They are young men who cannot dream of a better life because every moment is governed by the number of fish they catch in waters far away from their homelands. They are older men who work in the depths of the earth, mining coal that will warm the homes they will never visit.

These slaves are women who will never stand in their own kitchens and prepare meals for their children because they are in servitude in other kitchens to masters or mistresses whose consciences do not allow an opening for the light of human respect.

St. Francis of Assisi says that “all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a small candle.” It may not be a candle, but each of us has the power to illuminate the paths of those whose lives we touch or even never will touch. Each of us is called to be a bearer of light. The prayers we offer can be that light. Prayer is without boundaries. It can reach across genders, cultures, countries and even into the lives of the most desperate. Prayer offers life-support and the difference we make through prayer can make all the difference.

Remembering those who live in darkness – the trafficked as well as the traffickers and buyers of the slave trade – we pray the words of the song: Christ be our Light, shine in our hearts, shine in the darkness. By Sister Margaret Nacke, CSJ (founder of the Bakhita Initiative and a Founding Member of USCSAHT).

Environment

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS HALTS DAPL: The department of the Army will not approve an easement that will allow the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline to cross under Lake Oahe. The following statement was released by Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II.

“Today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that it will not be granting the easement to cross Lake Oahe for the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. Instead, the Corps will be undertaking an environmental impact statement to look at possible alternative routes. We wholeheartedly support the decision of the administration and commend with the utmost gratitude the courage it took on the part of President Obama, the Army Corps, the Department of Justice and the Department of the Interior to take steps to correct the course of history and to do the right thing.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and all of Indian Country will be forever grateful to the Obama Administration for this historic decision.

We want to thank everyone who played a role in advocating for this cause. We thank the tribal youth who initiated this movement. We thank the millions of people around the globe who expressed support for our cause. We thank the thousands of people who came to the camps to support us, and the tens of thousands who donated time, talent, and money to our efforts to stand against this pipeline in the name of protecting our water. We especially thank all of the other tribal nations and jurisdictions who stood in solidarity with us, and we stand ready to stand with you if and when your people are in need.

Throughout this effort I have stressed the importance of acting at all times in a peaceful and prayerful manner – and that is how we will respond to this decision. With this decision we look forward to being able to return home and spend the winter with our families and loved ones, many of whom have sacrificed as well. We look forward to celebrating in wopila, in thanks, in the coming days.

We hope that Kelcey Warren, Governor Dalrymple, and the incoming Trump administration respect this decision and understand the complex process that led us to this point. When it comes to infrastructure development in Indian Country and with respect to treaty lands, we must strive to work together to reach decisions that reflect the multifaceted considerations of tribes.

Treaties are paramount law and must be respected, and we welcome dialogue on how to continue to honor that moving forward. We are not opposed to energy independence, economic development, or national security concerns but we must ensure that these decisions are made with the considerations of our Indigenous peoples.

To our local law enforcement, I hope that we can work together to heal our relationship as we all work to protect the lives and safety of our people. I recognize the extreme stress that the situation caused and look forward to a future that reflects more mutual understanding and respect.

Again, we are deeply appreciative that the Obama Administration took the time and effort to genuinely consider the broad spectrum of tribal concerns. In a system that has continuously been stacked against us from every angle, it took tremendous courage to take a new approach to our nation-to-nation relationship, and we will be forever grateful." By Cannon Ball, N.D.

Living Laudato Si

CHRISTMAS RECYCLING CAMPAIGN. Christmas reminds us of a creator God who needed the warmth of his creation. Christmas is a time of gathering, exchanging hugs, love, and tenderness. For that reason, the youth of the parish Reina de los Cielos in Los Olivos (Lima, Peru), organized a Recycling Campaign for Christmas. Energized by Pope Francis, the youth from the nine different youth groups which make up the youth ministry, invited the entire community to participate with simple acts of recycling, reducing, and reusing.

Last year, through studying the encyclical Laudato Si, many youth leaders were asking how they could apply the recommendations of Pope Francis within the parish community. I remember that there were a lot of ideas presented, but one of the most concrete was to do a "collect everything" (aka recycle). So that's what we did, and it went really well! This action was even stronger this year, since Pope Francis incorporated the care of creation as the eighth work of mercy.

While this work challenges us, I can also say that it offers us a true opportunity for hope. To see the youth recycling and saying "this can be recycled" is amazing. It offers a living witness. How wonderful it is to watch them taking the care of creation into every decision, living it out in their youth events where they are reducing the use of non-recyclable materials. There is still a lot of work to do to restore our relationship to the planet, and that includes in the parish, but it is really beautiful to see the youth saying, "Laudato Si," when they choose to recycle, reduce, or reuse!

I would like to thank each member of the youth communities of Eje San Martin, Vida en Cristo, Nuevo Amanecer, Lumen Gentium, JAE, Eje Villa Sol, San Francisco, Caphonu y Juventus for having started an honest commitment to protect God's creation. It is also worth mentioning that the funds from the sale of the recycled materials collected in this campaign will be used to help provide Chocolatadas (Christmas parties) provided for children and the elderly in various marginalized communities throughout Lima.

Sister Story

When you go to her community, there is always a local newspaper that she has already read. The associates that she accompanies have a leading role in the ecclesial and social life in her community. Yes, in this edition we want to highlight our sister Leonila Gonzalez Siller, a Mexican CCVI, who is accompanying and promoting human dignity in Chimbote, Peru.

After 26 years in Peru, our sister Leonila remembers with gratitude and joy her first days in this country as a missionary. One of her first ministries in Peru was to accompany the rural community in Cambio Puente in their life and faith.

"I remember with gratitude Luzmila, one of the catechists of the Cambio Puente community, because despite all her work at home and in the countryside, she was always ready to support and encourage everyone, to carry out all the initiatives that were available to the community. Nowadays she is still that 'bridge' that connects with others to achieve a better quality of life for her people. For

me, she has been a huge support in our work of evangelization and remains a great witness of faith, sacrifice and love."

In her day to day work with the rural women, visiting the sick in Chimbote, and accompanying the parish Bible group, she has shown the way to realize the Kingdom of God with joy and creativity. *"For me to be a Sister of the Charity of the Incarnate Word is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, promoting Human Dignity, because the Incarnate Word always served the most needy, lifting them from their misery and restoring their rights as Sons and Daughters of God."*

The ongoing challenge to promote justice, peace and the care of creation today in Peru has convinced her that this can only be possible by loving one another as sisters and brothers, always remembering that the 'other,' including creation itself, is also a sister.

"We really need to welcome people with love and kindness, respect them and listen to them, joining in solidarity with them in the situations in which they are living, especially those who suffer the most. We need to love, enjoy and care for creation as God's perfect masterpiece, allowing it to be what it was created to be and not allowing it to be destroyed."

This is Leonis, as we affectionately call her. She is a simple woman, cheerful and above all: sister. A sister who with her words and actions continues to give witness promoting justice, peace and care for the earth, believing that this is what Jesus himself would do today.

Thank you Sister Leonila for all your love and commitment in the CCVI Mission, especially for spreading the joy of service every day in the concrete realities of your beloved port of Chimbote.

Peace

PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE. The World Day of Peace was initiated by Pope Paul VI and is celebrated every January 1st. This year, for 2017, Pope Francis has given it the theme of, "Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace." Nonviolence has a new and expanded meaning: not just as an ideal, a hope, a moral rejection of violence, of destructive impulses, but rather a realistic political focus, open to hope.

On behalf of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office, we offer you this prayer resource to aid in your own prayer and reflection for the World Day of Peace.

Setting: Create a small altar in the center of your group with symbols of peace from your culture, one large candle lit in the center, and smaller unlit candles around the larger one.

Opening Song: Peace Before Us by David Haas
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pevH0Ez6bms>)

Leader: Every day, we hear of issues—such as war, terrorism, or social violence—that affect us and our brothers and sisters around the world. The problems can seem so complex that they can leave us paralyzed, overwhelmed, or even numb. We may wonder, "What can I possibly do?"

Reader 1: In his message for the 50th World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1, 2017, Pope Francis urges us to overcome such challenges by replacing cautiousness with courage and cynicism with hope. This year Pope Francis has asked Catholics to focus on Christian nonviolence as a style of politics for peace. He says in his opening statement, "I wish peace to every man, woman and child, and I pray that the image and likeness of God in each person will enable us to acknowledge one another as sacred gifts endowed with immense dignity. Especially in situations of conflict, let us respect this, our "deepest dignity", and make active nonviolence our way of life."

Reader 2: In our families, schools, and institutions, we must learn the things that make for peace. There are effective Christian ways to counter war, terrorism, and social and domestic violence that can be accomplished without resorting to violence or military options. We must reach out to engage in positive encounters with our neighbors, in civil dialogue for the common good, and building skills to address these problems in meaningful ways. Working together, we can creatively build “cultures of peace” and our churches can become places of peacemaking in our communities.

Scripture Reading: John 14: 26-27

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid.”

Questions for Reflection and Sharing:

What can you do to affirm the centrality of active nonviolence in the message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church, and to the calling to be part of the healing and reconciling of both people and our earth?

How might the Holy Spirit be calling our faith community to be active and creative peacemakers?

Witnesses for peace and nonviolence

Leader: Loving Creator and giver of all life, We thank you for the many people who have gone before us:

Reader 2 For those who have lived out Jesus’ example of love

Reader 1 For those who have worked tirelessly to make sure that all people are treated with dignity

Reader 2 For those who have taught us how to pray

Reader 1 For those who have shown us how to forgive

Reader 2 For those who helped us to cross boundaries

Reader 1 For those who have tried to live your way of nonviolence

Reader 2 For those who have lived out your kingdom of justice, love and peace

Reader 1 We name them now before you...

(People can be invited to come forward to light a candle and, if they wish, name out loud a person who has been an example of peacemaking for them.)

Leader: We know that we do not go alone, for the path is brightened by those who have gone before us. May our lives also be a shining example to others. We ask the Incarnate Word to give us courage, strength and wisdom to be artisans of peace and nonviolence. When we are afraid, help us to remember your words, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.’

Prayer for Conversion to Gospel Nonviolence.

Blessed are the peacemakers, you said, O Lord, for they shall be called children of God. We ask you, Lord, to forgive us for the times we’ve caused division or misunderstanding in our communities. We know that communion is not achieved through violence, but through constant conversion. We ask the grace to not speak ill, not criticize, not to be sowers of strife, so that peace can reign in our hearts. From this conversion of the heart, Lord, lead us to a conversion in actions. First in our hearts, then in our world incarnate the power of gospel nonviolence. Give us the imagination to

overcome all forms of violence with creative nonviolence. Revive in our church's theology of peace the nonviolent message of Jesus, that once again our churches may be centers of learning for nonviolence and just peace, centers of conversion from violence to peace, and from loneliness to joy. Amen

Closing Song: Let There Be Peace on Earth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57-0i7qghhU>

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: PEACE IS THE WAY. One of the many names for Jesus, the Incarnate Word, was the "Prince of Peace" (Eph 2:14 and Is 9:6). In this time of Advent as we prepare to welcome the Prince of Peace into the world anew, we take a few minutes to reflect on this concept of peace in our own lives, our communities, and our world.

Jesus came to bring peace to the world. The first message of the risen Christ to his disciples was, "*Peace be with you*" (Lk 24:36). We exchange these greeting with one another during our weekly celebration of the Eucharist: "Peace of Christ be with you." So what is this peace of Christ? The Peace Christ revealed in the Scriptures is not just about the absence of war, but rather the fullness of life.

Think about the words of the prophet Isaiah that Jesus said he came to fulfill, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Lk 4:17-21) This is the peace we are called to help co-create with the Spirit of God.

"To be at peace, humankind must be in right relationship with one another and with God." The work of peace, justice, and the care of creation all seeks to bring healing and wholeness to these broken relationships between ourselves, the planet, and God. We can see how all of the areas are interwoven, and how we will not be able to achieve the peace of God, without first achieving justice in our world.

Looking at the realities facing us today, we have a lot of work to do to realize the peace and justice of God. We are inundated with news and stories of violence and injustice in our world today. This violence can take many forms whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual. All that denies the dignity and equal worth of all God's creation is a form of violence.

One of the most blatant forms of physical and psychological violence is the perpetual warfare and exorbitant military spending of the U.S. government. How can we ignore the pain and final messages of the people in Aleppo experiencing violent confrontations and bombings? And there are many other parts of the world experiencing the same violence of war and conflict.

"America Has Been At War 93% of the Time – 222 Out of 239 Years – Since 1776." 54% of the Federal Discretionary Budget in 2016 went to Military and Defense. Gun violence continues to plague our communities, with over 13,000 deaths and over 26,000 injuries from firearms in 2015.

In Mexico, it is now going on ten years since the start of the "war against drug trafficking" (2006), and even if the main Mexican drug kingpins have been detained, *their capture or abasement by the federal forces has not translated into a decrease of violence in the country or a weakening of the drug cartels.* In reality, there were 172,876 reported homicides from 2007-2016, according to the statistics of the National Public Security System (SNSP), and 28,937 people were disappeared, according to the National Registry of Missing or Missing Persons.

Although the internal war in Peru ended in 2000, remnants of terrorist groups and drug trafficking operating in the valley of the Apurímac, Ene and Mantaro rivers (VRAEM) have become a priority for the State which is why they continue to strengthen the institution of the Armed Forces.

And while some countries have reduced spending on defense, in Peru defense spending has increased 1.7 billion soles between 2012 and 2016.

The face of victims of violence in Peru is that of a young woman. A recent study by the Catholic Pontifical University in Peru indicates that at the national level that 7 out of 10 women between the ages of 18 to 29 have been victims of violence; and in Lima-Callao it is as high as 9 out of 10. In fact, on average, 11 femicides and 23 attempted murders are reported each month, *the highest figures in the last seven years* according to the Ministry of Women.

Selfishness, hard heartedness, intolerance, fundamentalism... the world is hurting. Humanity has turned against itself. We need to ask for forgiveness for the destruction of so many lives. We need to rethink our relationships. We need to work for peace; life depends on it.

So what can we do to be artisans of peace? Earlier this year representatives from around the world gathered to discuss experiences of nonviolence, Jesus' way of nonviolence, how Nonviolence and Just Peace is already being lived out in communities, and how to move beyond unending wars – replacing the doctrine of “Just War” with “Just Peace.”

The final statement coming out of this gathering is titled: “An Appeal to the Catholic Church to Recommit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence.” Some of the highlights of that appeal include: incorporating nonviolence explicitly into the life and work of the Church, training ourselves in nonviolent practices and strategies, initiating a global conversation on nonviolence, rejecting “just war theory,” and being a prophetic voice to challenge unjust world powers.

Pope Francis for the World Day of Peace also calls us to recognize: “*Non-Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace.*” This is because as people of faith we cannot remain indifferent. We must commit ourselves to incarnating the Peace of Christ in the world.

What if we each made a commitment for this coming year to support an environment of “just peace” through active non-violence? What kind of impact might we be able to have collectively? “Jesus, the Incarnate Word, called his disciples to love their enemies (Mt 5:44), which includes respecting the image of God in all persons; to offer no violent resistance to one who does evil (Mt 5:39); to become peacemakers; to forgive and repent; and to be abundantly merciful (Mt 5-7). Neither passive nor weak, Jesus' nonviolence was the power of love in action.”

Please, take some time to pray with an image of the Incarnate Word, asking him to teach you his way of peaceful love in action.

Biblical Text: Mt 5:38-42

How do you understand Jesus' proposed third way of nonviolence?

What does it mean to return good for evil?

How do you seek to understand someone who is different from you?

How do you confront those who are violent or promote violence?

We have been called to promote practices and strategies of nonviolence.

How can you learn more about nonviolent strategies and skills and incorporate them into your own life and ministry?

How is Nonviolence and Just Peace connected to our incarnational spirituality, recognizing Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the Prince of Peace?

We end this reflection asking the God of Life to give us all we need to realize God's peace, the peace that has been sown into our very being.

Give us your peace – Pedro Casaldaliga

Give us, Lord, that strange Peace
That sprouts in the midst of struggle
Like a flower of fire;
That breaks in the middle of the night
Like a hidden song;
That arrives in the midst of death
Like a longed for kiss.

Give us the Peace of those always walking,
Stripped of any advantage,
Clothed in the wind of nebulous hope.
That Peace of the poor
Who have already overcome fear.
The Peace of the free
Who cling to life.
The Peace that is shared
In fraternal equality
Like water and the Host.

Immigration

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY -- DECEMBER 18: Challenging racism and xenophobia, detentions and deportations --Lifting up human rights and justice for all migrants and refugees

December 18 is International Migrants Day, and marks the 21st anniversary of the passage of the United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. [Click here](#) to add your name in support of the Convention.

This will be the 11th year of worldwide celebrations and other activities. This annual day, proclaimed by the United Nations in 2000, recognizes the role and contributions of migrants throughout the world, raises awareness of their human rights, and calls attention to the continuing need for enhanced protections against exploitation, abuse and violence.

In the United States, we call attention to a record year of anti-immigrant rhetoric, led by no other than the future President of the United States, Donald Trump. And at years' end, we gear up for an anticipated escalation in detentions and deportations, a Muslim registry, more immigration restrictions--and an extension of the border wall.

Yet, hope and resistance abound! Across the country, immigrant communities, advocates and allies have rallied to broaden and strengthen resistance strategies and plans. Cities and campuses have taken on "sanctuary" commitments, with some church congregations even committing to providing physical sanctuary for immigrants threatened with deportation.

We urge members, friends and allies to recognize this International Migrants day and honor our migrant communities in the U.S. and around the world. [Click here](#) to check out the International Migrants Day background information and resources on our website.

Internationally, the issue of migration has continued to galvanize public debate, just as millions of migrants and refugees have crossed international borders and sought refuge and survival. This past year the United Nations agreed to move forward over the next two years to create two new "global compacts" on migration and on refugees, to engage governments to provide

safer and more inclusive policies for people on the move, including those who are "forced" to migrate and who are in "vulnerable situations".

Especially on International Migrants Day, when we recognize and honor migrants throughout the world, we also need to raise awareness about the need for policies that ameliorate involuntary displacement and forced migration, including climate justice, fair trade and people-centered development, and fulfilling the need and access to healthcare, education, housing, jobs and safe, healthy environments.

Background information and resources on International Migrants Day and the International Convention on the Protection of Rights for All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families are available at NNIRR's website. Migrants rights are human rights! *(from the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR))*

FOUR WAYS YOUR FAITH COMMUNITY CAN PREPARE FOR SANCTUARY. We call upon our congregations and communities to go beyond talk of loving our neighbor to revolutionary love, living our faith and values by opening our doors and hitting the streets to create sanctuary alongside marginalized communities to stop the violence and seek justice in all that we do. Here's how we can prepare while the newly elected administration moves in.

1. Sign the pledge to resist deportation and discrimination. Making this public commitment sends a strong message of resistance to the administration that our faith communities will not stand by while our friends, families, and neighbors continue to live in fear as targets of hate crimes, incarceration, and deportation.

Our pledge also sets an example of powerful, values-rooted resistance for people of faith and moral conscience who are struggling to discern the right thing to do in this moment. And most importantly, it is a promise to marginalized communities that we will work alongside those in the struggle to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people.

2. Connect with local sanctuary communities, immigrant rights groups and coalitions. We're in a new era of organizing because of the elected administration's extreme racist, discriminatory, and anti-immigrant policy proposals — but these are deep-set issues our communities have been fighting against for a long time.

Connecting with groups that have experience working within immigrant and marginalized communities, and are led by people in the struggle, is a necessary first step to creating powerful and sustainable local coalitions that can plug into the national movement.

3. Provide space in your homes, houses of worship, and community centers for healing, educating, and organizing. Depending on what the needs are of our local communities, and what happens after Inauguration Day, Sanctuary may be needed in a variety of contexts. But immediately, we can create safe spaces anywhere for people to heal, learn, and organize:

Offer up the literal spaces of our churches and community centers for gatherings, forums, office space, and organizing work. A lot of crucial organizing work happens on a shoestring budget. Any resources we have to support that work can mean the difference between success or failure. One of the easiest and yet most powerful things we can do in this moment is provide childcare for community meetings — childcare is costly and yet vital for the participation of parents at meetings. *Just remember: Opening our spaces to community groups to meet and strategize does not mean we are invited into that space. Unlock the doors, turn on the heat, and move out of the way. There is, of course, times in which we may be invited, but we must wait for those invitations and have upfront conversations with folks about expectations.*

White allies can create sanctuary space within your communities for white people to engage in talking about White Supremacy. Over half of white Americans voted for the President-elect,

including a surprising number of white women and college-educated white men. We will need to consider smart outreach and ministry strategies to dismantle deep-rooted racism and xenophobia within our own circles and communities.

Create and respect the sanctuary spaces of marginalized and underrepresented people. All of those directly impacted by systems of violence and oppression must have their own space to heal and find wholeness within circles of love and support where their life and experience is centered and shared.

4. Set up a rapid response team for immigration raids through sanctuary in the streets or the protection network. Sanctuary doesn't just have to be a specific space or region, it is also a way of being. Communities banding together and looking out for one another can be a powerful way to provide each other with sanctuary.

Pro-immigrant communities and organizations have been setting up loose networks to watch out for each other for as long as they've existed. More recently, people have been using and setting up these networks to watch out for and respond to immigration agents ripping people apart from their communities.

Immigrant communities almost always have informal mutual aid networks among themselves. Intentionally listening for them, and finding ways to support them when invited to, is one of the best first ways to become a part of a local rapid response network.

Creating sanctuary everywhere isn't easy, but it becomes easier when we remember a lot of what we need already exists in the love and connection we have for one another. The more we can build on that, the better we'll all be.

Contact us

Email: jpvc.office@amormeus.org

Office: 314 773 5100 ext. 13 | Cell: 314 707 7313

Blog: www.saccvi.blogspot.com