



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

November 2016

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

We hope that this November edition of Seeds be a resource to continue strengthening and motivating who we are and how we are responding to life crying out to us.

While some recent social events have shaken us, and created an even more challenging environment in which we carry out our work, our service and determination will continue to unite us with all people of good will to increase our active hope. We hope that the contents presented here offer some lights in the darkness.

There are a few important days we want to highlight in the coming month. November 25<sup>th</sup> is the international day for the elimination of violence against women and begins the 16 days of activism against gender violence campaign. December 2<sup>nd</sup> is the international day to end slavery, and we want to remember all those trapped in modern day slavery through the chains of human trafficking. And finally December 10<sup>th</sup> is Human Rights Day, a day we encourage the Congregation to join in prayer and fasting for the rights of all people around the world to live in a healthy environment that promotes their safety and well-being. We have included a resource for your prayer and reflection on this day.

May the experience of this coming Advent season reaffirm in us that we can be the leaven of a healthier and more just world. We count on your encouragement and understanding. We celebrate that the Lord is born anew every day!

## Human Trafficking

**WOMEN RELIGIOUS CRITICAL IN FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING (FROM GLOBAL SISTERS REPORT).** Women religious are often the first people to discover problems emerging in society because they work directly with so many people in need, an anti-trafficking advocate said. However, because religious focus more on providing assistance than publicizing their efforts, the rest of the world is often slower to catch on to where there is trouble, said Ivonne van de Kar, the coordinator of the Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking of Women in the Netherlands.

Women religious in the Netherlands, for example, "had started to work with women in prostitution when there was absolutely no attention (given to) them," and they provided a safe space for women to rest and chat, she told Catholic News Service November 4.

Offering coffee and a listening ear, the women religious were finding out as early as 1981 that some women were being forced into the sex trade and that marked the beginning of the sisters' work against trafficking. The religious quickly involved the police and later some other organizations, including van de Kar's in the early 1990s.

"Very often it's the sisters who discover a problem because they work with the people and they see what is happening on the streets and are there for them," she said. But speaking up more about their work is "one of the things I always tell them," so they can widen the scope of awareness and the response to so many problems, she said. "We help the sisters do more with PR, to make people aware of the fantastic work that has been done," she said, adding that the pope recognizing and thanking women religious for their anti-trafficking work was also encouraging and very helpful.

But, van de Kar noted that the sharply decreasing number of women religious in the Netherlands will be a blow to the critical work they carry out.

"It's very difficult for a layperson to follow in the footsteps of a religious sister," primarily because laypeople need a competitive salary to make ends meet, so the cost of filling vacancies left by consecrated women and men could be prohibitive, she said. Religious congregations, on the other hand, are able to assign and support their members wherever they are needed, she said.

Helping to expand the influence and impact of women religious is the network RENATE — Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation — which was founded in 2009. Network members, including van de Kar, were meeting in Rome November 6-12. They were scheduled to have an audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican Nov. 7.

The meeting will look at ways everyone in society and the church can do something to prevent and end human trafficking, she said. They are hoping to involve more clergy in global efforts, she said, by getting seminaries and ongoing formation programs to include specific courses on how to recognize abuse, exploitation and trafficking, and on what to do with suspicions.

"Your eyes have to be opened to see it. If you never heard of it, you can't see it," she said, but once the problem is explained, "all of a sudden you can see it everywhere."

The church also needs to establish or strengthen collaboration with state or local police because "they find the victims" during the course of their work, van de Kar said, and those victims need the kind of help the church can provide.

Getting consumers to stop expecting cheap products and services is also key, she said. "If you have the feeling something is not right, like two T-shirts for 5 euros — that's impossible. Who is paying the price? We always have to ask ourselves, who is paying the price for this and it's not the big industry and the organization, but it is always the people, the victims — they are paying the price."

"We as consumers are a big group and can do something about trafficking" by paying for products and services that do not involve exploitation, she said. Forced labor is growing in many sectors, she said, including the garment industry, seaports, nail salons and even "forced begging" on the streets.

Forced labor is still a fundamental part of the sex trade, said Hospitaler Sisters of Mercy Monica Chikwe, who works with trafficked Nigerian women in Italy. She told CNS that as long as demand remains high, traffickers will just replace the women that the sisters rescue with new recruits.

While it's necessary to get laws passed that prosecute traffickers, they are also trying to "appeal to the conscience of many men because this is what is perpetrating this problem," said Chikwe. "If the demand is not there, traffickers will stop, so it's good to tackle the problem from the root cause."

The church can spread the word with Mass homilies and school programs, including sexual education, she said. Families, too, need to speak up and teach their children very early "that the body of a lady is not a toy." When kids grow in understanding and they see in their own family that every person's body is to be shown respect, including one's own, "that will help society" and the family, she said.

## Environment

**SOLIDARITY WITH STANDING ROCK.** The indigenous tribe of the Standing Rock Sioux, together with other indigenous tribes of the U.S. and defenders of the earth and water have been protesting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) in North Dakota for months now.

This pipeline would transport crude oil through the land of the Sioux which includes sacred burial sites as well as cross the Missouri River which provides potable drinking water for millions. Those gathered at Standing Rock in peaceful resistance of DAPL have been met with militarized violence in the form of beatings, pepper spray, sound cannons, rubber bullets, and water cannons fired on them in freezing temperatures.

The JPIC Office of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word stands in solidarity with the indigenous tribes and all those gathered at Standing Rock to protect the sacred land and water.

We denounce the violent and militarized response waged against these water protectors, and call on the U.S. government and all investors in the pipeline to stop the violence and respect the rights of those gathered at Standing Rock protecting their sovereign land.

**STAND WITH STANDING ROCK.** November is Native American Heritage Month. What better time to stand up and show our support of our Native brothers and sisters in Standing Rock and other tribes who have been peacefully protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline from going through their sacred lands. Organizations such as Pax Christi USA and Creation Justice Ministries have developed prayers and petitions to bring awareness to this wrong that needs to be righted.

In some cases, there have been representatives able to go to the camp, join in the ceremonies and bring back eyewitness accounts of the people and their stories. Just this past weekend, four sisters: two Sisters of St. Francis (Oldenburg) plus two School Sisters of Notre Dame (Mankato province) drove to Standing Rock with coats and other supplies and

to be there as a gesture of solidarity. Mercy Sisters Aine O'Connor and Kathleen Erickson and the Sisters of Mercy West-Midwest Justice Coordinator, Mike Poulin also headed out to be a part of the Solidarity Circle, described below. Additionally, a Mercy Lay Associate, Virginia Fifield of the Akwesausne, who went to Standing Rock in September posted this blog of her time there.

Those mentioned above joined a group of nearly 500 faith leaders and clergy in a Multifaith Solidarity Circle in Support of Standing Rock. FAN urged people of all faiths across the country to fast and pray in a coordinated prayer of solidarity to support those in North Dakota. Here is a post of FAN's prayer service on Facebook.

As the protests continue, we urge members and friends to continue to pray and show your support of our native brothers and sisters. For concrete ideas on what you can do, go online to Stand with Standing Rock.net.

**COP22 INTERFAITH STATEMENT.** At this historic moment, as the Paris Agreement enters into force, an unprecedented global consensus has produced a universal framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to build greater resilience to climate impacts. We are profoundly grateful for the leadership that produced this agreement. We are also mindful of the challenges and complexity that lie ahead.

The Statement also emphasizes, that across all faiths we share a moral obligation to not harm others, to be fair and to care for the vulnerable.

Global society's continued use of fossil fuels and other extractive industries, while knowing the damage they cause, is ethically untenable. We must deliberately turn away from investing in fossil fuels and we stand together, to call for a collective shift by sovereign wealth funds and public sector pension funds from fossil fuels towards climate solutions. This will send a necessary and transformative signal to public and private borrowers and investors worldwide and will help end the fossil fuel era.

We must commit to new ways of living that honor the dynamic relationships between all forms of life to deepen awareness and the spiritual dimension of our lives. We appeal to all people living today to draw on courage, hope, wisdom and spiritual reflection to enable our young and future generations to inherit a more caring and sustainable world. This is the time to step forward and act as trustees to Mother Earth. Together, by supporting each other's progress we can go further and faster.

Key Policy Points - COP22 Statement:

- Urgently ask States to rapidly increase pledges to reduce emissions, in line with the 1.5°C goal;
- Call for a collective shift by sovereign wealth funds and public sector pension funds away from fossil fuels into renewables and other climate solutions;
- Strongly request an increase in global financial flows to end energy poverty with renewable energy and to provide for greater human and ecological adaptation, particularly to compensate for loss and damage, technology transfer and capacity building;
- Appeal to all States, when taking action to address climate change, to ensure the commitments contained in the preamble of the Agreement related to human rights,

including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, a just transition, food security, intergenerational equity and the integrity of all ecosystems are effectively reflected in any decision adopted at the COP22;

- Request stricter controls on the dispute mechanisms within trade agreements that utilize extrajudicial tribunals to challenge government policies;

Ask, including within our own faith communities, for more commitments to divest -invest from fossil fuels into renewable energy and targeted engagement with companies on climate change. We need to ground this work in pursuing a just transition to renewable energy.

**Climate prayer.** Merciful God, as governments meet in Marrakech for the COP22 we pray that they uphold their obligations on human rights, including the rights of indigenous peoples, gender equality, a just transition, food security and intergenerational equity. We also pray that we all might commit to new ways of living that honor the dynamic relationships between all forms of life to deepen awareness and the spiritual dimension of our lives. Amen

## Living Laudato Si

**FASTING AND PRAYER FOR GOD'S CREATION.** The call to Fast this December 10th is a means in which we invite the entire congregational family of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word to address the urgent challenge of protecting our common home, as Pope Francis has pointed out in his Encyclical, Laudato Si. We recognize that climate change is a global threat to human rights which is why we connect this fast to December 10th, the International Day of Human Rights.

It is also a way of increasing visibility and communally expressing our commitment to care for God's creation, protect human rights, and undertake the transformation necessary for a new universal solidarity ... (# 14) in the context of climate change and social justice. Because 'this sister cries out from the harm we inflict on her due to the irresponsible use and abuse of the goods that God has placed in her' (# 2).

It is the poorest and most vulnerable who are facing and will face the worst impacts of climate change. This requires us, as a Congregation, to take the risk of a corporate and prophetic stance in favor of justice, peace and the care of creation (Chapter Acts, 2014). We invite all members of the Congregation to share this invitation and to participate in a day of fasting with prayer and spiritual reflection on concrete responses to the pressing needs of our time.

You can donate the amount that you saved by fasting in support of the JPIC work of the Congregation through the JPIC Office. In the United States you can send in your donation to the Finance Office (4503 Broadway St, San Antonio, TX 78209) and be sure to indicate it is for the JPIC Office Fasting Day. You can also send us a copy of the donation to confirm it with the finance office at: [jplic.office@amormeus.org](mailto:jplic.office@amormeus.org).

Thank you for your participation, your prayer and reflection, and your commitment to our common home and human rights!

**WOMEN'S GLOBAL CONNECTION.** This month we lift up and celebrate the great work of Women's Global Connection in living Laudato Si. Women's Global Connection is a ministry of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word started by Sr. Dot Ettlring and Sr. Neomi Hayes in 2001 to promote the learning and leadership capacity of women locally and globally. The organization is currently run by Executive Director Lisa Uribe. Women's Global Connection (WGC) has projects supporting women in San Antonio, Tanzania, Zambia, and Peru.

One project that deeply connects with the message of Laudato Si is their water project in Bukoba, Tanzania. Pope Francis reminds us, "Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance, since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Sources of fresh water are necessary for health care, agriculture and industry" (LS 28).

Women are traditionally the ones to go and gather water from rivers or lakes to use each day, and these trips to gather water can take up to 6 hours each day between 3-4 trips. The water containers they use typically only hold five gallons, weighing about 44 pounds, which are carried back to their village. Due to the time required for this task, many girls are unable to continue with their studies, and girls and women are also at greater risk of physical attack or sexual violence during these trips to gather water.

One innovative solution to assist with this water gathering is a device called the Hippo Water Roller, which is a large barrel holding 24 gallons of water that can be pushed or rolled with a resistance making it feel like just over 20 pounds. One fill up of this Hippo Water Roller can provide enough water for a family of five for a day, only requiring one trip. However the high cost of the Hippo's, including shipping from South Africa where they are made, makes this purchase near impossible for most of the families in Bukoba, Tanzania.

The approach of Women's Global Connection to this problem of access to sufficient clean water sources matches their mission: access to education and resources. One example of this is the WGC Rainwater Harvester Building Project begun in 2011 as part of their Clean Water Project. Women are trained in the skills of building a rain harvester and the whole community comes together to gather the materials and participate in the construction which takes about one week. One water harvester can serve 25 families in the village. Since 2011, 35 rain harvesters have been constructed, benefiting more than 800 families.

Another is collaboration with the Women's Water Initiative to train women in the implementation of water related strategies including tools to educate their community about hygiene and water protection as well as technical skills to build rainwater harvesting tanks, water treatment technologies and toilets.

We celebrate and congratulate Women's Global Connection for their commitment to women around the world and their work to ensure access to clean drinking water for so many families in Tanzania! Thank you for living Laudato Si by strengthening communities, sharing resources and knowledge, and protecting our mother earth through women's empowerment and leadership!

# Sister Story Highlight

This month's featured sister is our dear Sr. Mary Kay McKenzie. Sr. Mary Kay joined the Congregation in 1958. She grew up in Normandy, MO less than two miles from where she currently lives. Sr. Mary Kay was educated as a math teacher, and served in that capacity for the majority of her life.

She has taught high school math at Chappelle High School in New Orleans, St. Mary's High School in Amarillo, TX, Incarnate Word Academy in St. Louis, MO, and taught 10 years at the University of Missouri St. Louis (UMSL). After a long teaching career she worked with Habitat for Humanity in St. Louis as their project manager for five years, and then did similar work in East St. Louis for another five years.

Given her long history teaching in high schools it is no surprise when Sr. Mary Kay says that she loves teenagers. She especially loves working with teenagers who initially feel defeated, and she can accompany them in building up their self-esteem and creating a bigger vision for their lives. Although Sr. Mary Kay is officially retired, she still dedicates four days a week to working with teenagers as a math tutor. Two days a week she is at Incarnate Word Academy and two days a week she is at Innovative Concept Academy.

Innovative Concept Academy is a high school created by Judge Jimmie Edwards as an alternative for youth who have gotten in trouble with the law rather than send them to jail or juvenile detention. This is concrete response to mass incarceration and the school to prison pipeline. Those who are kicked out of traditional schools have the opportunity to continue their education instead of entering the criminal justice system. Speaking about her work at ICA she shares, "I enjoy helping where it's really needed. I love when these kids who've been put down in school their whole lives start catching on and realizing how smart they really are when they get the right support and encouragement."

Sr. Mary Kay has also been a member of the International Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Committee for the past three years. She enjoys the opportunity this provides her to build and strengthen relationships with members of the Congregation in Mexico and Peru as well as practice her Spanish. Outside of the JPIC Committee she gets to do this work as an English tutor when Mexican and Peruvian sisters come to St. Louis to learn English.

As a member of the JPIC Committee Sr. Mary Kay was a lead organizer for the St. Louis workshops on Laudato Si and Sustainability last year, as well as the workshop on Human Trafficking two years ago. She also helps set the goals of the JPIC Committee each year and supports the JPIC Office in meeting those goals.

As you can see, her passion for helping where it's needed extends beyond the classroom to the various JPIC projects of the Congregation. She is a gift to all who know her and are blessed to work with her, and we are grateful for her service on behalf of young people and on behalf of JPIC throughout the world!

# Human Rights

## **ORANGE THE WORLD: RAISE MONEY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

From 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign is a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls around the world. The international campaign originated from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991.

In 2016, the UNiTE campaign strongly emphasizes the need for sustainable financing for efforts to end violence against women and girls towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

One of the major challenges to efforts to prevent and end violence against women and girls worldwide is the substantial funding shortfall. As a result, resources for initiatives to prevent and end violence against women and girls are severely lacking. Frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, which includes a specific target on ending violence against women and girls, offer huge promise, but must be adequately funded in order to bring real and significant changes in the lives of women and girls.

To bring this issue to the fore, the UN Secretary-General's campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women's call for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in 2016 is 'Orange the World: Raise Money to End Violence against Women and Girls'. The initiative provides a moment to bring the issue of sustainable financing for initiatives to prevent and end violence against women to global prominence and also presents the opportunity for resource mobilization for the issue.

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE CALL TO ACTION NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2016: ONE EARTH, ONE PEOPLE, A CALL TO MERCY AND JUSTICE.**

(By Jennifer Reyes Lay) Last weekend Nov. 11-13<sup>th</sup> I had the opportunity to attend Call To Action's annual conference, hosted this year in Albuquerque, NM. The theme for the Conference was "One Earth, One People, A Call to Mercy and Justice."

Incorporating this theme into the spirit and activities of the Conference, there were many different presentations from people of various cultures, ethnicities, and parts of the world, sharing about our common work for mercy and justice. Liturgical and prayer celebrations included song, dance, movement, and reflection from indigenous communities of Albuquerque and indigenous Latino communities.

The Conference opened with a special ceremony of representatives from one of the local indigenous communities welcoming us into their space and land, and sharing gifts of friendship and hospitality. It then continue with women sharing stories about their ancestors, and honoring our various stories of how they arrived from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. The preacher for the closing liturgy was a Navajo man who helped us (Catholics) reflect on our complicity in the Doctrine of Discovery and genocide of native peoples, and call us to repentance and conversion to respect and honor all peoples and creation.



During the weekend there were three main keynote presentations. Friday night's keynote was by Fr. Richard Rohr, reflecting on the dynamic relationship of God through the Trinity, and the transformative power that has to offer the Church and the world. He focused on how relationship, specifically a relationship of giving and receiving love, is central to understanding and experiencing our God. We too are called to model this dynamic relationship of giving and receiving love in our lives and interactions with the whole of creation.

Saturday's keynote was a panel of young adult Catholics, sharing about their experiences of being church, Catholic identity, and building intergenerational communities. It was a lively and inspiring conversation that fueled a lot of hope for moving forward together as an intergenerational church committed to the work of justice and peace in our world. Sunday's keynote was presented by Dr. Greer Gordon, a Roman Catholic theologian, author, and lecturer known for her work in the field of apologetics, evangelization, and catechetics. She offered a powerful witness and challenge of what it means to be the body of Christ in the U.S. today given the reality of a Trump presidency. She spoke of her own personal experiences of being targeted by racism and encouraged all those present to not give in to fear, but to stand as prophetic witnesses, imaging Christ in the world, and being prepared to give the ultimate sacrifice just like he did if necessary. She challenged us to reflect on and take seriously what it means to be followers of Christ in the world today, and to act accordingly, pushing the Church to do the same where it currently fails to do so.

In addition to the keynote speakers, there were many workshops held throughout the Conference on a wide range of topics including our responsibility to protect and care for the environment, decolonization and shadow work, peace and nonviolence, Latina and mujerista theology, mercy and restorative justice, and interfaith perspectives among others. The Conference also had particular spaces for me, as a young adult Catholic, to gather with other young adults in our 20s and 30s to build community and share ideas. I really appreciated these spaces to network with other young adults inspired by their faith to work for peace and justice in the world. They give me a lot of hope for the years ahead of us!

Call to Action as an organization has also made a commitment to actively work to become an anti-racist, anti-oppressive organization and to dismantle structural racism in our church and in the world. Part of this work involves connecting with local organizations and communities where the Conference is held to see how they can partner with them to lift up their own local work against racism and oppression.

At this year's conference, CTA partnered with Strong Families New Mexico to hold a joint march and press conference for mercy and justice. Strong Families is active in the Albuquerque area supporting victims of violence and discrimination and working for justice. Together CTA and Strong Families held a march with signs stating that we stand in solidarity together, we call for mercy and justice in our communities, and that love will always trump hate and violence. I was grateful for the opportunity to participate in this action of solidarity.

Overall it was a wonderful weekend, full of inspiring and challenging messages of how to be the body of Christ in the world today, particularly in light of the divides and hateful rhetoric we have experienced in this election cycle. The message I was left with is

that we have a lot of work to do, but we can comfort in the knowledge that we do not do this work alone. God is with us as we stand together to create a world of mercy and justice for all.

**A POST-ELECTION COMMITMENT TO LIVE OUR GOSPEL VALUES.** The presidency and staff of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious congratulate President-elect Donald J. Trump and promise to work with him to build a society worthy of our values where the dignity of each person is respected and all can flourish.

We thank Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton for her many years of service and sacrifice on behalf of our nation. We are especially grateful for her tireless commitment to promoting the wellbeing of women and girls everywhere.

After a difficult and contentious election characterized by partisan rancor and divisive rhetoric, it is time for all of us to ask forgiveness and be reconciled with one another. We are called to “. . . put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another, and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Beyond all these things put on love which is the perfect bond of unity.” (Colossians 3:12-14)

Now is the time to heal the deep divisions laid bare by this bruising political campaign and to tear down the walls, real or imagined, which divide us by gender, race, class, geography, lifestyle, political party and belief. This moment, these times, require us to engage in deep contemplative prayer and to risk courageous action for the sake of all who call these United States their home.

Now is the time to make space in our hearts and our homes for the needs and concerns of all God’s people, the undocumented mother, the unemployed steel-worker father, and those children and elders consigned to live in poverty. It is long past time to make room in our politics for those who have been disaffected, disenfranchised, and discarded.

We recall the many times that Catholic sisters in the United States and around the world have been called upon to exercise courage in the face of fear and division. We promise once again to be the healing hands of God. We pledge to hold the needs and concerns of all in a contemplative space, in the heart of a loving and ever faithful God.

We recommit ourselves to the Gospel call to welcome the stranger, care for creation, establish economic justice, abolish every form of modern-day slavery, and promote nonviolence and just peace and we pledge to continue to work together with all people of good will to build God’s beloved community in this place we call home.

## **Immigration**

**A SISTER’S REFLECTION ON THE ENCUESTRO AT THE BORDER.** “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matthew 5:9) It has been a gift and a beautiful experience to be able to travel to the border with the Giving Voice sisters, Julia Walsh, Tracy Kemme, and Priscilla Torres, among other sisters who accompanied us to participate in the March for Immigrant Justice organized by SOA Watch. It is important for

each of us to work for justice for immigrants. Here I want to echo the words Benedict XVI spoke some years ago:

“Those with greater political, technical, or economic power may not use that power to violate the rights of others who are less fortunate. Peace is based on respect for the rights of all. Conscious of this, the Church champions the fundamental rights of each person.”

As both an immigrant and a religious woman, traveling to the border of Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Mexico, meant feeling myself a daughter of God and a sister to my brothers and sisters in need, in addition to being able to answer the call of solidarity the situation cries out for. It was the ability to join our voices as the Giving Voice Organization into one voice with our brothers and sisters who call for justice and hope for immigration reform that favors uniting families instead of separating them.

During the Vigil outside the Eloy Detention Center, I could feel the grief that overwhelms the families at having their loved ones in prison. I was touched to my soul at seeing the people detained in that center wave their curtains when we shouted “YOU ARE NOT ALONE, WE HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN YOU,” from outside. I imagined what it must feel like to see one of my loved ones there locked up, and I could feel with these families the powerlessness, the pain, and the frustration, but also the hope for a better future.

It is painful for immigrants to be treated as criminals, locked up in a prison just for wanting to seek a better future for themselves and their families. Violence or the economic situations in our home countries often force us to emigrate, as in my case. No one leaves their family and their homeland by choice; they know they could die in the attempt. This tugs at my heartstrings because my brother Mario, one of my younger brothers, almost died in the desert when a “coyote,” the person who was guiding him, abandoned him halfway through the desert because he twisted his foot and couldn’t walk anymore. He said to him “wait for me here, I’m going to look for help,” and he never came back. Because of this and because of the heat, my brother began to walk as well as he could, and found a puddle of dirty water, which he drank from because he was dying of thirst. My brother tells of how he came across immigration officers, but they didn’t stop to help or detain him... With his foot swollen and painful, he reached a town, where a good Samaritan gave him a hand and lent him her phone so he could call his family. At home, we prayed that my brother would be all right. Thanks to God, my brother recovered well and got his American citizenship a few years ago, but I am sure he will never forget what he went through in the desert.

When immigrants arrive at the United States border, the words of Jesus, “for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...,” (Matthew 25:35) appear to be forgotten. Some private institutions profit from keeping these people as prisoners. In the words of Pope Francis “We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion – ‘suffering with’ others: the globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!”

#### A Glimmer of Hope

I am very happy that now that I am a citizen of this country, I can help my immigrant brothers and sisters by “Giving Voice”, and that together with the Church we are able to shout with one voice... “NO HUMAN BEING IS ILLEGAL.”

I would like to thank Giving Voice, because it was here that the idea to have this experience arose. I would also like to thank the Guadalupe Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit, who supported me in attending this protest in favor of immigrants.

**WHAT ARE SANCTUARY CITIES?** A sanctuary city is a city that shelters undocumented immigrants. According to [apsanlaw.com](http://apsanlaw.com), these cities "do not permit municipal funds or resources to be applied in furtherance of enforcement of federal immigration laws." In these cities, local and state government employees are often instructed not to inquire about one's immigration status and told not to report undocumented workers.

In some sanctuary cities, if an undocumented immigrant is caught committing a crime, say driving without a license, they will be ordered to serve jail time or pay fines, but will then be let go, according to the Washington Post. Since there is no official designation for sanctuary cities, policies vary across the board.

Which U.S. cities are considered sanctuary cities? According to the Washington Times, more than 340 U.S. cities are considered sanctuary cities. Some of the larger cities that have vowed to continue protecting undocumented immigrants include New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Austin, according to Remezcla.

Why do U.S. cities choose to shelter immigrants? For the most part, cities that shelter undocumented immigrants have diverse, liberal communities. Many of these cities recognize deportation as the "wrong punishment" for undocumented immigrants, thus constituting a breach of civil law. It is often said that sanctuary cities encourage undocumented immigrants to work with local authorities without fear of deportation so that law enforcement can identify and arrest real criminals.

A CNN report shows that chiefs from the country's largest police departments and police groups, such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police, support sanctuary cities because they help officers and communities to combat crime.

**STUDENTS ORGANIZE TO CREATE "SANCTUARY" CAMPUSES.** Students at over 50 colleges and universities planned to walk out of class Wednesday to push their schools to adopt "sanctuary campus" policies to keep undocumented students safe from deportation. The protests come amid fears that President-elect Donald Trump, who rallied supporters with his attacks on immigration, will make good on his pledge to deport millions of undocumented immigrants once in office next year.

Students and activists are particularly concerned about his plan to "immediately" repeal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, President Barack Obama's 2012 executive action that protects young people from deportation and allows them to work if they meet certain criteria. Over 700,000 people have DACA status and an estimated 600,000 more are eligible.

The idea of campuses as safe havens stems from sanctuary cities, an unofficial designation for cities where officials limit cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement. Trump has threatened to cut all funding to sanctuary cities, but several have vowed to continue their policies.

Students, faculty and alumni have also circulated petitions in the past week, calling on administration to designate sanctuary campuses at more than a dozen schools, including Yale, Brown, Stanford, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Massachusetts-Amherst and University of Southern California.

The petitions list several demands that vary by institution. (Read Movimiento Cosecha's list here.) These include calls for universities to refuse to release information on students' immigration statuses, limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities and bar them from entering campuses.

A sanctuary designation might not have a significant effect on ICE tactics, but it could have a "symbolic impact."

"It sends a message to all immigrant students and students who have immigrants in their families that the university is an inclusive community, that the goal of the university is to educate and promote an engaged citizenry for the future and that we do that without regard to citizenship status, without regard to immigration status," César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, said.

## News

**INTERNATIONAL JPIC COMMITTEE MEETING IN MEXICO CITY.** Members of the CCVI International JPIC Committee met together for their semi-annual in person meeting in Mexico City, Mexico October 28-30, 2016. The International JPIC Committee is chaired by Sr. Martha Ann Kirk and contains members Sr. Covadonga Suarez (Mexico), Sr. Maria Marquez (Mexico), Sr. Ana Luisa Prieto (Mexico), Agustin Rios (Mexico), Victor Mendoza (Peru), Sr. Walter Maher (USA), Sr. Mary Kay McKenzie (USA), and Monica Cruz (USA). Serving as ex-officio members of the Committee are Sr. Katty Huanuco (Peru – Director of JPIC Office) and Jennifer Reyes (USA – Assistant Director of JPIC Office), as well as Sr. Jean Durel as the General Leadership Team liaison.

The JPIC Committee spent two full days together reflecting on the past year of JPIC work within the Congregation, particularly in light of the new JPIC Office, and planning for the coming year ahead. In the plans for the year ahead it was agreed that the Congregation would continue its focus on human trafficking and care of creation, as well as give special emphasis to education and action around building a culture of nonviolence and just peace.

In the area of human trafficking, we are excited by new networks to combat human trafficking forming in Mexico, as well as ongoing work and collaboration through our networks in the U.S. and Peru.

In the year ahead we will work toward implementing our corporate action for creation: ensuring that at least 50% of all materials used in meetings are environmentally friendly. The JPIC Office will be preparing resources to assist those who plan meetings/events within the Congregation to ensure they are taking active steps to meet this goal.

Our renewed focus on nonviolence and just peace comes out of reflection and discussion of the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome earlier this year. We unite with Catholics around the world in committing ourselves to build our own skills and capacities for peace building as well as encouraging others to the same. The JPIC Office will be sharing more information and opportunities to engage this topic throughout the coming year.

As always, we desire to be in communication with all members of the Congregation, ministries, and collaborators in our communities. Please let us know your thoughts, hopes, and concerns regarding our collective work for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We are here to serve the Congregation in living out its mission to bring the healing presence of Jesus to the world. Thank you for your prayers, support, and trust in carrying out this holy work together!

**SUPPORT WOMEN IN POVERTY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON WITH AN ALTERNATIVE GIFT THROUGH WOMEN'S GLOBAL CONNECTION!** Please consider honoring your loved ones by honoring women around the globe who want to escape poverty and improve their lives.

Through WGC's Alternative Giving Program this holiday season, you can purchase gifts in your friends' or families' names to provide things such as: preschool education for children in Peru, Zambia or Tanzania; goats or pigs for women's family businesses in Tanzania; or the building of rainwater harvesters in Tanzania for clean water.

Go to our website for online giving or contact us at [wgcinsa@gmail.com](mailto:wgcinsa@gmail.com) or (210) 828-2224, ext. 297 for a hard copy of the program order form. Upon request, we can also send you a special recognition card to personalize and pass along to the loved ones you want to honor with your gifts!

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