



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

August 2017

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

We send this August edition of Seeds at a time when our world is facing a lot of fear, uncertainty, and threats of violence. We join with all those around the world who are praying and acting for peace. We highlight some actions and articles related to this peace making work. We also share with you some of the events of our Congregation over the past couple of months, and ongoing outreach and support for our migrant and immigrant communities. We also want to remind everyone that September 1st is the World Day of Prayer for Creation, and begins the Season of Creation through October 4th. Consider taking a special action or joining a prayer service during this time to celebrate and care for our common home.

We also know this is a special time for our Congregation. On the 15th we celebrated our congregational renewal of vows to continue serving the people of God as women religious. We rejoice in the Incarnate Word for the gift of religious life and service in community! We have also officially begun a time of preparation for our General Chapter, and pray for the grace to reflect on how we are called to live our mission in the world today.

May the coming months be a time of discernment, prayer, and action to heal the divisions in our world, comfort those who are suffering, and speak out against injustice and structural oppression. As always we want to hear from you! Contact us with any events, questions, or concerns you have.

Human Trafficking

RAHAHIM: Religious Life Against Trafficking in Mexico

After the Training Workshop Against Human Trafficking in 2016, organized by Talitha Kum, a new religious network in Mexico was formed to combat human trafficking: Rahahim (womb of mercy). Since October 2016, seven religious congregations have met together: sharing new information, going deeper into the Palermo Protocol, organizing for the prevention of trafficking in different areas, understanding more closely the crime of trafficking in our country, and increasing our training.

Some of us participated in the Meeting Against Human Trafficking organized by the Chamber of Deputies where they presented interesting work going on to rescue victims of human trafficking. However, it is also clear that current laws do not effectively protect victims, and there is lack of an adequate anti-trafficking budget in Mexico.

It is painful to see impunity in the face of sexual abuse of minors, trafficking in the indigenous community of Las Chamulas, and to know that Mexico has become a springboard that takes many young women abroad from Cancún, Colima and CDMX. We are deeply concerned about violence towards women and how women have been objectified in our society.

In light of this reality we ask ourselves, how do we fit in? And it is that we need to continue working against this crime that day by day captures more victims. We have shared some congregational initiatives to prevent trafficking and care for survivors, all of which require us to promote and share how we are involved in the fight against human trafficking through research, training, prevention and/or care.

As Sr. Marcela says, we must become aware of what it means to work in a network from the standpoints of communication, articulation, collaboration and coordination between the Religious Congregations and with people from other organizations. Perhaps a step towards this will be our participation, as Red Rahahim, in the Latin American Seminar of Religious Life in response to Human Trafficking that will be held in Colombia from August 18 to 20, 2017.

In general this is what we are doing since Rahahim started. The progress is slow because not all are on the same level; some of us need to make our work more concrete. But there we go, for the time being - raising awareness and publicizing this crime so that it is seen because it is something happening more frequently than most people think.

Written by: Sor Ofelia Lozano, CCVI and Sor Ma. Covadonga Suarez, CCVI

CCVI Sisters Host Prayer Vigil for Victims of Human Trafficking

On Sunday, July 30th, World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word held a public prayer vigil for victims of human trafficking in their Chapel of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, TX. About 100 people participate in the prayer vigil from various congregations and other lay people throughout the city.

In front of the altar were 10 unlit candles in remembrance of the 10 lives that had recently been lost to human trafficking in San Antonio. Sr. Mary Henry CCVI led the group in silent reflection for each person who died and then lit their candle. The rest of the prayer was joining in some contemporary psalms together.

On the back of the prayer program were suggested websites to learn more about human trafficking and take action to end it. Participants were also encouraged to write to their representatives to support laws that will help end human trafficking and support victims of human trafficking.

Outside the Chapel posters created by students from the University of the Incarnate Word were displayed of various people who have in the past or are currently working to end the sin of human slavery and human trafficking. Those featured included Sr. Chan Kong a Vietnamese Buddhist nun, Amma a Hindu woman known for her hugging, and Frederick Douglas a former slave and abolitionist.

Sister Story: Sr. Maricela Martinez

Our sister story this month is Sr. Maricela Martinez, a woman sent to share joy and the hope amid the struggles and worries of the migrants in Michigan. We share with you this reflection written by Sr. Maricela, sowing seeds of justice of peace.

In our constitution as the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word (CCVI) we read of the legacy of our founder, Bishop Claudio Ma. Dubuis, who wrote: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, suffering in the persons of a multitude of sick and infirm of every kind, seeks relief at your hands." Const. CCVI No. II. Motivated by the gospel of Christ, by this charter, and by the call of Pope Francis to be a missionary disciple, I wish to share my experience of encounter, dialogue, and growth with some extraordinary people.

During the summer of 2014 I had contact with migrant families within the territory of the Diocese of Grand Rapids, MI. This first encounter with the families gave me the opportunity to maintain an attitude of learning, to identify a process of accompaniment, and to collaborate in the task of evangelization.

Currently the missionary work is developed jointly with the parishes of St. Francis de Sales in Holland, St. Patrick-St. Anthony in Grand Haven and St. Mary's in Muskegon. When I first started and now there is the opportunity to visit migrant families in the fields surrounding Holland, Grand Haven and Muskegon. The families that are in these areas come from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador.

To me it is fundamental to devote time to the families and listen to their stories with their hopes and fears. My task is to connect them with different immigrant service organizations. Each conversation gives me greater insight into the challenges they face on their long journey to cross the US-Mexico border and integrate into the work environment in the camps. I remember, for example, a marriage of two people of Oaxacan origin whose relationship began collecting harvests together in the fields of California. Today they mobilize a group of three hundred members that migrate between four states within the US. And it is one of the main jobs of the migrants to collect various crops. In fact, Michigan is considered the fourth and last state in which they work raising crops.

Being in contact with the migrant families involves a process of accompaniment. Listening to these extraordinary people made me committed to continue visiting them in the fields, while the harvest season culminates. When they are in their homes, they confidently share their problems, their needs and their hopes for their children. Hospitality is a characteristic of migrant families and they enjoy sharing their foods like tortillas, beans and mole.

The families express their gratitude for the missionary presence of the priest, the religious and committed lay people. They are grateful that we go out to the field, listening to the family, attending to their basic needs and sharing bread. Migrant families are - for me - a privileged and evangelizing space.

Each summer brings a migrant season in which 23 committed lay people participate, parishioners who wish to assist families in the fields. That is why, based on the experience of these committed lay parishioners who visit the camps and live with the migrant families, I have generated courses of integral missionary formation. 2016 culminated with joy the first participants of this course, and in 2017 a second group will participate.

So this summer in 2017 we are visiting 25 camps around Holland, Grand Haven and Muskegon, MI; All with the purpose of welcoming migrant families and identifying their primary needs. The team consists of a priest from the Institute of Foreign Missions of Yarumal, a sister of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, 23 committed lay people and 4 young people.

We ask for your prayers and we pray to the Incarnate Word to keep us in the joy of his gospel to meet our migrant brothers and sisters on the margins. Because that's where we believe and want to serve our Lord Jesus Christ who suffers in a multitude of the sick and infirm of every kind.

Ecology

Season of Creation: September 1 – October 4, 2017

The Season of Creation, running yearly between September 1 and October 4, is that time of the year when 2.2 billion Christians are invited to pray and care for creation.

September 1 was proclaimed as a day of prayer for creation (World Day of Prayer for Creation, or Creation Day) by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I for the Orthodox in 1989, and was embraced by the other major Christian European churches in 2001 and by Pope Francis for the Roman Catholic Church in 2015.

And it has happened that in recent years many Christian churches have started celebrating the “Season of Creation” (also known as Creation Time) between that date and October 4, which is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (author of the Canticum of the Creatures in the 13th century) that some Western traditions observe.

It is meant to give flexibility to celebrate prayer services for creation in alternative dates throughout the month, while engaging in different actions to care for creation throughout the season. Several statements from the past few years have called to observe this month-long Season of Creation, such as those of the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines in 2003, the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu in 2007 and the World Council of Churches in 2008.

Help your community respond to the creator’s call. Host a prayer service with the easy-to-use toolkit. Or find a prayer service near you on the map online. Learn more by exploring the Season of Creation website: www.seasonofcreation.org.

Living Laudato Si

Summer Seminar for CCVI Sponsored Ministry Leaders

June 20-22, 2017 twenty-seven lay leaders from CCVI ministries throughout the United States and Mexico gathered in San Antonio, TX for the second Summer Seminar hosted by the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The Summer Seminar is a three day formation workshop for lay leaders in CCVI ministries where they learn about incarnational spirituality, the CCVI charism and mission, Congregational history, and reflect on topics like cross-cultural communication, justice, peace, and integrity of creation, and what it means to be a sponsored ministry of the Congregation.

Assisting with the Summer Seminar was Jennifer Reyes Lay, Assistant Director of the Congregational JPIC Office, who led a workshop on "Threads of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation." This workshop helped show how the work for justice, peace, and care of creation is not like one square of a quilt that can be added or removed, and is separate from the other squares, but rather are the very threads that knit the whole tapestry together. If you try to remove the threads, the whole tapestry comes apart. This work of JPIC is integral to the mission and vision of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and to the ministries it sponsors, because it is integral to the life and mission of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, and the universal Catholic Church.

Participants engaged in an activity of "paper weaving" to physically engage this metaphor of the JPIC threads and tapestry. Groups wrote on pieces of paper about the different justice, peace, and care of creation work or policies they are doing or have in place at their ministries, and then wove these pieces into the larger paper. It was inspiring to hear about all of the great work happening throughout the CCVI ministries, inspired by the charism to incarnate the love of God and heal the body of Christ suffering in our world today. Together we are creating a beautiful tapestry of justice, peace, hope, and love!

The Summer Seminar also did a great job of living into the sustainability goals for meetings that the Congregation set back in 2016: "At least 50% of all materials and refreshments used in meetings will be environmentally friendly." Some of these sustainability initiatives included: offering reusable water bottles to all participants to use throughout the week and having a large water jug available to refill water bottles; offering ceramic coffee mugs each morning instead of disposable cups; serving food buffet style to eliminate unnecessary packaging and waste; offering a non-meat protein at every meal; turning off the lights and all electronic equipment when the meeting room wasn't in use; carpooling out of town guests from the retreat center where they were staying to the Heritage Center where the meetings were in one large van; and providing clearly marked separate bins for trash and recycling. We thank the organizers including Dr. Denise Doyle, Sr. Mary Henry, and Sr. Brigid Marie Clarke for not only providing great content and hospitality for the summer seminar, but also being good stewards of our common home!

Immigration

Take Action to Defend DACA

By Hannah Graf Evans, August 2, 2017 from the Friends Committee on National Legislation

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is under threat. We need you to take action over the next month to protect young immigrants from being deported away from the only country they call home.

Right now, the administration is considering whether to put nearly 800,000 young people who grew up in the United States at immediate risk of deportation. Despite President Trump's prior statements that he supports the recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program - often referred to as Dreamers - their futures hang in the balance. Ten states threatened to sue the president if he does not rescind the program by September 5. Over the next month, we need Congress to raise the alarm and support Dreamers.

FCNL has been working towards a permanent, congressional solution for Dreamers for over 15 years. Since President Obama started the program in 2012, DACA offered young people who grew up undocumented in the United States a way to apply for protection from deportation and legal work authorization. Keeping DACA in place is essential while Congress passes a permanent solution, such as the bipartisan Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615) which would provide a pathway to citizenship for qualified applicants.

HOW CAN CONGRESS WEIGH IN?

President Trump has indicated that he alone will make this decision. He needs to hear from lawmakers that DACA is more than a program; it's about the people who have had their lives transformed over the last five years. Legislators must prioritize this issue, and make it clear to the President how devastating, immoral, and unpopular rescinding the DACA program would be. Senators can:

- Directly urge President Trump to keep the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals in place. Furthermore, lawmakers can urge President Trump to direct the Department of Justice to defend the program should the states follow through on their threat.
- Publicly support DACA-recipients by inviting them to a recess event, publishing an op-ed, or issuing a statement of support.
- Co-sponsor the Dream Act of 2017, along with a colleague from across the aisle, to indicate the bipartisan support for a congressional pathway to citizenship for Dreamers. President

Trump should keep DACA in place while Congress passes a clean version of this bill. (See if your Senator is already a co-sponsor, and if so thank them!)

You can take action today.

- Write directly to your Senators.
- Publish a letter to the editor.
- Use state-specific fact sheets on DACA to help educate your Senator and community about the role that DACA-recipients play in your state. (link on our blog)

Texas led the lawsuit along with Arkansas, Alabama, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. If you are from one of these states it's especially important that your Senator hears from you and leaders in the community (business, faith, educators) who support protecting Dreamers. The National Immigrant Law Center wrote about possible scenarios for DACA given the current legal threats. We must ensure we are standing in solidarity with Dreamers and doing everything we can to keep DACA in place.

Peace

Tell President Trump and Congress: We need Dialogue, Not War, with North Korea

The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative sent out the following action to support dialogue not war with North Korea. You can follow the link on our blog to send an electronic message to your representatives, senators, and the President. Or the text of the letter is below for you to print and mail as well.

On August 9th, 72 years ago, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki - just three days after dropping one on the city of Hiroshima. It is estimated that over 150,000 people were killed over those three days.

Now we have a U.S. president vowing to meet threats from North Korea "with fire and fury like the world has never seen."

On August 1st, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said during a briefing with the press, "We are trying to convey to the North Koreans: 'We are not your enemy, we are not your threat.'" Tillerson added that the United States hopes that "at some point," North Korea will understand and sit down for a dialogue. The time for dialogue is now.

Join with our friends at the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns and let President Trump and Congress know that we need talks, not war, with North Korea.

Here is the text of the letter:

As a person of faith, I am alarmed by the inflammatory rhetoric by the leaders of the United States and North Korea and the increasing threats of hostile acts and nuclear war. I urgently call upon President Trump to tone down his inflammatory rhetoric.

Furthermore, the movement of U.S. military assets to the Korean peninsula and region, including aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines, bring the world closer to the possibility of hostile acts and violence. Steps must be taken immediately to avoid the possibility of a cataclysmic nuclear war and to promote peaceful coexistence.

There are 11 million people on the Korean peninsula who will immediately suffer injury or death if our leaders do not pursue dialogue and diplomacy instead of military strikes. Belligerent threats and hostile acts are not the answer to the political tensions between the U.S. and North Korea.

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It is essential that bilateral dialogue take place, that aggressive language be discarded, and that paths to peace be pursued.

Thank you. Sincerely, (insert name here)

A Christian Prayer for Peace in Our Times

O God, author and giver of peace,
in whose image and likeness each of us has been created
and destined for eternal glory,
Listen to the cry that rises from every corner of this fragile earth,
from our human family torn by violent conflict:
Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.
To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion, and nation
to that common humanity that makes us all your children
and brothers and sisters to one another.
To those who have taken up arms in anger or revenge
or even in the cause of justice
grant the grace of conversion to the path of peaceful dialogue
and constructive collaboration.
To the innocent who live in the shadow of war and terror,
especially the frightened children,
be a shelter and strength, their haven and hope.
And to those who have already lost their lives
as victims of human cruelty and chemical warfare,
open wide your arms and enfold them all
in the embrace of your compassion, healing, and everlasting life.
Grant this through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord.
Mary, Mother of all and Queen of peace, pray for us.
- Peter J. Scagnelli

Human Rights

Corruption in Peru – by Selena Mitchell, Incarnate Word Missionary

Corruption. The undercurrent of injustice, wrongdoing, stealing, and lying have plagued so many of the government agencies. It has also disrupted daily interactions amongst Peruvians. It is no secret that this beautiful country regarded for its culinary arts and known for its natural wonders, struggles to progress and develop in a way where the majority can benefit and thrive. The constant push-pull of wanting to uphold justice and yet allowing short cuts to supersede the later leads to inefficiency and suffering. However, this article will not go into the history of corruption in

Peru neither the current events, although some background will be used for context. Rather the article will observe the ways in which a country's leadership affects communities on a small scale. Thereby highlighting that even within micro-societies they lend itself to the country's battle with corruption. The trickle down theory of economics states that overtime the benefits of the wealthy will reach the majority. If this same theory is applied to behavior, business practices, and expectations, then one has a better time grasping how corruption has infiltrated the lives of Peruvians.

Whether we choose to accept the influences of media and state leadership, we also cannot deny that previous presidents such as Alberto Fujimori, indeed caused long term repercussions -- coming from a societal and cultural perspective. Author Julio Carrion wrote, "In the Fujimori Era [...] corruption was a primary constitutive feature of the regime. By effectively eradicating any oversight of the executive branch by the legislature or the judiciary, Fujimori and his inner circle were free from scrutiny and could act with impunity" in "The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Peru". In essence Fujimori laid the groundwork for a government ridden with corruption and crime. He was able to infiltrate all aspects of the political system and remove respect for authority. In the sense that the need to follow protocols and regulations wavered. His long list of wrong-doings in many ways has stayed with the country. This is not to say that Fujimori was the sole culprit of corruption in Peru but rather he was a major player in its continued existence. Unfortunately, overtime the shock value of crime decreases until one becomes jaded. When that transpires, a country has a major challenge ahead in reducing illegal actions.

A chemist professor at the University of San Pedro in Chimbote shares his perspective on corruption on a community level. He explains that one reason why people act without accountability is because their bosses have chosen to think of the self rather than the whole. In other words, the system of checks and balances has slowly degraded over time. Indirectly he is supporting the argument that Fujimori and the overall Peruvian government holds responsibility for not being able to uphold procedures and justice as it should. Such that those within power and those striving to obtain it are unable to distinguish between right and wrong. Specifically in Chimbote, although similar behaviors can probably be found throughout Peru, there is this mindset that things are not going to change so therefore why try to change them. Perhaps this outlook derives from the years of living under an overall unsupportive government and police system. But the resulting actions or lack thereof often equate to being unsupportive or undermining to one another.

The ease that comes from paying off a police officer to avoid getting a ticket or for having outdated car documents should be startling. Yet, it has become the norm. Just as plans for a new construction project is priced higher than calculated and the extra money benefits the companies, has become common knowledge, but should be startling. Similarly when a politician assists a non-profit agency to receive a scholarship or operating funds, it is almost expected that a portion of that money will be given to the politician. Otherwise known as a kickback. These examples of real life occurrences are just some of the ways in which corruption in simple forms take place. Of course, these examples do not represent all Peruvians but surely some. Like myself, many often wonder where these behaviors derive from. Are they a result of poverty or greed?

Knowing the answer to that question may never be made evident. However, the earliest form of a classroom is the home. Children and parents learn their moral code, manners, and cultural normalities from family members and friends. Should we want future generations to live in a more just and accountable society, we must first take ownership of our own behaviors and how we influence those around us. An educated community gains power by knowing their rights as citizens. Thereby acquiring the ability to check the power of the local government and the police force.

Because when it is all said and done, a government without a community cannot run well. To continue to allow the instances previously mentioned to occur, permits the erosion of the system's foundation. One would only hope that through education and accountability those caught in corruption will be prosecuted. With the long term result of ending the people's suffering and preventing the daily microaggressions amongst one another.

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