



FDNSC united together for JPIC

FDNSC Generalate, Rome

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Dear Sisters and Friends,

In the General Chapter of 2014, it was decided that the next APA meeting would be held in Kiribati and that its focus would be to assist Kiribati with its immediate and long-term planning to respond to the impact of Climate Change. From **8 until 16 November 2016** this meeting was held. The **first 5 days** were used for a **Conference about Climate Change** and it is about this conference that I would like to report on in this JPIC Bulletin. Gratefully, I used the summaries that Sr. Merle made every day. Thank you, Sr. Merle!

As usual you will find the “Events on the JPIC Calendar”, news from some Provinces in “Did you know?” and a prayer.



The APA Meeting in Kiribati

The conference was attended by Srs. Lorraine and Philippa from Australia, Srs. Immaculae and Eufrasia from Indonesia, Sr. Cecilia from Japan, Srs. Sally and Betty from the Philippines, Srs. Relida and Hedwig from PNG, Sr. Beneteta, the Provincial Leader, and 13 Sisters from Kiribati - as they were hosting the meeting - and Srs. Merle and Elly from the Generalate. Father Martin Everi MSC was the facilitator. For most of us it was the first time in Kiribati and the sisters welcomed us by crowning us with garlands of flowers. The film “The spirit of Kiribati”, that we watched on **8 November**, taught us that this means “we garland you with love” and that is what we experienced during our stay in Kiribati. The film was a very informative and helpful orientation. It gave us an overview of Kiribati, its history, geography, people and culture as well as its problems, particularly Climate Change, the biggest problem the country is facing now.

On 9 November we, to our surprise, heard the first speaker, Dr. Temakei, say that Climate Change is real but it is normal, following a normal cycle. According to him: global warming is a manufactured lie; there is no ozone depletion because there is no ozone layer; sea level rise is not true, it is just a myth; and all of these things are only propaganda from a group of powerful and rich people who want money. He therefore assured us that we can relax, nothing will happen to Kiribati. The scientists are just telling us lies. Most of us, if not all, were confused because experience shows us a different picture. The welcome



Sr. Merle, Dr. Temakei, Fr. Martin

message of Sr. Beneteta, as well as the sharing of personal observations in the afternoon, showed that indeed much has changed in our climate patterns and that Climate Change is real: the world is warmer and the sea level has really risen. It is not “normal.”

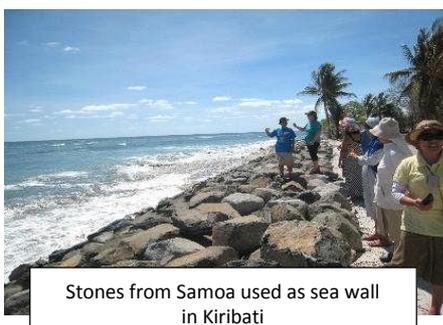
In the afternoon, a more realistic picture emerged as Ms. Elaine from the office of the President shared with us their plans to mitigate the impact of Climate Change on Kiribati. The new Kiribati government has the conviction that the islands will not sink and they want the country to focus on adaptation and becoming more resilient to survive the effects of Climate Change.



What did we get from all that we heard? In the small group discussions three things emerged:

1. We have the duty to take care of our environment, to care for the earth, our common home. This is a point of agreement among all of us, our two speakers and ourselves. We have all contributed to Climate Change in some way. We cannot deny this reality and our responsibility.
2. We ourselves need to seek more information. We heard two different views. We are called to continue listening and seeking the truth ourselves.
3. At this moment, we are called to identify practical things that we can do now, to combat the effects of Climate Change. Some examples the Kiribati Sisters gave were: planting mangrove trees, educating themselves and their people about the wise use of fresh water, fortifying their coasts by planting trees and building better and higher sea walls.

On 10 November our guest speaker was Ms. Mimitong. She gave us a clear presentation of the Kiribati Adaptation Program (KAP), from Phase 1 to 3, a program which began in 2003 and is expected to be completed in February 2018. She gave us a very clear picture of what has been done and what is being done by the government to help the people of the country adapt and mitigate the effects of Climate Change. The presentation gave many of us a deep sense of hope. More importantly, the presentation empowered us. How?



In three ways:

- First, we learned what is essential for Kiribati to survive the effects of Climate Change: fresh water supply and coastal protection. This gave us a clear focus.
- Second, the KAP Pilot Projects opened our eyes and made us see that the necessary interventions are very practical and doable. Examples are: rain water harvesting to guarantee a fresh water supply and mangrove planting for coastal protection.
- Third, through the presentation, we realized that the government cannot do everything. They cannot reach all the villages and cover all the islands. We, therefore have a necessary role to play. We, as a religious congregation, can follow the example of KAP and play our own part.

As a result, there was a lot of positive energy and optimism during the small group discussions and the groups came up with very concrete proposals as to what we can do as FDNSCs. Before the end of the day, we had succeeded in gathering all those proposals and appointing a 'writing group' to put together all our proposals into a declaration.

On 11 November, we had the opportunity to "move beyond the talk". We went around



Tarawa and saw with our own eyes some of the effects of Climate Change, like the sea wall erosion in several places. We also saw some of the KAP Projects, like mangrove gardens, rain harvesting tanks and new sea walls. The highlight of our day was our experience of mangrove planting in the morning and mangrove seed picking in the afternoon. We ended the day with a sack of mangrove seeds ready to be planted in the APA mangrove garden, somewhere near the OLSH Convent in Teoraereke - the small beginning of our continuing efforts to contribute to God's saving act here and now.



On 12 November the guest speaker was our facilitator himself, Fr. Martin Everi MSC. His presentation was entitled "*Impact of Climate Change in the Pacific: a Challenge to the Mission of the Church*". To make a theological analysis of Climate Change, Fr. Martin used as a framework the methodology: see – understand – discern – act. He presented to us: the signs and effects of Climate Change; how scientists explain Climate Change and its causes; the biblical view on creation and what the church is called to do in the face of Climate Change.

After all the presentations and following group discussions, we confidently dared to say that "our knowledge, awareness and understanding of Climate Change had increased, so that we were ready to act". Just before lunch, we trooped to the seashore behind the OLSH Provincialate to plant the APA mangrove garden! We hope that these mangroves will survive the tides, will live and grow and help protect the sisters from the king tides of the future.



But this Conference was about much more than Climate Change. We experienced God's love in creation: this beautiful country is paradise! We experienced the beauty of the simple

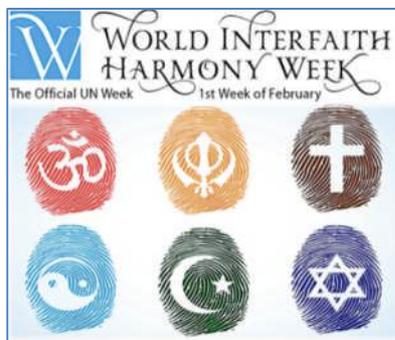
lifestyle of the people of Kiribati, in which community life plays such an important role. We celebrated Mass with the people in the Maneaba (meeting house) of the Sacred Heart Parish and we realized once more that the Heart is the source of our mission. We have come to love the people of Kiribati. We experienced solidarity as we searched for ways to respond to the impact of Climate Change and to support and encourage one another. We experienced what Pope Francis stated in *Laudato Si*: “All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.” (89)

“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (92). Encouraged to act, we went home.



Events on the JPIC Calendar

February 6-12, World Interfaith Harmony Week: This week came about as a result of a UN resolution for such a week, proposed in 2010 by HM King Abdullah II and HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan. It seeks to spread the message of harmony and tolerance among the followers of the three monotheistic faiths and all the world’s religions. It also seeks to promote the common basis of “Love of God and Love of the Neighbour, or “Love of the Good and Love of the neighbour” among religions, to safeguard world peace.



Prayer

Loving God, we ask for your help in bringing about peace among all people. As Your children, we are bound to each other through our created nature. Help us to see that our differences are not cause for conflict. Open our eyes and allow us to see our neighbours as our brothers and sisters. Bless our actions, that they may be the cause of peace and not injustice. Bless our lips, that they may speak your loving words in conversation with all people and be an avenue for change through prayer.

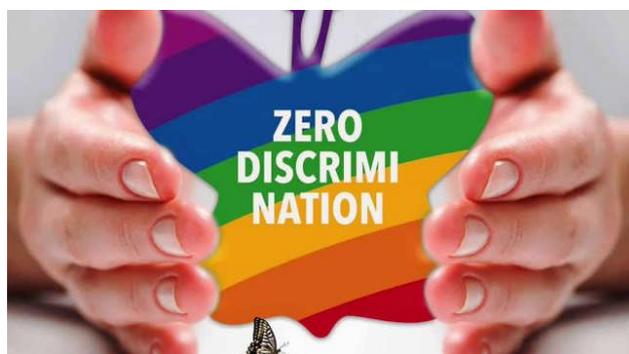
February 20, World Day of Social Justice: This day is meant to support the international community’s efforts towards social justice for all. This day was observed for the first time on 20 February 2009. It aims to contribute to the efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and justice for all.



Prayer

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin.
It is your will that they be gathered together as one family in yourself.
Fill the hearts of mankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.
By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure equality for all our brothers and sisters throughout the world.
May there be an end to division, strife and war.
May there be a dawning of a truly human society,
built on love and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

March 1, Zero Discrimination Day: This United Nations Day aims to combat all forms of discrimination. In particular, this involves the organization of UNAIDS and their fight for a fair and equal treatment of patients suffering from HIV and AIDS.



Almost 40 million people worldwide live with the so-called human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). The United Nations program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) pursues the goals of individual countries by supporting and coordinating their activities. On Zero Discrimination Day worldwide actions will take place to raise awareness.

Prayer

May we reject all forms of discrimination and stigma,
because we believe in You, God,
who created the world in all its diversity and colour, HIV-positive and negative alike.
May we honour the dignity of all people,
because we believe in You, Jesus Christ,
who took upon yourself the pain and suffering of the world,
carers and people living with HIV alike.
May we speak and act with one prophetic voice,
because we believe in the Holy Spirit,
who summons us out of our complacency, voiceless and influential alike.
And we ask You, God, to convert all governments as we call upon them
to honour their commitments of funds and services in the response to HIV.
May we stand as one with those who live with HIV,
because You, Lord, care for us all.

March 8, International Women's Day: Celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, the present and the future. This Day aims to highlight the importance of creating conditions for the elimination of discrimination against women and for their full and equal participation in social development.



Prayer

Today we honour women of all times and all places,
because they are a reflection of the glory of God:
Women of courage. Women of hope.
Women suffering. Women mourning. Women living fully. Women experiencing joy.
Women delighting in life. Women knowing the interconnectedness of the human family.
Women honouring the sacredness of the relational, the affective.
Women quietly tending the garden of human flourishing.
Women boldly leading the transformation of unjust global structures.
Women seeking Wisdom. Women sharing Wisdom.
Women receiving Love. Women giving Love.
Women: life-giving. Women: the image of God.
Loving God, we celebrate your faithfulness and love.
On this day we commit ourselves to the promotion
of the full humanity of all women everywhere.
We know that whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts their full humanity is not of God.
Help us to be faithful to your call to love. Amen.

March 22, World Water Day: Focusing on the importance of fresh water and the sustainable management of fresh water resources. This day, declared by the UN General Assembly, aims to promote awareness of the extent to which water resource development contributes to economic productivity and social wellbeing.



Prayer

Today, on World Water Day, let us lift our voices in prayer for all persons who are on the margins, especially those who do not have access to safe water sources.

We pray for the 663 million people who lack access to safe water.
Plant our hearts near streams of compassion, God.
We pray for the women and children, who spend hours each day walking to collect water.
Plant our hearts near streams of compassion, God.
We pray for the 800,000 deaths per year attributable to unsafe water supply,
poor sanitation and hygiene.
Plant our hearts near streams of compassion, God.
We pray for a reduction in the 38 billion plastic water bottles
that end up in landfills every year.
Plant our hearts near streams of compassion, God.
We pray for greater accountability and transparency
when public water systems are threatened.
Plant our hearts near streams of compassion, God.

Good and gracious God, we pray for humility to see all the ways we take water for granted. Send Your Spirit to change the hearts of those who use water to create strife and conflict. Have mercy on those who are sick or in need because they cannot access safe water. We are thankful for Your gift of water, seen in the beauty of waterfalls, placid lakes, rivers that move people and commerce, oceans full of amazing creatures. Give us guidance on how to be better stewards of a finite resource. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus, Your Son. Amen

April 22, International Mother Earth Day (also known simply as **Earth Day**): recognises that the Earth and its ecosystems provide its inhabitants with life and sustenance. It also aims to raise awareness that humans have a collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature and to balance the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations.

‘Mother Earth’ is an ancient concept common to many languages and cultures, acknowledging our connection to the planet which sustains and nurtures us.

Prayer

Almighty God, open our eyes to see your love throughout creation. Inspire us to treat creation and each other as you would, with respect and compassion.

Creator God, we thank you for all that you have given us. Help us to see that your gifts are meant to be shared by all, not just exploited by a few. Lead us to take action to make a change not just for ourselves, but for all creation.

God of wonder, open our eyes to see you in all that you have created. Through the contemplation of your goodness, move us to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and with the earth that we share.

God of all, you so loved the world that you sent your only Son to redeem all creation. Grant that we may follow Christ’s example of compassion and never forget the impact of all that we do on the earth and to one another. We ask this through Christ our Lord, Redeemer of all. Amen.



Did you know....?



On **Sunday 16 October** the City of Tilburg celebrated “the week for the people new to Tilburg”. The MSC’s and FDNSC’s in this city in the Netherlands participated by presenting a program with the title “How to settle in a foreign country.” Father Ben Verberne spoke about this topic. A ‘new Tilburger’ spoke about “I was a refugee and have found a new home” and Sr. Francesco

spoke about “How to live as a Christian among Muslims.” Congratulations, Dutch Province, for being part of this initiative!



Because Pope Francis had declared **6 November** to be a day of Mercy for all people in captivity, our Sisters in the Netherlands participated in the initiative of the KNR (Dutch Religious Conference) to send a message of mercy to all women in the detention centres of Zwolle, Evertsoord, Nieuwesluis, Schiphol and Rotterdam.

Therefore, on 29 September our sisters used handkerchiefs to make a little bundle and put a tea bag and some sweets in it. A handkerchief was used to show that the religious are aware of

the suffering of these women and wanted to bring a little bit of consolation. They attached a card with the words: “On this day of mercy, a little sign of consolation and encouragement for you! Much strength, peace and all the best! The Dutch Religious.”

This was a very meaningful event, not only for the women in the detention centres, but also for our Dutch Sisters, who were happy that they could show their sympathy. “This is what we can still do”, said one of the sisters, who are mostly more than 80 years old.



At the APA meeting Sr. Betty, the Coordinator for JPIC of the Philippines, gave a presentation in which she showed us how in their country Justice and Peace Issues are fully integrated into their ministries. Thank you very much, Sister! We hope to report about that in our next bulletin.

On www.futurelearn.com you can find two very interesting free internet courses on Climate Change. The first one is: “*Climate change challenges and solutions*” from the University of Exeter. The second one is: “*Climate justice*” from UNESCO!! Are you also going to sign up? Go to:

www.futurelearn.com/courses/climate-change-challenges-and-solutions and www.futurelearn.com/courses/climate-justice



A Prayer for the Earth by Pope Francis

All powerful God, filling all the universe and the smallest of your creatures,
You embrace all life with tenderness.

Pour out the power of Your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as sisters and brothers.

We thank You! We thank You! We thank You for being with us every day!

We thank You! We thank You! We thank You for being with us in every way!

God of the poor, help us to rescue the lost and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in Your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives and we'll protect the world from all this confusion.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the earth.

We thank You! We thank You! We thank You for being with us every day!

We thank You! We thank You. We thank You for being with us in every way!

Teach us, O God, to discover the worth of each and every thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to see we are united with every little thing as we journey to Your light.

Encourage us, we pray, to work for justice, peace, love and understanding!

We thank You! We thank You! We thank You for being with us every day!

We thank You! We thank You! We thank You for being with us in every way!

If you would like to sing this prayer, go to:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJz0ZuxxMI0