



FDNSC united together for JPIC

FDNSC Generalate, Rome

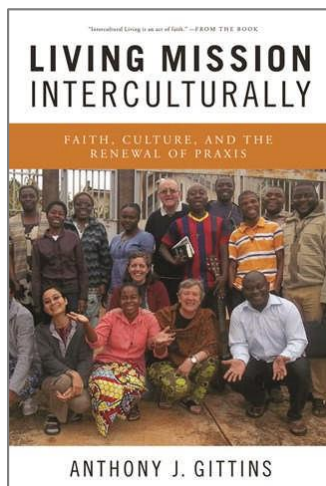
JPIC Bulletin, No 6, October 2016

Dear Sisters and Friends,

While Sr. Marife and I were on visitation in the Netherlands and Belgium, two things that struck us were the **multiculturality of the society** and the fact that, even though both countries are rich, many people still suffer from **poverty**.

Before the 60's there were rich and poor countries. The latter were referred to by Catholics as "Mission Countries". It was generally thought that these were the countries where the poor people, 70% of the world population, lived. At that time many of those poor countries were still Western colonies. But since then, the world has changed drastically.

Nowadays the map of global poverty is no longer equal to geographic borders. The World Bank, one of the world's largest institutes for development that aims to alleviate poverty, divides countries now into low, middle and high income countries. 74% of the extreme poor are living in the middle-income countries, while in many of the high-income countries only the rich elites are better off.



In his book "*Living mission interculturally*" Father Anthony J. Gittins writes: Multiculturalism, i.e. living together separately, can for us, as people of faith, not be enough. We choose deliberately to work through linguistic and cultural divisions in order to build communities that can be called "intercultural". Unless we meet the challenge of intercultural living, communities risk fragmentation, loss of membership and the inability to serve the mission."

In this Bulletin, you can read an article written by Dr. Rob van der Zwan, Director of the Missionary Service Centre in Tilburg, about his experiences with the challenges of intercultural living in the Centre. As usual, you will find here the events on the JPIC Calendar; you can read about what has been done by our sisters in different parts of the world, and we end with a prayer.

The Missionary Service Centre (MST)

This centre was established by the Dutch MSC and FDNSC. It is a centre for meeting and services, located in Tilburg; it works in the tradition of the MSC and FDNSC. The MST is for everyone, but especially for vulnerable people. Connections between people are made here.

Hospitality is important and participation is the motto. People are valued for what they are and how they are, no matter who they are. Where necessary and where possible, people are supported; a mission that is as easy to declare as it is difficult to achieve in everyday practice.

The MST is large, that is to say, it is visited by 1000-1500 people weekly. Our visitors have a lot of different backgrounds. The birthplaces of our guests are in more than 100 countries. Therefore, we sometimes say: "The whole world comes together in this one place." To participate in Dutch society, migrants and refugees must deal with the Dutch



language. Anyone who does not speak the language well enough misses an important instrument to survive. The MST, therefore, has a major language department where every week hundreds of people attend their lessons which are taught by enthusiastic volunteers.

The Netherlands is prosperous and has no war. There is good education and quality health care exists. People reach advanced ages here. The cities are clean and nice and there is an efficient public transport system. There is art and culture. There are green, grassy meadows and the ground is heavy and fertile and produces huge amounts of food to be exported to all continents. Against the background of this scene of prosperity, the Dutch live and work. The Netherlands is a rich but complex society. In the Netherlands, you do not have to die of



hunger. Yet there are Food Banks where people can go for food packages. In the Netherlands, you do not have to wander homeless on the streets, but there are homeless people. The meaning of poverty is drawn along other lines here. As MST, we have identified poverty as 'societal homelessness'. The modern poor we call 'urban nomads'.

Who are these urban nomads? Helen, a woman from Tilburg, who has run up large debts and continues to do so; Joshua, a disillusioned immigrant from Ghana who just cannot settle; Esther who has lost her child because she could not take care of him; Kees who quarrels with everyone and therefore has been put out of his home; Herman, a paedophile who no longer knows how to keep going; Sonja, a Roma woman from Romania, who has problems with the immigration police; Ingrid who is truly alone and has cancer; Mohammed who says he is a Palestinian refugee, but actually is a Moroccan ragamuffin. With them, there are many others and their problems are often large. These are the lives which know little peace and house much injustice. These are the lives that are permanently in crisis and where hope and despair take turns quickly. Does anyone care? Many urban nomads do have a roof over their heads, but they seem not to exist in the bureaucracy. They are 'lost' in it, or they have had a permanent quarrel with public authorities, or their personal problems are insoluble. Anyone can become an urban nomad.

Again, the Netherlands and thus Tilburg form a complex society. People who want to move along well in society should be able to "dance" according to its sophisticated choreography. Anybody who does not grasp this choreography (any longer) is faced with the hard and merciless side of Dutch society. Many have luck and succeed. Others have difficulties in joining. Some go to rack and ruin. In the MST, we try to "dance" along with people in the hope that "movement lasts".



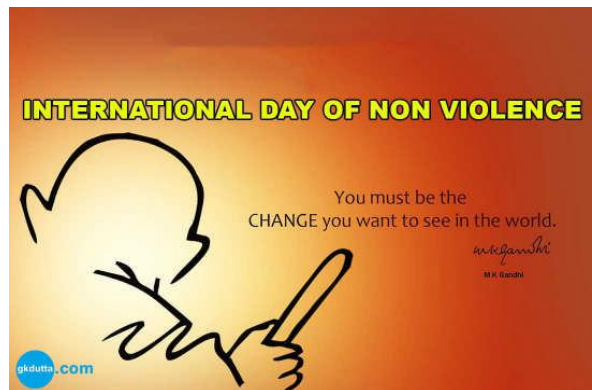
Srs. Marife and Lies and Rob looking at the painting that represents all the different people who visit the centre.

What can MST offer to people? Help to make connections and to build bridges of trust. MST aims to be 'a heart and soul presence' in Tilburg society. MST is indebted to the tradition of the two religious congregations (MSC and FDNCS) who founded it in the late eighties. 190 dedicated volunteers - religious and non-religious - play a key role. Led by a small staff of 8 workers, they give actual shape to this inspired presence of MST in Tilburg. So many times we cannot solve the problems of people;

rather we offer a helping hand in coping with their problems. Through hospitality and togetherness, we provide a 'pantomime' of the good life, even if only for a moment.

Events on the World JPIC Calendar

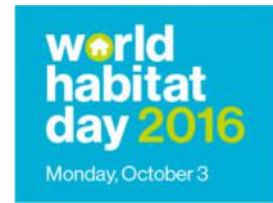
October 2, International Day of Non-Violence: This day is established to honour the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. According to the UN General Assembly resolution, this day offers an occasion to "disseminate the message of non-violence, through education and public awareness." The resolution reaffirms "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence."



Let us pray that we may be instruments of peace wherever we are, as we are presented with opportunities to bring love to hate, pardon to injury, faith to doubt, hope to despair, light to darkness, and joy to sadness.

October 3, World Habitat Day: The United Nations officially designated the first Monday in October throughout the world as a time to consider that all humans have the right to adequate shelter. It is also a time that is meant for us to consider the conditions of our cities and towns as well as remind us of our responsibility to future generations.

Every year since 1986, the United Nations has chosen a different theme for the celebration and it is celebrated in a different country. The themes range in topic, but are generally focused around the problems of urban development, such as sanitation, safety, and access to clean water. The organization of World Habitat Day is managed by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).



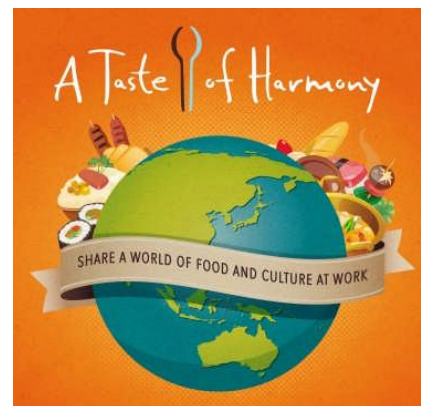
Every year since 1989, UN-Habitat awards the Habitat Scroll of Honor to recognize projects that make remarkable contributions to fields related to human habitats. Some examples of these include providing shelters for those without, bringing awareness to the problems of the



homeless, reconstruction following a conflict, and quality of urban life.

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow a nest — a place near your altar. Give us the hands, hearts and resources to continue building homes for – and with – our neighbours in need.

October 16, World Food Day: This is a day of action against hunger. People around the world come together to declare their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime, because when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number in the world is zero.



Lord, give us today our daily bread.

Let us remember those who do not have bread for today.

May we willingly share your generous provision, with all who hunger and lack adequate nutrition in our own communities and across the globe.

Lord, give us today our daily bread.

Let us remember that our bodies are God's holy temple.

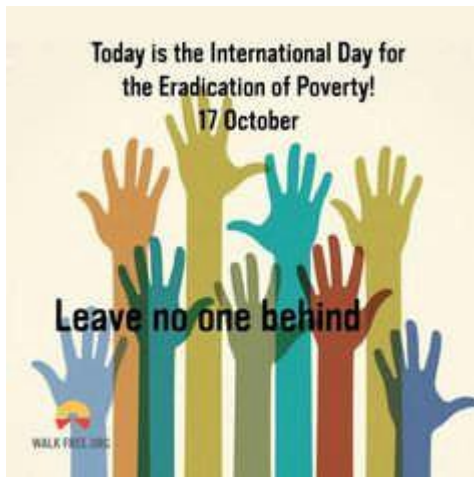
May we not eat too much or eat unwisely and destroy our health, nor deplete our planet's resources.

Lord, give us today our daily bread.

Let us remember that we are all part of God's worldwide community.

May we work together to steward the world God has created, recognizing our responsibility as caretakers and neighbours, and joining in the celebration of God's good creation. Amen.

October 17, 30th UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty: The theme for this year, chosen by the United Nations with the International Committee for October 17, is: 'Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation: Ending poverty in all its forms'.



Lord, God of Mercy, we pray today in solidarity with people who are poor, vulnerable, abused and neglected in our own neighbourhoods, in our country and throughout the world.

May we serve as instruments of your love in prayer and in action for the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have no one to care for them.

Help us to bring your healing presence to all who are broken in body, mind or spirit and to turn their hurt into hope. We pray in the name of Jesus, who knew poverty and pain and suffered for us. Amen.

November 16, International Day for Tolerance: On the day of its fiftieth anniversary, 16 November 1995, UNESCO's Member States adopted a Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. Among other things, the Declaration affirms that tolerance is neither indulgence nor indifference. It is respect and appreciation of the rich variety of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance recognizes the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms of others. People are naturally diverse; only tolerance can ensure the survival of mixed communities in every region of the globe.



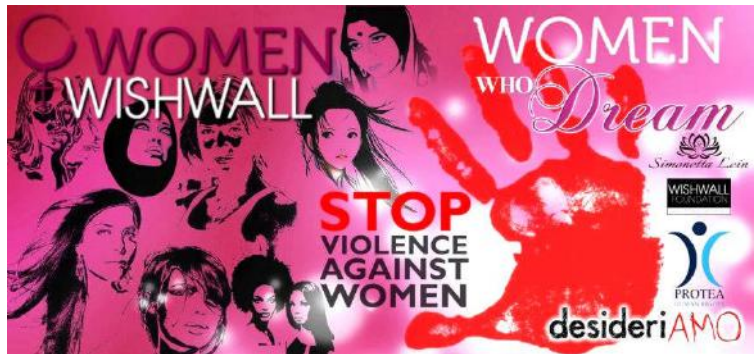
Dear Lord, we often are divided, unloving, prejudiced at times, intolerant and inclined to misunderstanding. Make us instead united, loving, understanding, forgiving, tolerant and open to learning. May your Spirit be present in us as you are in all peoples.

November 19, World Toilet Day: This day is about the 2.4 billion people who lack access to improved sanitation. It is about the nearly 1 billion people who have to defecate in the open. It is about the millions of children whose futures are compromised by poor sanitation and related nutrition problems. We cannot accept this situation. Sanitation is a global development priority. This is why in 2013 the United Nations General Assembly officially designated November 19 as World Toilet Day. World Toilet Day is coordinated by UN-Water in collaboration with governments and relevant stakeholders.



Loving God, we pray for a world of justice where everyone has access to a toilet and clean water. May all our sisters and brothers throughout the world be able to live in dignity. We thank you God for creating us all in your image and making us your children. Amen

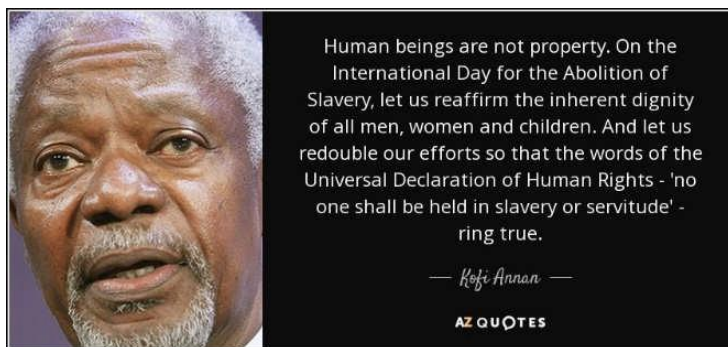
November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women: As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated: “Violence against women and girls takes many forms and is widespread throughout the globe. On this International Day, I urge governments and partners around the world to harness the energy, ideas and leadership of young people to help us to end this pandemic of violence. Only then will we have a more just, peaceful and equitable world.”



God, we thank You for the love that You have for us because we were created in your image as man and woman. So recognizing us as different, we seek to complement each other: men as support for women and women as support for men. Thank You, God, for women and their mission in the human community.

We pray for the women who are good and generous and who have given their lives to give us life. We pray for the women who are feeling alone, women who do not find meaning to life; for the marginalized and those used as an object of pleasure and consumption; women who have been mistreated, raped and murdered. We pray, Lord, for all of us, men and women; that we may know, understand, appreciate and help each other, so that in a relationship, which is friendly and positive, we may collaborate together in the service of family, community, society and life.

December 2, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: This is held annually to raise awareness of the atrocities of modern slavery. The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, different forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts. Today, more than 27 million women, men and children are trapped in slavery all over the world.



God of freedom, beauty and truth, we believe that your deepest desire is that all creation might know abundant life. We raise our voices in anguished prayer for our sisters and brothers, women and girls, men and boys, who are modern day slaves. They are your beloved daughters and sons, exploited sexually or forced to work because of human violence and greed.

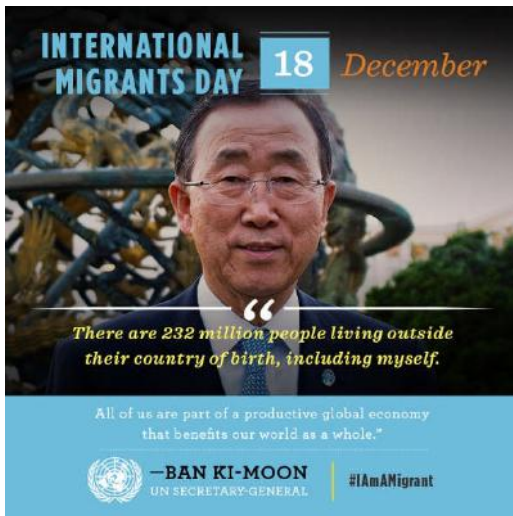
Fill us with your holy anger and your sacred passion that those who are trafficked might know healing and justice; that traffickers will come to repentance and conversion; that all of us might live in such a way that others are not made to pay the price for our comfort and convenience. Hasten the coming of the day when all people and our precious earth itself will be treated, not as a commodity, but as radiant images of your freedom, beauty and truth. Amen.

December 10, Human Rights Day: On this day, we are reminded of the fact that human rights belong equally to all of us. All people have the same rights to be free from fear and from want. Having similar needs and desires can bind us together as a global community.

In many ways, our community ministries of healthcare, education, social services and welcoming presence seek to honour these basic human rights for others.



Let us pray for the wisdom and insight to create situations that promote a safe and healthy environment where the dignity of each person is respected.



December 18, International Migrants Day: This day recognizes the efforts, contributions and rights of migrants worldwide. This is a time to bring to our attention the stories of the struggles of migrants, the problems of human trafficking, the difficult lives of migrant workers' children, and the plight of refugees.

Let us pray to be open to the different gifts and talents that migrants can bring to our communities and that we will be able to promote ways in which migrants can be welcomed as persons who can make important contributions to the life of the communities where they live.

Did you know.....?

These days the General Council has paperless meetings. Using their laptops during the meetings they save a lot of paper.



From November 8 until 16, there will be an FDNAC APA meeting (Australia, Pacific, Asia) in Kiribati about Climate Change. The invited keynote speakers are: Sir Anote Tong, the former president of Kiribati, and Fr. Martin Everi MSC. Sir Anote Tong also spoke in the film "Kiribati a Climate Change reality" (8 August 2015) and he gave a TED Talk (24 December 2015). Both have been placed on our JPIC Facebook and can also be seen on the Internet by following these links:

1. *Kiribati a Climate Change reality* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cIG7vt1ZPKE>
2. *My Country will be underwater soon, unless we work together* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KACXV-cW-4>)

Sr. Marife and Sr. Elly while on visitation in Belgium visited the Sant'Egidio Community. They have communities in more than 73 countries. Is there a community in your Province?



Sr. Marife wrote in the visitation report of Belgium: “I am impressed by an 80 year-old sister riding a bike to do volunteer work for the poor.” Here she is!

On September 1, united with many people around the world, we celebrated “the International Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.” Sr. Linda and Sr. Madeleine prepared a beautiful decoration for this day in our chapel.



Prayer

"God of a Thousand Faces",
 My father was an Aramean wanderer...
 From the time of Abraham and Sarah, migration
 and resettlement have assured ethnic diversity
 in communities worldwide.
 Nowadays, our multicultural societies
 reveal the God of a thousand faces.
 This opens to us the possibility of seeing many new dimensions
 of the gospel as we share our insights with each other.
 God of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, God of all people,
 thank you for the beauty and uniqueness of our country.
 Grant your protection and grace to all who shelter here.
 Forgive the racism and destruction that have been part of our history,
 and our disregard for the pain and oppression within communities.
 Help us shed our local expectations. Take away our cultural tunnel vision.
 Open our hearts to be caring neighbours to each other.
 Direct our lives to just and peaceful action.
 God of a thousand faces, help us also to acknowledge
 that You are worshipped in many languages,
 in songs and rhythms of life different from our own.
 May we respect these religious insights in each other
 and assist each faithful expression of You.
 We rejoice in You, God, in whose image we are brothers and sisters
 and by whose example in Jesus Christ we know the breadth and depth of Your universal love.
 Amen