



# FDNSC

## united together for JPIC

FDNSC Generalate, Rome

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### Dear Sisters and Friends,

Last year I accompanied Sr. Marife on her visitation to Brazil. The months before we went there, the issue of the refugees dominated the European news. “What JPIC issues are urgent in Brazil?” I wondered. In this bulletin, therefore, you will find an article about Justice and Peace in Brazil. As usual you will find: events on the World JPIC Calendar; *Did you know* and a concluding prayer. I hope that reading this bulletin will encourage you to continue working for Justice and Peace so that the Mercy of God, shown to us by the Heart of Jesus, will be known everywhere!

### JPIC Issues in Brazil

Sr. Iede das Gracias Simao de Lima is the Coordinator for JPIC in Brazil. “With Fr. Jules Chevalier, we believe that Justice and Peace is the alternative vision of life for all, for



communion with God, with one another and with all of creation. It describes the quality of life in the Reign of God, the coming of a new heaven and a new earth. It is in this sense that we have learned to believe that our human participation in the saving works of God in our time and our compassion for the world of today must be a conscious choice, a preferential option for the poor and an engagement in liberating and transforming action.” (*First MSC APIA consultation on justice and peace and integrity of creation*). Therefore, JPIC issues deserve an important place in our Congregation with its Sacred Heart Spirituality, according to Sr. Iede. And she mentioned many JPIC issues in Brazil that they have to address, such as:

discrimination of minorities, as the population consists of many different races; the difficulty to access drinking water, because of drought and because rich people are sometimes inclined to keep the sparse water for themselves; the problem of climate change; the fact that many children do not go to school; violence against children and the refugee problem.

Sr. Sonia Maria Martins is working with refugees. She is a member of the board of the Caritas Groups in São Paulo. One of their responsibilities is a refugee centre, which we were able to visit during our visitation. The centre helps refugees to apply for asylum.



According to the National Committee for Refugees, a part of the Brazilian Ministry of Justice (Conore), 2,077 Syrian refugees have been granted asylum in Brazil since the beginning of the war. Currently 8,400 recognized refugees reside in Brazil, from 80 different nationalities. The relatively large number of Syrian refugees in Brazil is due to a special humanitarian visa created by the Ministry of Justice in 2013. Syrians who have been displaced due to the war can use this visa to guarantee safe passage by plane to Brazil in order to claim asylum on arrival. Andrés Ramirez, representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Brazil, spoke highly of the country's stance on refugees. "Brazil has an open door policy for Syrian refugees", he said. "The numbers are still small, mostly due to our geographical location, but without doubt ours is an example to be followed on a global scale. Another relatively unusual aspect of the process for asylum-seekers in Brazil is that they are allowed to work while their application is under consideration." According to Sr. Sonia, for Syrian refugees the procedure to get asylum takes about 3 months. The refugees receive support to visit a doctor, to learn the language and to find a job and a house. Many people in the parish donate food, clothes and money to support the refugees. Sr. Sonia likes her work with the refugees. She thinks it fits in with our spirituality to go to the poor and marginalized. "These people have left everything behind. That mustn't be easy," she said. She remembers a young refugee whom she helped to get his ID card. Now he works at McDonald's and tries to save money so that he will be able to bring his family to Brazil. Once she let him phone home. It was the first time in three years that he spoke to his father!! That was a very emotional moment.

However, after photos of the drowned Syrian toddler, Aylan Kurdi, shocked the world and were widely shared in the Brazilian media, some people have reacted with criticism, reminding everybody of the high levels of violence against children in Brazil.



Sr. Sueli Elisabeth de Lima, who works as a lawyer in family rights, confirms that the violation of the rights of children, and also of women and elderly people, is indeed high in Brazil. Children in the *favelas* (slums) are confronted on a daily basis with problems related to health, food, access to water, education and violence. Brazil has the seventh highest rate of violence against women in the world. Therefore, Sr. Sueli deals with problems like child neglect, child abuse, termination of paternal rights, custody, child support, spousal support and even divorce. "In family law you can be more than a lawyer, assessing and advising clients on their legal rights," she said. "You can help families through a stressful experience in their lives and help them to build up a supportive family life."

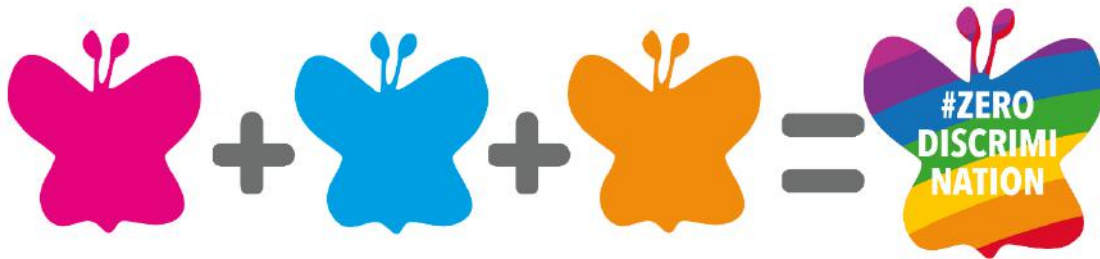
As a coordinator, Sr. Iede tries to inform the sisters about issues such as these and to make them aware of the situation of the marginalized people in their country. She stimulates the sisters to pray for justice and peace and, when it is possible, to act. For many sisters that will be in a more indirect way, in dealing with the children in the schools for example. We can all

teach people justice and peace by our own example of living it out, because: “We know of the deep conviction of Fr. Jules Chevalier regarding a new world, emerging from the pierced Heart of Jesus, a world watered by Justice and Peace.” (*First MSC APIA consultation on justice and peace and integrity of creation*)

### World Event Calendar

#### March 1: Zero Discrimination Day

An annual worldwide event that promotes diversity and recognizes that everyone counts.



**March 8: International Women’s Day** - to celebrate women’s achievements throughout history and across nations. It is also known as the United Nations (UN) Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace.



#### March 19: Earth Hour

Earth Hour is a global WWF (World Wildlife Fund) climate change initiative. An annual environmental campaign that brings attention to the effects of climate change by asking people to switch off lights in homes and businesses for an hour at 8.30pm (20:30), local time on the last Saturday of March. This year Earth Hour will be held on March 19, instead of the last Saturday of the month.

**March 20: International Day of Happiness** - The day recognizes that happiness is a fundamental human goal and calls upon countries to approach public policies in ways that improve the well-being of all peoples. By designating a special day for happiness, the UN aims to focus world attention on the idea that economic growth must be inclusive, equitable and balanced, such that it promotes sustainable development and alleviates poverty.



Additionally the UN acknowledges that, in order to attain global happiness, economic development must be accompanied by social and environmental well-being.

**March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** - The day aims to remind people of racial discrimination's negative consequences. It also encourages people to remember their obligation and determination to combat racial discrimination.

**March 22: World Water Day** - Events are organized on or around this day to increase people's awareness of water's importance in environment, agriculture, health and trade.

**April 7: International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda** is an opportunity to remind the world that crimes that were committed should never be repeated again. In 1994, more than 800,000 people, mainly Tutsi, moderate Hutu and Twa, were systematically killed across Rwanda in less than three months.

**April 22: International Mother Earth Day**

- Recognizing that Mother Earth reflects the interdependence that exists among human beings, other living species and the planet we all inhabit, the General Assembly declared 22 April as International Mother Earth Day to recognize the responsibility we have to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a balance between economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations.



**April 29: Day of Remembrance for all the victims of Chemical Warfare**

This day gives people the chance to pay tribute to the victims of chemical warfare. It also allows governments and organizations to commit or reaffirm their commitment to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an organization that aims to end the threat of chemical weapons and promote the peace and security worldwide.

**May 3: World Press Freedom Day** - This day gives people the chance to pay tribute to media professionals who risked or lost their lives in the line of duty.

**May 8-9: Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for those who lost their lives during the Second World War** - Although many countries have their own public holidays and remembrance days dedicated to the end of World War II, the United Nations General Assembly decided to establish annual international days of remembrance to pay tribute to the victims of the war. They begin on May 8 as on this day in 1945, the Allies accepted the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

The events of the Second World War created the conditions for the establishment of the United Nations as an international organization that focuses on promoting peace and co-operation. The UN was created in order to prevent other conflicts comparable to WWII.



**May 21: World Day for the Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development** - to help people learn about the importance of cultural diversity and harmony.

### Did you know?



Like many of us, on 1 September 2015 the Italian Sisters celebrated the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation. Pope Francis added this annual prayer day to the Catholic Calendar.

On September 24, the eve before the General Assembly of the United Nations finalized their new Sustainable Development Goals, the sisters in Sydney Australia held a vigil and they felt united with many people throughout the world and especially with the Generalate where the same vigil was held.



Sr. Philippa from Australia shared the following with us: On 11 October, Pacific Calling Partnership, a group that Sr Philippa Murphy and Sr Lorraine McCleary belong to, organised a conference in Sydney. The theme of the conference was: 'Climate Change and our Common Home in the Pacific'. Over 100 people attended the conference and a group of OLSH sisters - (Srs Kaitaake, Maria and Bina from Kiribati Province and Srs Lorraine and Philippa from the Australian Province) - gave one of the key presentations on our



Congregation's response to Care of the Earth, based on our 19th General Chapter Statements and Recommendations, with a particular emphasis on Heart Spirituality and the impact of Climate Change on the lives of the people of Kiribati.

The Sisters from Kiribati showed great courage as they shared their personal stories on how Climate Change is impacting on their people and the

country of Kiribati. Sr Kaitakke witnessed: "Climate change is having a grave impact on the people of Kiribati. Taro is one of our staple foods but there is a problem growing it because of salty water in our gardens. Also the coconut tree cannot grow in this salty land. Fish in the sea have to move to find another place for their shelter. They are all affected by climate change and rising sea levels."

Sr Maria said: "The most terrible experience I have had in my life was when a huge wave bashed the hospital in Betio due to the rising tide." (Betio is a small island which is part of Tarawa in the Republic of Kiribati.)

Sr Bina shares about her experience of the king tides: "It was scary – people along the coast screamed and were shocked. They busied themselves trying to gather their scattered belongings that were floating away. People wondered: Is this the end of us? We are not safe anymore. Does anybody think about our problem at this time?"

On 24 November, the sisters of the communities of Capanema and Barracão in Brazil visited Itaipu Hydroelectric Dam with Sr. Marife and Sr. Elly. It is the largest operational hydroelectric energy producer in the world, with an installed generation capacity of 14GW. The plant is operated by Itaipu Binacional and located on the border between Brazil and Paraguay. Energy generated by Itaipu helps meet demands from the two countries. One of the workers said that he never saw a group of sisters visiting the project before and that the interest and enthusiasm of the sisters had made the workers happy.



On 29 November, the day before the Climate Change Conference in Paris began, the Brazilian Sisters and Associates participated in a conference about Climate Change given by

Sr. Elly. At the same time in Rome, Sr. Dain from the Italian community and Srs Merle and Laurentia from the Generalate participated in a rally to create more awareness for our earth.



### Pope Francis' Prayer for the Year of Mercy

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him.  
Show us your face and we will be saved.  
Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money,  
the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things,  
made Peter weep after his betrayal,  
and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.  
Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us,  
the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:  
“If you knew the gift of God!”  
You are the visible face of the invisible Father,  
of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.  
You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness  
in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:  
let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved and forgiven by God.  
Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,  
so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,  
and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,  
proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,  
and restore sight to the blind.  
We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,  
you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.  
Amen.