



# FDNSC united together for JPIC

FDNSC Generalate, Rome

JPIC Bulletin, No 5, June 2016

## Dear Sisters and Friends,

In the Chapter Statements of our 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter, we wrote: “Challenged by *Evangelii Gaudium* which says that “to the extent that God reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity” (E.G 180), we reaffirm our commitment to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We are conscious of the desire of the Heart of Christ that “all may be one” (Jn. 17,21). But how do we live our spirituality of the Heart in light of the challenges of today’s world? We hope that this Bulletin may contribute to our awareness that JPIC is rooted deeply in our spirituality and how we commit ourselves ever more to JPIC.



In this Bulletin you can read about the Sedos meeting that took place in Rome. You also will find the events on the JPIC calendar. This time we have added a question for you to reflect on. As usual you can read about what has been done by our sisters in different parts of the world and we end with a prayer for oneness in diversity.

## The Sedos Residential Seminar

From May 2 to 6, four of us, Srs Elly, Laurentia, Madeleine, and Merle attended the SEDOS residential seminar entitled “INTERCULTURALITY: LIVING AND MISSION.” It was held at the Casa Divin Maestro in Ariccia (near Rome). In the opening address the President of SEDOS showed us how today’s world is full of contradictions: Everything is connected, but there is also disconnection. Nowadays it is easy to travel to other parts of the world but at the same time, we build walls to prevent people from entering certain countries; our societies and

**SEDOS SEMINAR 2016**  
2-6 May 2016 - Ariccia (Rome)



also our own communities are multicultural and we all eat food from many different cultures, but do we really live interculturally?

The Pope has highlighted in his documents for the year of Consecrated Life the culture of encounter, and suggests that we as religious should be models of community by living together as brothers and sisters. We can’t just live alongside one another (multicultural), we have to live with and to learn

from one another (intercultural). Intercultural living is not an option, it is an obligation. We are called to live like spiders by weaving nets (networking) and to use the strategies of ants (strength, power and coordinated actions), because intercultural living is the future of religious life. This is expressed in the logo for this Seminar.

## THE BIG 12 IN INTERCULTURALITY



Now that we see that intercultural living and mission is no longer an option but an obligation, it is important that our sisters are adequately prepared for such. It is important that formation, both initial and ongoing, prepares us to

live, effectively and happily, in multicultural communities and to do mission in a complex intercultural context. During the Seminar, Fr John Kirby, SVD gave a conference on “Developing Intercultural Competence.” In one part of his conference, he presented to us what he calls “The Big 12” in intercultural competence. These are 12 personality characteristics needed for working and living in a second culture. How did they come up with the big 12? The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) carried out a research on the qualities needed for effective cross-cultural communication. This research was later applied to missionaries where the agency made correlations between the scores of 350 missionaries and their ability to live contentedly and be effective in another cultural context. The result is a list of 12 intercultural characteristics that are worth developing in our own sisters. They are:

1) Approachable	7) Show Respect
2) Intercultural Receptivity	8) Perseverance
3) Positive Orientation	9) Flexibility
4) Forthrightness	10) Cultural Perspectivism
5) Social Openness	11) Venturesome
6) Enterprise	12) Social Confidence

In fact, an online test, Muriel Elmer’s Intercultural Competence Scale (ICS), has been developed to measure these twelve characteristics in a person. The test claims universal validity but Fr Kirby noted that it retains a substantial bias toward North American culture. But we think the list is worth looking at. The challenge is for each one of us to look at ourselves and see which of the big 12 is in me. What am I good at? Where am I invited to grow? Hopefully, this reflective exercise will give each one a clue as to how ready one is for interculturality.



## Making space for the other

*Sr. Merle was asked to give a reflection after the readings during the Eucharist of 4 May.*

*In that reflection she made it very clear how this applies in everyday living:*

Years ago, I heard a Jewish story about God and creation. The story begins by saying that in the beginning, there was God and God was perfect and complete. The image used was that of a perfect circle, this was God, perfect and complete in himself and there was no space for any other. The question then is, how did we come about. How did creation come about? The story continues...God who is perfect and complete, decided to contract, that is to withdraw a part of Godself to make space for the other. And then, after contracting and making space, God created and creation filled up that space completing God once again. And so we, and all of creation, are parts of God. The Jewish concept is called *TSIM TSUM*.



In today's first reading (Acts 17:15,22-18:1), Paul declares "God made the world and all that is in it...God is the one who gives to everyone life and breath and everything...In God we live and move and have our being." Whenever I read this text, I remember the Jewish concept of Tsim Tsum. God withdrawing a part of himself to make space for the other, then creates to fill up that part. Truly, in God we live and move and have our being.

Today, as we learned the different stages of growing in intercultural competence, the same concept comes to mind. Fr Kirby said we have to learn to leave and leave to learn. In other words, we have to learn to contract, to withdraw a part of ourselves to make space for the other and learn to make a new whole in which we together live and move and have our being.

Paul learned to do this. He went to Athens and left his own country and culture. He spent time looking around and (I suppose) talking to people and learning from them. Then he found a space (literally and figuratively) where he was able to come in. He tells them "You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious. For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed 'To an Unknown God'..." And then he shared his message with them.

In today's Gospel (John 16:12-15), we see Jesus do the same. He, of course, could have said everything he needed to say to his disciples already but he does not. He makes space for his disciples and says "I have much more to tell you but you cannot bear it now." He makes space for the Spirit to come and work in the disciples. "The Spirit will come and guide you to all truth."

Fortunately for us, our God created us in his image and likeness. We therefore can



confidently believe that in creating us, God has also given us the capacity to do *tsim tsum*, that is, the capacity to withdraw a part of ourselves and make space for the other. In these last two days of the seminar, if there is anything that has been made clear to us, it is that interculturality is a slow and difficult intentional process. This afternoon, we even started to ask if possibly it is something that can be done only by certain personalities and/or cultures. We were excited to take the test to see whether our style of conflict resolution is good for interculturality or not.

At the end of the day we know that as creatures of the same God, the capacity for *tsim tsum* is something we have in common. We may have it in different measures but we all have that capacity. We can withdraw a part of ourselves. We can make space for the other. We can live interculturally. God has made us so!

### Events on the World JPIC Calendar:



**June 1, global day of parents:** is celebrated each year to honour parents and their commitment to children worldwide. With this day the United Nations (UN) wants to give people all over the world the opportunity to appreciate parents and parental figures for the vital role they play in the development of families. The General Assembly also noted that the family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and

protection of children and that children, for the full and harmonious development of their personality, should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

**Pope Francis said** that “our family relationships help us to learn the virtue of mercy as we develop the habits of loving, forgiving, and serving one another.”

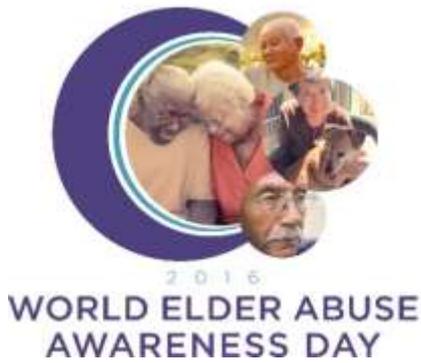
Where is God calling you to grow in mercy within your (religious) family?

**June 5, World Environment Day:** is one of the principal vehicles through which the UN stimulates worldwide awareness of the environment and enhances political attention and action.

**In his Encyclical “Laudato Si” the Pope said:** “The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish.”

How can you show mercy to Mother Earth and reduce the amount of waste that you produce?





**June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day:** this day aims to focus global attention on the problem of physical, emotional, and financial abuse of elderly. It also seeks to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population, and brings together senior citizens, and their caregivers, national and local government, academics, and the private sector to exchange ideas about how best to reduce incidents of violence towards elders, increase reporting of such abuse, and to develop elder friendly policies.

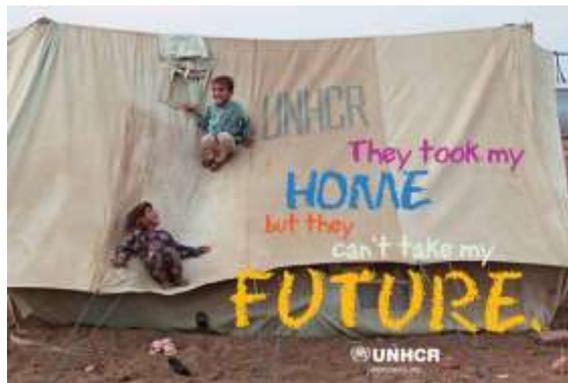
“A people who don’t protect their elderly, who don’t take care of their young, are a people without hope”, said **Pope Francis in his address to the Saint Egidio Community** on 15 June 2014.

Do you value the elderly? We aren’t immune to the pressures and opinions of our culture that often exults youth and dismisses the elderly. How can we see the elderly in light of God’s mercy? What can they teach us that no one else can?

**June 20, World Refugee Day:** This event honours the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

**Pope Francis said in his Message for the 2015 World Day of Migrants and Refugees:**

“Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants’ lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.”



Have you ever been welcomed warmly into a new group? What did it feel like? How did it change you? Are you good in welcoming strangers? Where are you invited to grow?

**July 11, World Population Day:** aims to increase people’s awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, including gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights.



**Pope Francis writes in Laudato Si:** Many intensive forms of environmental exploitation and degradation not only exhaust the resources which provide local communities with their livelihood, but also undo the social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and

community. The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal. The imposition of a dominant lifestyle linked to a single form of production can be just as harmful as the altering of ecosystems. In this sense, it is essential to show special care for indigenous communities and their cultural traditions. Indigenous people should be principal dialogue partners in projects.”

Does receiving much compel you to share this mercy with others? Take time after Mass this week to ask God how he wants you to share his mercy with those in need.

**July 30, World Day against Trafficking in persons:** Human trafficking affects every country in the world. At least 2.5 million people are trapped in modern-day slavery, according to the UN. All around the world, men, women and children are kidnapped, tricked, blackmailed, or manipulated into slavery, like prostitution, forced labour, or organ removal. One in four victims are children. More than half of these children are from Africa and the Middle East, and more than one third are from Asia and the Pacific.



The UN launched the Day Against Trafficking Persons for the first time on July 30, 2014, to end human trafficking and raise awareness worldwide.

**In Evangelii Gaudium Pope Francis said:** “I have always been distressed at the lot of those who are victims of various kinds of human trafficking. How I wish that all of us would hear God’s cry: “Where is your brother?” (Gn 4:9). Where is your brother or sister who is enslaved?” Do you believe that the Gospel is an answer to the many problems of injustice in our world? Do your actions reflect this belief? If not, how can you pray, speak or act differently?



**August 19, World Humanitarian Day** A time to recognize those who face danger and adversity in order to help others. The day was designated by the General Assembly to coincide with the anniversary of the 2003 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in

Baghdad, Iraq. World Humanitarian Day is also an opportunity to celebrate the spirit that inspires humanitarian work around the globe.

**Pope Francis said during the Vigil of the Prayer for Peace on 9 July 2013:** God’s world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other. This evening, in reflection, fasting and prayer, each of us deep down should ask ourselves: Is this really the world that I desire? Is this really the world that we all carry in our hearts? Is the world that we want really a world of harmony and peace, in ourselves, in our relations with others, in families, in cities, in and between nations?

Reflect on the questions of Pope Francis. What do you do to show this desire in everyday life?

**September 5, International Day of Charity:** promotes charitable efforts made to alleviate poverty worldwide.

**Pope Francis said in the Homily during the Mass on the Feast of the Sacred Heart on 6 July 2013:** “Jesus wanted to show us his heart as the

heart that loved so deeply. For this reason we have this commemoration today, especially of

God’s love. God loved us, he loved us with such great love. I am thinking of what St Ignatius told us.... He pointed out two criteria on love. The first: love is expressed more clearly in actions than in words. The second: there is greater love in giving than in receiving.”

In what ways can you look with new eyes at your brothers and sisters and their needs. Pray that God will allow you to look upon others with more mercy.



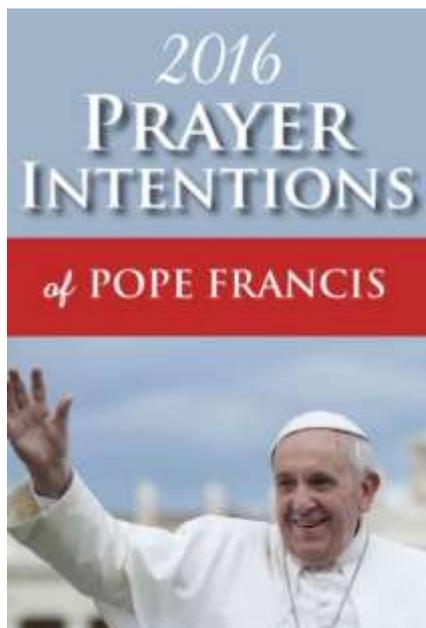
**September 15, International Day of Democracy:** to raise public awareness about democracy.

**The Pope said in Evangelii Gaudium number 220:** “People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let

us not forget that “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation”.

How do you show your appreciation for Democracy? By listening to the opinion of other people? By voting conscientiously?

### Did you know?



Pope Francis delivers his monthly prayer intentions on video over the social media. These new video messages, feature the pope asking for prayers and action on various challenges facing the world today. While the Pope speaks in Spanish, the videos have subtitles for a total of 10 languages.

Pope Francis' general prayer intentions for 2016 include: greater care for creation; more support for families in difficulty; just compensation for small farmers; greater respect for women and indigenous peoples; helping sports contribute to peace; encouraging journalists to respect truth and be more ethical; greater support for countries that take in refugees; and an end to the use of child soldiers. You can find the monthly video on our FDNCS Justice and Peace Facebook page (Go to our website: [www.olshgen.com](http://www.olshgen.com) – go to justice and peace – the first line is: follow us on Facebook)

In the 'Vietnews' that Sr. Precy sent us from Vietnam we read that in April Sr. Precy with Ty, Hong, Thao and her friend joined the annual out-reach and outing of the young lay MSC associates. Father Hoang MSC is the Spiritual Director of this group. They visited an orphanage run by Buddhists and also visited a Buddhist temple.



Sr. Merle and Sr. Linda are working on the revision of our Formation Handbook. After the working document was circulated, they received many helpful comments and suggestions. Formation for JPIC will be a very important focus in this Handbook, because JPIC is and will be deeply rooted in our Sacred Heart Spirituality.

In the Philippines some sisters and associates assisted during the National Elections. Here you see, Ayen, one of our Lay associates serving.



Sr. Betty showing the T- shirt, that she and all the non-partisan observers of the elections wear while on duty. They are part of PPCRV (Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting)

### **A prayer to affirm our oneness in diversity**

Our countries and also our Communities are becoming more and more multicultural. For some, this trend is a frightening thought, while for others it appears to be a doorway to many splendid opportunities. Let us celebrate our oneness, amidst the diversity in which we find ourselves.

## Prayer

Lord, we acknowledge You as our creator, creating in Your wisdom, people of different races, religions and languages. Grant us the faith to accept Your wisdom.

Lord, we realise that You have made us all in the image of God. Grant us the understanding to see our diversities as reflections of Your image.

Lord, as we affirm our distinct cultural identities, we realise that sometimes such cultural heritages enable us to understand the gospel better and, at other times, that they are a hindrance. Grant us the wisdom to know the difference between what is gospel and what is culture.

Lord, despite all our cultural differences, we acknowledge the oneness to which You have called us in Christ. Grant us the determination to pursue that oneness in our diversity. Amen.

