

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



Peace
and
Non-violence

January, 2023

Vol. 8, Number 5



When we feel plunged into a dark and difficult maelstrom of injustice and suffering, we are likewise called to keep our hearts open to **HOPE** and to trust in God, who accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness and, above all, guides our path.

Pope Francis, 2023 World Day of Peace Message

This year's World Day of Peace message, promulgated by Pope Francis, bears the title: "No One Can Be Saved Alone: Combatting COVID-19 Together, Embarking Together on Paths of Peace." In his 2023 message of peace Pope Francis reminds us that all global crises we are experiencing are interconnected and that we must not forget any of them but work together for the good of humanity and for the benefit of our common home. His message of peace is an inspiring one for us to take into the new year as we continue to not only advocate for peace but become artisans of peace in those places and contexts where we find ourselves.

This issue of the JPIC Newsletter includes quotes from Pope Francis' message of peace for our reflection as well as information about Pax Christi International's Peace conference held in Rome last month that the Sisters of Bon Secours sponsored with several other Catholic organizations.

This newsletter also includes the full text of Pope Francis' Message of Peace and the Bon Secours Prayer Calendar 2023 that is one of the Congregation Laudato Si' SMART Goals for developing an ecological spirituality.

"Covid-19 plunged us into a dark night.
It destabilized our daily lives,
upset our plans and routines
and disrupted the apparent tranquility
of even the most affluent societies.
It generated disorientation and suffering
and caused the death of great numbers
of our brothers and sisters."

Pope Francis, 2023 World Day of Peace Message



Reflection

Pope Francis poses these questions to us:

What harsh realities did the pandemic reveal to you/us?

What positive lessons did you/we learn from the pandemic that can help us move forward?

What new paths should we follow to cast off the shackles of our old habits,
to be better prepared, to dare new things?

What signs of life and hope can you/we see, to help us move forward
and try to make our world a better place?

January
JPIC Days of Remembrance

January 1
56th World Day of Peace
(Catholic Church)

January 17
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (USA)

January 24
Foundation Day
Sisters of Bon Secours of Paris



In the spirit of our Foundress,
Josephine Potel,
may we be a healing,
compassionate and liberating
presence as we care for each other
and care for Earth,
our common home.

January 27
International Commemoration
for Victims of the Holocaust

Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)

**"After directly experiencing the fragility of our own lives and the world around us,
we can say that the greatest lesson we learned from Covid-19 was the realization that we all need one another."**

Pope Francis, 2023 World Day of Peace Message

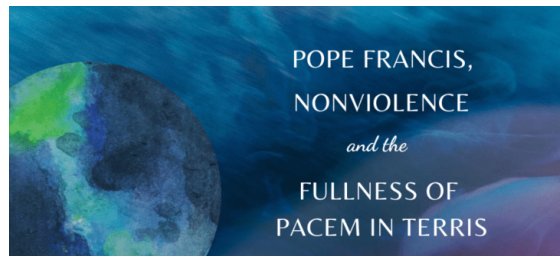
"The war in Ukraine is reaping innocent victims
and spreading insecurity, not only among those directly affected,
but in a widespread and indiscriminate way for everyone.

We cannot continue to focus simply
on preserving ourselves;
rather, the time has come for all of us to
endeavor to heal our society and our planet,
to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world,
and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common.
Pope Francis, 2023 World Day of Peace Message



Reflection

*In what way can you commit yourself to pursue
the common good in this New Year?*



Pope Francis, Nonviolence and the Fullness of Pacem in Terris

Sponsored by Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), Catholic Church leaders and local change makers from nearly 30 countries gathered in Rome last month to reflect on Pope Francis' relentless work for nonviolent change throughout his 10-year papacy; to share their own experience of nonviolent change in the face of acute violence and injustice; and to explore next steps in advancing the spirituality, way of life, strategies, and universal ethic of nonviolence in the Church and the world.

The goal of this conference was to foster a deeper understanding across sectors of the Catholic Church of Pope Francis' teachings on the contribution of active nonviolence in divesting global violence of its deadly power, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and in fostering the well-being of the whole Earth community.

Representatives from 28 nations including theologians, church officials and peace activists shared rich experiences of nonviolence practiced at a grassroots level in contexts of egregious violence in its many different forms. Participants from Guatemala, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Peru and other places all shared the work they are doing to teach nonviolence and live nonviolence as reactions to war and social conflict, human rights violations and the destruction of the environment.

The Sisters of Bon Secours have financially supported Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence initiative since its inception in 2016 and contributed generously to the support of this most recent conference on nonviolence.

Sources: Pax Christi International and Independent Catholic News

In this New Year 2023

*"We join Jesus as incarnations of God's peace on this earth
for however long it takes."*

Richard Rohr



Participants met in small groups to share how an official Church teaching on nonviolence would affect their work.



Sr Maudilia Lopez, an Indigenous woman from Guatemala, spoke about resisting the destructive practices of a Canadian mining company.

International Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benítez Montero, CBS
Sr. Rosa Elena Lozada Escobar, CBS
Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ - Chair
Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS
Rachel Moccia
Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS - Co-chair
Nicholas Stein
Sr. Chris Webb, CBS



The Holy See

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE
FRANCIS
FOR THE
56th WORLD DAY OF PEACE

1 JANUARY 2023

No one can be saved alone.

Combatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace

“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night” (First Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians, 5:1-2).

1. With these words, the Apostle Paul encouraged the Thessalonian community to remain steadfast, their hearts and feet firmly planted and their gaze fixed on the world around them and the events of history, even as they awaited the Lord’s return. When tragic events seem to overwhelm our lives, and we feel plunged into a dark and difficult maelstrom of injustice and suffering, we are likewise called to keep our hearts open to hope and to trust in God, who makes himself present, accompanies us with tenderness, sustains us in our weariness and, above all, guides our path. For this reason, Saint Paul constantly exhorts the community to be vigilant, seeking goodness, justice and truth: “So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober” (5:6). His words are an invitation to remain alert and not to withdraw into fear, sorrow or resignation, or to yield to distraction or discouragement. Instead, we should be like sentinels keeping watch and ready to glimpse the first light of dawn, even at the darkest hour.

2. Covid-19 plunged us into a dark night. It destabilized our daily lives, upset our plans and routines, and disrupted the apparent tranquillity of even the most affluent societies. It generated disorientation and suffering and caused the death of great numbers of our brothers and sisters.

Amid a whirlwind of unexpected challenges and facing a situation confusing even from a scientific standpoint, the world's healthcare workers mobilized to relieve immense suffering and to seek possible remedies. At the same time, political authorities had to take measures to organize and manage efforts to respond to the emergency.

In addition to its physical aspects, Covid-19 led to a general malaise in many individuals and families; the long periods of isolation and the various restrictions on freedom contributed to this malaise, with significant long-term effects.

Nor can we overlook the fractures in our social and economic order that the pandemic exposed, and the contradictions and inequalities that it brought to the fore. It threatened the job security of many individuals and aggravated the ever-increasing problem of loneliness in our societies, particularly on the part of the poor and those in need. We need but think of the millions of informal workers in many parts of the world left without a job and without any support during the time of the lockdown.

Only rarely do individuals and societies achieve progress in conditions that generate such feelings of despondency and bitterness, which weaken efforts to ensure peace while provoking social conflict, frustration and various forms of violence. Indeed, the pandemic seems to have upset even the most peaceful parts of our world, and exposed any number of forms of fragility.

3. Three years later, the time is right to question, learn, grow and allow ourselves to be transformed as individuals and as communities; this is a privileged moment to prepare for "the day of the Lord". I have already observed on a number of occasions that we never emerge the same from times of crisis: we emerge either better or worse. Today we are being asked: What did we learn from the pandemic? What new paths should we follow to cast off the shackles of our old habits, to be better prepared, to dare new things? What signs of life and hope can we see, to help us move forward and try to make our world a better place?

Certainly, after directly experiencing the fragility of our own lives and the world around us, we can say that the greatest lesson we learned from Covid-19 was the realization that we all need one another. That our greatest and yet most fragile treasure is our shared humanity as brothers and sisters, children of God. And that none of us can be saved alone. Consequently, we urgently need to join together in seeking and promoting the universal values that can guide the growth of this human fraternity. We also learned that the trust we put in progress, technology and the effects of globalization was not only excessive, but turned into an individualistic and idolatrous intoxication, compromising the very promise of justice, harmony and peace that we so ardently sought. In our fast-paced world, the widespread problems of inequality, injustice, poverty and marginalization continue to fuel unrest and conflict, and generate violence and even wars.

The pandemic brought all this to the fore, yet it also had its positive effects. These include a

chastened return to humility, a rethinking of certain consumeristic excesses, and a renewed sense of solidarity that has made us more sensitive to the suffering of others and more responsive to their needs. We can also think of the efforts, which in some cases proved truly heroic, made by all those people who worked tirelessly to help everyone emerge from the crisis and its turmoil as best they could.

This experience has made us all the more aware of the need for everyone, including peoples and nations, to restore the word “together” to a central place. For it is together, in fraternity and solidarity, that we build peace, ensure justice and emerge from the greatest disasters. Indeed, the most effective responses to the pandemic came from social groups, public and private institutions, and international organizations that put aside their particular interests and joined forces to meet the challenges. Only the peace that comes from a fraternal and disinterested love can help us overcome personal, societal and global crises.

4. Even so, at the very moment when we dared to hope that the darkest hours of the Covid-19 pandemic were over, a terrible new disaster befell humanity. We witnessed the onslaught of another scourge: another war, to some extent like that of Covid-19, but driven by culpable human decisions. The war in Ukraine is reaping innocent victims and spreading insecurity, not only among those directly affected, but in a widespread and indiscriminate way for everyone, also for those who, even thousands of kilometres away, suffer its collateral effects – we need but think of grain shortages and fuel prices.

Clearly, this is not the post-Covid era we had hoped for or expected. This war, together with all the other conflicts around the globe, represents a setback for the whole of humanity and not merely for the parties directly involved. While a vaccine has been found for Covid-19, suitable solutions have not yet been found for the war. Certainly, the virus of war is more difficult to overcome than the viruses that compromise our bodies, because it comes, not from outside of us, but from within the human heart corrupted by sin (cf. *Gospel of Mark 7:17-23*).

5. What then is being asked of us? First of all, to let our hearts be changed by our experience of the crisis, to let God, at this time in history, transform our customary criteria for viewing the world around us. We can no longer think exclusively of carving out space for our personal or national interests; instead, we must think in terms of the common good, recognizing that we belong to a greater community, and opening our minds and hearts to universal human fraternity. We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavour to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common.

In order to do this, and to live better lives after the Covid-19 emergency, we cannot ignore one fundamental fact, namely that the many moral, social, political and economic crises we are experiencing are all interconnected, and what we see as isolated problems are actually causes

and effects of one another. Consequently, we are called to confront the challenges of our world in a spirit of responsibility and compassion. We must revisit the issue of ensuring public health for all. We must promote actions that enhance peace and put an end to the conflicts and wars that continue to spawn poverty and death. We urgently need to join in caring for our common home and in implementing clear and effective measures to combat climate change. We need to battle the virus of inequality and to ensure food and dignified labour for all, supporting those who lack even a minimum wage and find themselves in great difficulty. The scandal of entire peoples starving remains an open wound. We also need to develop suitable policies for welcoming and integrating migrants and those whom our societies discard. Only by responding generously to these situations, with an altruism inspired by God's infinite and merciful love, will we be able to build a new world and contribute to the extension of his kingdom, which is a kingdom of love, justice and peace.

In sharing these reflections, it is my hope that in the coming New Year we can journey together, valuing the lessons that history has to teach us. I offer my best wishes to Heads of State and Government, to Heads of International Organizations, and to the leaders of the different religions. To all men and women of good will I express my prayerful trust that, as artisans of peace, they may work, day by day, to make this a good year! May Mary Immaculate, Mother of Jesus and Queen of Peace, intercede for us and for the whole world.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2022

Francis

**Congregation of Bon Secours Prayer Initiative
In the Spirit of Laudato Si'
2023**



Congregational SMART ACTION

Transformative SMART Action	Implementer	Measure of Success	Target Date
Revise Congregational Prayer Initiative from focus on feast days (excluding Congregational feasts) to focus on ecological spirituality in the spirit of Laudato Si'. Prayers will be prepared monthly.	JPIC Coordinator and Sisters from each Area	Evaluation	Monthly beginning January 2023

Goal 6: Ecological Spirituality

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to "discover God in all things", both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the Spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.

Prayer Calendar - 2023

Month	Commemoration	Preparation	Laudato Si' Focus
January	CBS Foundation Day	France	Bon Secours Charism Compassion, healing, liberation as it relates to Laudato Si'
February	Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita <i>International Day of Prayer/Awareness of Human Trafficking</i>	JPIC	Ecological Economics (Labor Trafficking)
March	Josephine Potel Birthday	Ireland/GB	Responding to the Cry of the Poor
April	Earth Day	JPIC	Sustainable Lifestyle
May	Bon Secours Triduum	Congregation	
June	World Environment Day	JPIC	Responding to the Cry of Earth
July	Feast of St. Kateri Tekakwitha <i>Patron of Ecology</i>	USA	Ecological Spirituality
August	International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples	Ireland/GB	Ecological Education (Indigenous wisdom)
September	Season of Creation	JPIC	Ecological Spirituality
October	Angelique Geay Birthday	USA	Responding to the Cry of the Poor
November	St. Martin DePorres <i>Patron of Race Relations</i>	Peru	Advocacy/Systemic change
December	International Migrants Day	France	Responding to the Cry of the Poor