

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



### Responding to the Cry of the Poor

March, 2023  
Vol. 8, Number 7



"We cannot grow accustomed to the bloodshed that has marked this country for decades, causing millions of deaths that remain mostly unknown elsewhere. What is happening here needs to be known."

Pope Francis, speech in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Pope Francis' historic trips to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan last month laid bare the utter poverty and suffering of the Congolese and South Sudanese people: material poverty as well as the poverty of peace. The Congregation of Bon Secours is intimately linked to the people of both countries through a personal presence in the DRC and through our membership in Friends in Solidarity with South Sudan.

This issue of JPIC News highlights Pope Francis' presence to the Sudanese and Congolese people, his pastoral response to their suffering and his challenge to the rest of the world - especially the richer countries - not to turn a blind eye to the ongoing anguish these people are experiencing.

Presiding over Masses in both nations, Pope Francis begged the Congolese and South Sudanese people to lay down their arms, embrace mercy, and be missionaries of peace. He told them never to forget that Jesus knows their pain and loves them. Both messages are a challenge and a comfort to all of us.

March  
JPIC Days of Remembrance

March 3  
World Wildlife Day

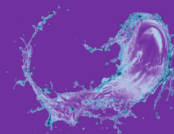


March 8  
International Women's Day



Globally, women and girls are the primary water collectors for their families and for this reason many girls do not attend school.

March 22  
World Water Day



March 25  
International Day of Remembrance  
of the Victims of Slavery and the  
Transatlantic Slave Trade

### Pope Francis in the Democratic Republic of Congo

#### A Country Devoured by Violence

Continuous ethnic and political conflicts, fueled by illicit profits from the country's extremely rich natural resources have displaced almost 4 million people in the DRC. There are more internally displaced people there than in any other country in Africa. More than 600,000 have fled to neighboring countries as refugees.



"Your tears are my tears;  
your pain is my pain."  
To every family that grieves or is  
displaced by the burning of villages  
and other war crimes,  
to the survivors of sexual violence  
and to every injured child and adult,  
I say: I am with you;  
I want to bring you God's caress."  
Pope Francis, Kinshasa, DRC

Congolese from the country's violence-wracked east traveled to the capital of Kinshasa to tell the pope of the horrific violence they suffered for years as rebel groups sought to gain territory in the mineral-rich region through attacks that have forced more than 5 million people to flee their homes. Francis sat in silence as victim after victim came forward to tell their stories. He watched as they offered up at the foot of a crucifix a symbol of their pain: the machete used to maim and kill, or the straw bed mat on which they had been raped. When they knelt in front of him for a blessing, Francis placed his hand on their heads, or on the stumps of the arms that remained.  
Source: *The Associated Press*

“One has the impression that the international community has practically resigned itself to the violence devouring Congo. We cannot grow accustomed to the bloodshed that has marked this country for decades, causing millions of deaths. While the international community has remained passive and silent, more than 10 million people have been horribly killed.”

Pope Francis, Kinshasa

”

“What a scandal and what hypocrisy, as people are being raped and killed, while the commerce that causes this violence and death continues to flourish. Enough!”

Pope Francis, Kinshasa  
Referring to the Extractive Industries



“You are part of a greater history, one that calls you to take an active role as a builder of communion, a champion of fraternity, an indomitable dreamer of a more united world.”

Pope Francis to the Young People of the DRC

### Responding to the Cry of the Those Who are Poor in South Sudan An Invitation

“As a Chapter Call we all bear some responsibility for the success of the mission and life of Bon Secours in the Congo.”

The Sisters in the Congo are very conscious about the need for Sisters to volunteer for this new ministry to maintain our presence into the future. Please take this to heart and consider it in your personal prayer and discernment. As a Chapter Call we all bear some responsibility for the success of the mission and life of Bon Secours in the Congo. Are you being called to give a part of your life to live in the Congo? Are you being called to give some service to the Sisters presently in the Congo by volunteering some time, perhaps sharing a topic for discussion or prayer via Zoom? Are you being called to volunteer in your own unique creative way? Please speak with your Area Leader about ways that you might be feeling called! CT Report, January 2023, Sr. Rosie



Sr. Mumbi Kigutha,  
President  
Friends in Solidarity



Pope Francis' visit to South Sudan took the form of an ecumenical pilgrimage for peace in the company of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Together they prayed with the people and called for unity; the three voices were one issuing a powerful appeal for peace and reconciliation in the divided nation.

Precious Blood Sister, Sr. Mumbi Kigutha, president of Friends in Solidarity with South Sudan, was present in South Sudan during Pope Francis' visit. She was interviewed by Christopher White, Vatican correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter. Sr. Mumbi praised the way the three ecumenical leaders elevated the role of the country's young people, women and civil society leaders as essential to working alongside political and religious leaders in securing the country's future.

Source: National Catholic Reporter

### Pope Francis in South Sudan

“Great numbers of children born in recent years have known only the reality of camps for displaced persons. They have no memory of what it means to have a home; they are losing their connection with their native land, their roots and their traditions.”

Pope Francis, Juba, South Sudan

More than 4.3 million people in South Sudan are estimated to need humanitarian assistance — the majority of whom are displaced or refugees.



Pope Francis meets a boy in an IDP camp in Juba.  
Source: Vatican Media



“Never lose hope.  
And lose no opportunity to build peace.  
May hope and peace dwell among you.  
May hope and peace dwell in South Sudan!”  
Pope Francis to the people of South Sudan  
Juba, South Sudan

#### International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

- Sr. Teresa Margot Benites 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
- Nick Stein
- Sr. Chris Webb, CBS

#### Observers for 2023:

- Sr. Marianne Falanka, Congo
- Beatrice Lesourd, France