



Love Gives Everything

By Sister Kathy Schmittgens, International Shalom Coordinator

Sister Rosemary Howarth said recently that one of the novices sent her a message that put together *Love Cannot Wait* with *Love Gives Everything*. It became *Love Cannot Wait to Give Everything!* Can all of us take the cue from the zeal of this novice?

We have before us a challenge for this time, our time. We see a world filled with fear, distrust, and violence; we feel at times that we do not have the ability or the energy to fight the darkness. But to quote the author Clarissa Pinkola Estes, “We were made for these times.”

We are alive NOW, we are dedicated to the Mission of God NOW. We are the ones called to make a difference NOW. Our Directional Statement gives us the program to be the “ones we have been waiting for.” (*Hopi Elders, June 8, 2000*)

- Embracing Gospel Poverty gives us the freedom to risk and be transformed.
- Deepening our understanding of the Triune God helps us to put ourselves in right relations in all our relationships.
- Authentic community life gives us the support we need to be brave.
- Growing in our understanding of what it means to be intercultural moves us to “that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.”
- Collaborating with others widens our view and strengthens our networks for good.
- Communal discernment for the needs of today touches us back into Theresa’s vision of working for unmet needs in the world.

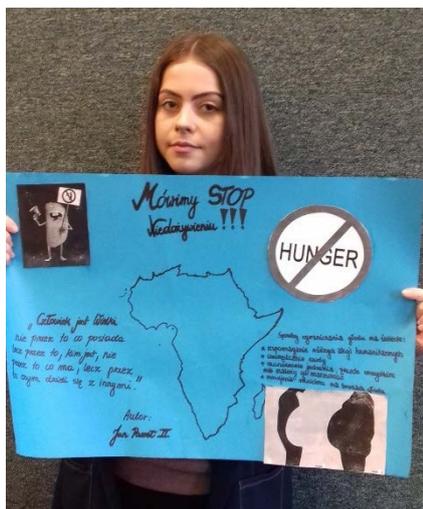
Of course we know that it doesn’t happen easily or quickly but to paraphrase Theresa’s words, “the roots will be sturdier and the flowering the lovelier.”



Human Rights Day

December 10, 2017

For the school in Szeged, **Hungary**, Sister Renata prepared a 30-minute presentation. She chose four human rights: the right to life, the right to freedom, the right to education, and the right to equality. First, she gave an insight into the reality of these rights in our world today. After that, she connected these rights with the season of Advent. At the end of the celebration, the students prayed for those who lack these basic rights and they learned to appreciate what they have. Each class then chose one of these rights with a personal assignment (for example, the right to education was as follows: Choose a lesson each day, in which you will participate actively and eagerly.) *From the European Shalom newsletter*



Young people in Opole, **Poland**, received information leaflets, watched a thematic film and listened to testimonies of people protecting human dignity and rights. Educational activities were finished by work in groups and a common prayer for the victims of human trafficking

Children in the Kindergarten of Blessed Mother Teresa in Opole, Poland gathered in the chapel of the Motherhouse to pray together for all people in the whole world so that they can live in harmony and peace, develop their talents and interests, and work for the good of their family and country. They also prayed that all people may respect themselves and their neighbors. In the class, the children created a chain of human rights from the colorful strips of paper.



Recent Branch Meetings

By Sister Kathy Schmittgens, International Shalom Coordinator

North American Branch



The North American Branch meeting was held in November in Waterdown, Ontario, **Canada**. A contemplative spirit pervaded the meeting helped by a beautiful prayer each morning created by Sister

Genevieve Cassani. The meeting was held shortly after the close of the General Chapter. It was a great grace to look at the new directional statement together. North American plans for implementing the Focus and Commitments were revised in light of *Love Gives Everything*.

Each of us had prepared a written report that was sent ahead of time. More was shared at the meeting more was shared. Time was given for reflection, and then comments and/or questions. All agreed it was helpful for growth. During the meeting, Tim Dewane was chosen as the new branch representative for North America.

Sister Eileen Reilly led us in a process using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) similar to the process used at the General Chapter. We looked at which SDGs seemed of greater importance to the North American experience.

A highlight of the meeting was our experience of the “Blanket Exercise” a process that illustrated the experience of the native Canadian tribes as their territories and cultures were being threatened and obliterated by the encroaching Europeans. It was emotionally packed and helped to highlight how important the statement on interculturality in *Love Gives Everything* really is.

African Branch

The African Branch meeting was held toward the end of November. It was held at the former Province of Africa Novitiate in Sunyani, **Ghana**. There was great delight for the branch members in returning to their spiritual roots!

The sisters shared their reality in the five countries of the province. It was a profound experience as they spoke of political and social issues that call for a *Shalom* response. Sister Roxanne Schares was originally scheduled to speak at the meeting but her plans changed “a bit” in October. (S. Roxanne was elected General Superior.) Fortunately, we were able to view the talk she prepared for the Central Pacific Province Days on “Nonviolence”. The discussion was very rich.



We also spent time looking at the *Shalom* Focus and Commitments in the light of *Love Gives Everything*. A new plan was developed for the next two years. Sister Helen Galadima was chosen as the new branch representative.

We were able to attend Sunday Mass with the Students of Notre Dame Senior Secondary School. Praying and singing with over 800 students was a blessing.

Migrants and Refugees

By Sister Eileen Reilly, Director of SSND UN-NGO Office



UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres (*right*) talked of “Making Migration Work for All” in his *report*.

As the number of refugees and migrants worldwide continues to increase daily, the United Nations is engaged in a two-year process to develop a Global Compact on Refugees as well as a Global Compact for Safe,

Orderly and Regular Migration. Both of these compacts are attempts to articulate norms for sharing the responsibilities for refugees and migrants more equitably among nations.

When the process began in September 2016, Zeid Ra’ad al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, challenged the assembled delegates at the UN with these words:

“When millions of people see freedom’s invitation only through the flapping canvas of a tent. When they carry their children and possessions on their backs, walking hundreds, perhaps even thousands of miles. When they and their families risk drowning, and are kept cramped in appalling detention centers – and, once released, risk abuse by racists and xenophobes. There is no cause for comfort here.”

The process begun at that meeting has resulted in two draft documents, one on refugees and one on migrants; these will be finalized in the coming months.

One of the new elements in the discussions is the recognition of “Climate Refugees,” those who leave their home because of the effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels. The documents also call for an end to the detention of children, stating that detention is never in their best interest. In addition, both documents recognize the links between forced migration and the trafficking of persons.

As the process continues, we are reminded that our faith tradition tells us: “You shall treat the strangers who reside with you no differently than the natives born among you, have the same love for them as for yourself; for you too were once strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34).



Together Respect, Safety and Dignity for All

By Sister Eileen Reilly, Director of SSND UN-NGO Office

In launching the UN Together Campaign, António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, said, “Our duty to the people we serve is to work together to move from fear of each other to trust in each other. Diversity in all its forms is an asset, not a threat.” [Click here for more information on the six ways to become involved in the Campaign](#)

As noted in our [December newsletter](#), Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR), a new organization of religious congregations at the UN, is finding ways for congregations to collaborate more. In November, since I was in Africa for the African Branch meeting of *Shalom*, a Medical Mission Sister and I, piloted a new model of working together. We traveled to **Ghana** where, with the assistance of the SSNDs in Ghana, we offered two workshops for all the religious in two dioceses: Cape Coast and Sunyani. Women and men religious gathered to become more familiar with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to learn about opportunities in their country to contribute to the evaluation of these goals.



Centers of Prayer for Peace

At the North American branch meeting, we discussed the vitality of the Centers of Prayer for Peace. The work in the Congregation for Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation depends heavily on the on-going prayer support of these Centers of Prayer for Peace. We want to do all that we can to encourage our sisters who are the prayer powerhouse. One suggestion is to send particular intentions for each month so that each day those intentions are remembered.

If you have other suggestions to strengthen the connection to the work of *Shalom*, please share them with us. The calendar of dates for the Centers can be found on the gerhardinger.org website.

***Shalom/UN-NGO Newsletter is a triannual publication of the School Sisters of Notre Dame:
via della Stazione Aurelia 95, 00165 Roma · tel: +39.06.6652.01; fax: +39.06.6652.0234.***
