



Shalom/UN-NGO Newsletter

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"I can't breathe, man.
Please, please, let me stand.
Please, I can't breathe."



Sister Sandra Helton,
SSND

Mr. George Floyd's plea to a police officer went unanswered as he took his last breath. "I can't breathe," is reverberating in my ears and my heart. Why? Because, as a School Sister of Notre Dame, part of our mission is to advocate for justice. Mr. Floyd's words echo the cry of injustice. Many of our sisters and brothers cannot breathe due to society's inability/unwillingness to recognize and accept that every human being on earth is made in the likeness and image of God.

If everyone embraced the belief that we are all made in God's image, who would be able to take a knee to his neck and snuff out his life? Would you be able to extinguish the life of the one who says, "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly? I think not.

"I can't breathe, man. Please, please, let me stand. Please, I can't breathe."

A healthy environment includes being able to breathe – being able to have life and live it more abundantly.

Laudato Si' week at the Generalate

Sister Kathy Schmittgens,

The Care of Creation Sector of the Dicastery (Vatican Office) for Integral Human Development has a mandate to work for the promotion of *Laudato Si'*. One of the programs it encouraged

this year was the celebration of the 5th Anniversary of the encyclical. The May 16 – 24 dates were titled "*Laudato Si'* Week".

Of course, when the idea was proposed, COVID-19 was not on the world's radar. So many wonderful plans had to be dropped. Instead, only virtual events could be held.

Our Generalate remained COVID free so we made our own plans to celebrate and educate ourselves. Sister Julie Lattner and myself looked for ways that we could engage in the week, while realizing that ordinary work continued!

Each evening there was a presentation on part of the encyclical. Each presentation was only 20 minutes and always concluded with a song that celebrated God's magnificent creation. Attendance was purely optional but usually was well attended...even to the last evening!

Our final evening was a special Vespers that began in the aula but proceeded out to behind the chapel where a tree was planted as a reminder of how much of nature is being destroyed and how much our life and well-being depend on preserving it. Sister Carolyn Anyega helped with the "pouring of libation" which is an African tradition to remember the ancestors who occupied this land and as a blessing to the land itself.

Sunday, May 24th was the Jubilee celebration here but we still all gathered at noon to join our voices with those throughout the world to pray for our "common home." The week helped us all to consider in what ways each of us can make a difference. We signed the *Laudato Si'* pledge to:

- Pray for and with creation
- Live more simply
- Advocate to protect our common home.

You, too, can make this pledge. The pledge can be found at: <http://livelaudatosi.org/pledge-forms/> It is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Polish.

More information on the Dicastery can be found at: <http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/sviluppo-umano-integrale/cura-del-creato.html>

This site is only available in English and Spanish

A year of Laudato Si'

Sister Kathy Schmittgens

"After praying the Regina Coeli on Sunday, Pope Francis recalled the 5th anniversary of his encyclical "*Laudato Si'*: On the Care for our Common Home."

He said the document sought to "call attention to the cry of the Earth and of the poor."

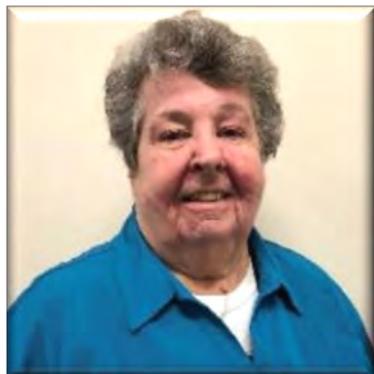
The Pope invited everyone to take part in the *Laudato Si'* Year, which is promoted by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and runs from 24 May 2020 until 24 May 2021.

"I invite all people of goodwill to take part, to care for our common home and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters." *Vatican News*

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-05/pope-francis-appeals-for-laudato-si-year-prayer.html> You will receive more news on how we can celebrate this year as School Sisters of Notre Dame.



Looking Back at Beijing 25 Years Ago



We are glad to share with you the link of the video presentation that Sister Ethel Howley, SSND generously prepared for all the teachers and students who registered for the 64th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Sister Ethel recounts her experience at the Fourth Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Please click on <https://vimeo.com/421224543>

Women at the frontline of the COVID-19 Crisis

Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia

On March 11, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a pandemic. As of June 27, the World Health Organization reported that globally there are 9,633,157 confirmed cases 490,481 deaths.

What is happening since that day? COVID-19 drastically is changing not only the routine of people's daily life, but also the way to relate with each other. The stay-at-home policy is intended to save lives at the same time, this disease is exposing the pre-existing inequalities of worldwide social, economic and political systems.

How COVID-19 is worsening the situation of women and girls? Before COVID 19, women spend three times more in the unpaid care and domestic work than men. During this pandemic, women's workload has increased considerable now that schools are closed.

According to the International Labour Organization 740 million of women depend on the informal economy. Most of these women do not have access to health care or other social assistance. Most of these women are single parents, migrants, and widows. Women earn less and save less; globally, they earn 23 % less than men.

Maybe this information is not new, it sounds like statistics. However, each one of these 740 million of women who work in the informal market are women who have a name and story. These 740 million of intelligent women who are innovators, initiators, and entrepreneurs hope for a decent job and a decent house to live. They are on the frontline struggling for the lives of their love ones. These 740 million women on the frontline must be decision and policy-makers to build a new era, an era of solidarity!

United Nations News



Last June, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, current President of the General Assembly, announced that [Mr. Volkan Bozkir](#) of Turkey is the elected President of the Session 75th. Mr. Bozkir will preside over the annual General Assembly from September 15-30. The UN will commemorate its 75th Anniversary with a one-day high-level meeting on September 21 on the

theme, 'The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism' Due to COVID-19, member States will participate via internet.

World Environment Day

The theme this year for World Environment Day was “Biodiversity.” The problem with loss of species that is occurring now is not just a sadness that some organisms are lost forever. It is also the fact that the biosphere exists in a delicate balance. We don't know the consequences of the loss in the whole balance of nature. The UN website for World Environment Day states:

“The emergence of COVID-19 has underscored the fact that, when we destroy biodiversity, we destroy the system that supports human life. Today, it is estimated that, globally, about one billion cases of illness and millions of deaths occur every year from diseases caused by coronaviruses; and about 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic, meaning that they are transmitted to people by animals.”

Pope Francis underscored this in his message for World Environment Day when he said”

“We cannot pretend to be healthy in a world that is sick.”