



# JUST Love

SEPTEMBER 2017



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND  
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH



## *Gifts from the Sea: A Retreat for Survivors of Human Trafficking*

*Sister Kati Hamm, SC (Halifax) reflects on the Gifts from the Sea retreat for formerly trafficked women that was held August 5-7. The retreat was a collaborative project of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Halifax, and New York. Fr. Terrence Moran and Sister Roberta Feil served on the planning team and Seton Associate Nancy Smith offered massage and yoga on the retreat. The leadership of all three Congregations made generous donations to make this retreat free of charge for the women.*

Magnificent, relaxing, joyful, calm-these are some words that described the weekend retreat, *Gifts From The Sea*, held at the Jersey Shore in August. The event for women survivors of human trafficking was a collaborative effort of members of the Sisters of Charity Federation in the NY Metro Area.

Christina, a member of the team, who knows the girls well, reflected on the time at the beach. She loved the laughter she heard there from the women. All life has lessons to teach us. Many times the lessons come to us as metaphors. Being challenged by the unpredictable waves as the water energy makes its way to the shore, one learns to trust herself and to feel safe and happy learning to ride the waves even if occasionally getting knocked down. Holding positive thoughts, self-talk and energy does

actually make you stronger and more confident: the principle was demonstrated as Wisdom figure, Pat, at first easily moved the arm of a young woman when she was thinking negative thoughts but couldn't budge it when she changed her thoughts to affirm her goodness. The mind-body connection is strong. Maybe that is why the massages and Jacuzzi were in such demand. Using gesture prayer, we danced to a song called *Downstream* by Earth Mama and felt we really knew, as the song says, "life is not a line but a circle."

With the generosity of the three congregations, the planners, the hosts at the retreat house and healing arts practitioners, the women were able to experience the power of feeling welcomed and honored and had opportunities for massages, reiki, gesture and guided prayer. The beautiful sea breezes, waves on the ocean and full moon on the water at night also gifted each person with a sense of well being and feeling loved. The last exercise of the weekend was one of creating beauty from natural objects and thanking all creation for reminding us we are all one. We all were grateful for this weekend blessing.





Pope Francis has called for an annual Season of Creation beginning on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care

of Creation and ending on October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology. Here are a few resources that you can use to celebrate this time of prayer, reflection and advocacy for Earth. What will you do? As Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'* "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience"

-The Season of Creation website from the Global Catholic Climate Movement

<http://seasonofcreation.org/>

-Take the *Laudato Si'* Pledge <http://livalaudatosi.org/>

-Use the SC Six Weeks with *Laudato Si'* Calendar [http://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/SIX\\_WEEKS\\_WITH\\_LAUDATO\\_SI\\_2.pdf](http://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/SIX_WEEKS_WITH_LAUDATO_SI_2.pdf)

## Our Continuing Series on the UN Sustainable Development Goals...



The SDGs can only be realized with a strong commitment to global partnership and cooperation. The world today is more interconnected than ever before. Coordinating policies to help developing countries manage their debt, as well as promoting investment for the least developed, is vital to achieve sustainable growth and development.

-Check out the work of Jubilee USA Network to find out how you can help in international debt relief

<http://www.jubileeusa.org/index.html>

This concludes our monthly focus for the past year and a half on the Sustainable Development Goals. To celebrate this time of reflection, watch this inspirational video of a talk for young people on the SDGs by Tony Annett <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5JPGZXYaFI&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>



## Dates in September

**4 Labor Day** - "Work is fundamental to the dignity of a person. Work, to use an image, 'anoints' us with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God, who has worked and still works, who always acts..."

~ Pope Francis

**10 Birthday of Jean Vanier (1928)** "Every child, every person needs to know that they are a source of joy; every child, every person, needs to be celebrated. Only when all of our weaknesses are accepted as part of our humanity can our negative, broken self-images be transformed."

**15-October 15 Hispanic Heritage Month** - Learn some Spanish phrases to greet a new immigrant <http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/spanish.php>

**16 International Day for Protection of the Ozone Layer** ♦ Purchase products that are labeled "ozone friendly" or "CFC free". ♦ Ensure that your car's ac system is regularly checked for leaks. ♦ Dispose of old refrigerators and appliances properly.

**21 Rosh Hashanah** "Rosh Hashanah is the Creation of the World. It is a time to recreate ourselves by recognizing our faults, repenting and asking forgiveness from others for our sins, all leading to atonement, granted by God for our actions." Marc Rubenstein

**22 Native American Day** "I salute the light within your eyes where the whole Universe dwells. For when you are at that center within you and I am that place within me, we shall be one." Crazy Horse, Oglala Lakota Sioux (+1877)

**27 Feast of St. Vincent de Paul** "We should strive to keep our hearts open to the sufferings and wretchedness of other people, and pray continually that God may grant us that spirit of compassion which is truly the spirit of God."

**30 Yom Kippur** "Yom Kippur is an affirmation of the value of life, of each day and of every aspect of each day, and of every choice that we make. We all know: that which we truly cherish is that which we carefully scrutinize. The more significant the whole, the more precious are its details." ~ Shimon Apisdorf