



# JUST Love



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

## Becoming Hopeful by Doing Hopeful Things

*I have a small grain of hope—one small crystal that gleams clear colors out of transparency. I need more. I break off a fragment to send you. Please take this grain of a grain of hope so that mine won't shrink. Please share your fragment so that yours will grow. Only so, by division, will hope increase, like a clump of irises, which will cease to flower unless you distribute the clustered roots, unlikely source—clumsy and earth-covered— of grace.*

Denise Levertov, in her poem *For the New Year:1981*, reminds us that hope is not a feeling that happens to us. We become hopeful by doing hopeful things; by sharing fragments of hope, like iris bulbs, with one another. The New Year 2021 began with an unprecedented assault on American democracy – the storming of the Capitol to interrupt the certification of the presidential election by Congress. But there are still motives for hope. The Biden administration shows signs of action on the peace, justice, and Earth issues that are important to the Sisters of Charity. As a Congregation with a 161-year history of accompanying and empowering new immigrants, we are cheered by the plan of the Biden administration to end family separation at the border and to provide a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented brothers and sisters who live and work among us. In recent years, the Sisters of Charity have collaborated in a variety of ways with RAMP (Refugee Assistance Morris County) to settle refugee families. We welcome the new administration's plan to reassert America's commitment to asylum-seekers and refugees. In accord with our Congregation Public Stand on Climate Change/Global Warming, we are pleased to see that addressing



the climate crisis as one of the one of four stated policy priorities of the new administration (along with the coronavirus pandemic, economic recovery and racial equity). Certainly, the pro-abortion platform of the Democratic party is of concern to Catholics who promote a consistent ethic of life. But we can also hope that more robust social welfare programs will make it easier for poor women to choose life. As we journey further into a new year, resolve to do something hopeful. Find an issue that ignites your passion. Do some serious research on it – not Facebook memes! Donate to an organization that promotes your values. Enter the numbers of your senators and congressional representative into your cell phone so you're ready to advocate when you get a Sister of Charity *Action Alert*. Share your fragment of hope so that it will grow like the lovely iris that's already stirring under the frozen ground.



Before you buy “sweets for your sweet” on Valentine's Day, consider that UNICEF and the US State Department have uncovered widespread use of child slave labor in the chocolate industry – an estimate 40% of chocolate is produced this way. Companies that are slavery free: Equal Exchange, Divine, Alter Eco, Sweet Riot, Theo. The worst companies: Nestle, Perugina, Toblerone, Mars, Dove, and Cadbury.



On January 22, 2021, the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, having been ratified by 50 UN member nations, enters into force. The Treaty includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. Not surprisingly, none of the nations possessing nuclear weapons, including the United States, have ratified the treaty. As the graphic above shows, these international agreements are important steps to eventual abolitions of weapons. The four first weapons were all once part of conventional warfare and are now nearly abolished in practice.

- Check out the site of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons <https://www.icanw.org/>
- Read the story of Dominican Sister Ardeth Platte who died in 2020 and who, with Sr. Carol Gilbert, OP, dedicated her life to nuclear abolition <https://www.grdominicans.org/news-remembering-ardeth-platte-op/>

A report by a Sister of Charity from St. Joseph's High School, Pensacola, Florida, unfortunately unsigned and undated, reflects on the school's graduates, "One is duly impressed by the choice of professions the young people are embracing. They bespeak an innate or cultivated culture. Incredible though it is, America has been, shall we say determinedly, unaware of the scholarly potentialities in her Negro citizens." The sister author of this report shows an awareness, unusual for the time, of structural racism, of an America that is "determinedly unaware" of the gifts and accomplishments of African Americans. The Black History Month 2021 theme, "Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity" explores the African diaspora, and the spread of Black families across the United States. Check out these resources to celebrate February as African American History Month:



- <https://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/>
- <https://www.oprahmag.com/black-history-month/>
- <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/resources-black-history-month>

## JPIC Dates to Commemorate in February

**1 Feast of St. Brigid of Kildare** In Brigid's convent the sisters chose by lot one of the Beatitudes on their profession day as a theme for their entire lives. What Beatitude is your life's theme?

**4 Birthday of Rosa Parks (1913-2005)** "Stand for something or you will fall for anything. Today's mighty oak is yesterday's nut that held its ground."

**5 Death of Pedro Arrupe, SJ (1907-1991)** "As long as there is one hungry person in the world, all our celebrations of the Eucharist are in some way inadequate."

**8 Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita/International Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking.** Find prayer resources here <https://preghieracontrotratta.org/>

**11 Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes/World Day of the Sick –** Pray for all the members of the Company of Charity around the world involved in health care.

**17 Ash Wednesday** "The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free." Isaiah 58:6

**22 Execution of Sophie and Hans Scholl, resisters to the Nazi Regime** "The real damage is done by those millions who want to 'survive.' The honest men who just want to be left in peace. Those who don't want their little lives disturbed by anything bigger than themselves. Those with no sides and no causes. Safe?! From what? Life is always on the edge of death; narrow streets lead to the same place as wide avenues, and a little candle burns itself out just like a flaming torch does. I choose my own way to burn." Sophie Scholl



Happy Birthday to *JustLove!* *JustLove* began publication in February 2013 and so with this issue begins its 9th year of publication -96 issues. Special thanks to layout editor Donna Sartor who comes up every month, often on short notice, with a creative and engaging issue.