It’s hard in 2024 to experience the sense of newness and possibility that a new year often brings. The ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, Congo; Earth passing over so many tipping points from which there is no going back; the acrimony and divisiveness that election years seem inevitably to bring; and each of us has our own personal struggles and challenges. It’s enough to make you want to stay in bed with the covers pulled over your head. What can one person do, we ask? *Just Love* begins its 12th year of publication sharing quotes, stories, and images of how ordinary people like ourselves have answered that question.

20-year-old Bristol University student Ella Lambert in the UK had her year abroad plans scuttled by COVID. With some unexpected time on their hands, donations of fabric from local communities and a crash course in how to use a sewing machine, Ella and 21-year-old university friend Oliwia Geisler got to work. The began the Pachamama Project to end “period poverty.” They created a global network of volunteers to sew washable menstrual pads for refugees. Since 2020, they have sent 100,000 pads out into the world, taking 13,000 women and girls out of period poverty for up to five years. [https://www.thepachamamaproject.org/index.html](https://www.thepachamamaproject.org/index.html)

“In these downbeat times, we need as much hope and courage as we do vision and analysis; we must accent the best of each other even as we point out the vicious effects of our racial divide and pernicious consequences of our maldistribution of wealth and power. We simply cannot enter the twenty-first century at each other’s throats, even as we acknowledge the weighty forces of racism, patriarchy, economic inequality, homophobia, and ecological abuse on our necks. We are at a crucial crossroad in the history of this nation—and we either hang together by combating these forces that divide and degrade us or we hang separately. Do we have the intelligence, humor, imagination, courage, tolerance, love, respect, and will to meet the challenge? Time will tell. None of us alone can save the nation or world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so.”
- Cornel West, *Race Matters*
Brendan Walsh (whose sister Patricia is a New York Sister of Charity) and his wife Willa Bickham founded Viva House, a Catholic Worker community in inner city Baltimore, in 1968. When they celebrated their 50th anniversary Brendan calculated that they had fed over one million people. So whenever anyone asks him what one person can do, he responds, “Well two people can feed a million people.” Willa is also a stunning water colorist. See one of her paintings below.

Brendan Walsh

Bill McKibben is one of the outstanding climate activists in the world. Whenever anyone asks him “What is the best thing an individual can do for the climate?” he replies, “Stop being an individual.” Check out Bill’s latest initiative Third Act [https://thirdact.org/]. Third Act is building a community of Americans over the age of sixty determined to change the world for the better. Together, they use their life experience, skills, and resources to build a better tomorrow.

Bill McKibben

Saint Brigid was renowned as a peace maker and one of the most popular stories associated with her is that of her giving away her father’s precious jeweled sword to a poor person so that she could barter it for food to feed his family. She was compassionate, a protector of the natural world and a formidable force for justice whose light shines ever more brightly today. From New Zealand to New York, from Brisbane to Barcelona, a minute’s silence for peace will take place all around the globe on February 1 and will form part of the rolling Pause for Peace movement. Pause for Peace will be at 12 noon, Saint Brigid’s Day, February 1, 2024.

Saint Brigid

“The work of tactic, which is always very captivating to people in bad times-
‘What is the tactic?’-that is in itself a captivation. The first question is ‘Where is the community?’ and then out of community comes naturally the tactic.”

Daniel Berrigan, SJ

How will you form community in 2024?

JustLove is an e-publication of the Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth. Email us at pjei@scnj.org. Editor: Fr. Terrence Moran - Layout: Donna Sartor