Editorial: “When divine love becomes incarnate in us, Christ is born anew.” This insight from Sr. Llla Delio, OSF, calls us to a profound preparation for this blessed time. May this advent be such a holy journey as we strive to become more alive with the presence of Christ in this world that is so in need of his love. May we accompany one another through difficult times; may we value the dignity of all creation; and may we experience new ways of building trust that light will enter the darkness, joy will remove sadness and peace will overcome violence. This issue of Newsbrief shares some of the ways of interconnecting local and global concerns for the environment, poverty, human rights and advocacy efforts.

VATICAN SECRETARY OF STATE OFFICE HOSTS MEETING ON COP 24

A very informative meeting hosted by the Secretariat of Vatican State on Integral Ecology and chaired by Mons. Paul Richard Gallagher was held on October 26. The JPIC Secretariat joined Vatican officials from various dicasteries and representatives of Catholic civil societies, CIDSE, CAFOD, Caritas Internationalis, the Pontifical Academy of Science, Katowice diocese of Poland, and Union of Superiors General of religious congregations.

The meeting was held to coordinate the Catholic Church participation at the United Nations Climate Change conference (COP24) in Katowice, Poland, and to continue with the efforts of the Holy See to make sure the Laudato Si message is put into action.

Fr. Joshtrom of the Ecology Department of the Dicastery for Promotion of Integral Human Development (DIHD), presented the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report on the dire impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, released on October 8, 2018 and other related scientific studies on climate change.

The Vatican official from the Intergovernmental Forum of Negotiation with States read the preparatory process for COP24 and pathways forward: COP24 is a follow up with the objectives of Paris Agreement. There are numerous difficulties and controversies to be resolved. With regards to the coal mining industry, the call to look at transitions of the workforce to create decent and quality jobs in alternative energy sources when possible.

The representatives of CIDSE and the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) presented their perspectives on the Preparatory process for COP24 and the way forward from Civil Societies perspective.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A session, allowing participants to air their views, perspectives and comments.

References:
- COP 24 Poland Website
- CIDSE
PROPHETIC ECONOMY

Castel Gandolfo was the exciting meeting place for the international conference on “Prophetic Economy.” Hundreds of persons of all ages gathered for this enriching experience.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a panel discussion facilitated by Tomás Insua of the Global Catholic Climate Movement on the divestment of fossil fuels that occurred in Ireland. Three main pillars in the country—government, universities and the Catholic Church—united in this effort. Lorna Gold of Trocaire exercised a strategic role in providing information and connections necessary for this incredible achievement.

Each person on the panel shared how their specific role was pivotal in creating this success. The legislation passed unanimously, the Bishops of the Conference all signed on and the Board of Trinity College passed the resolution with the major support from the students through the leadership of Deirdre Duff. The students worked tirelessly and creatively to be united behind this effort.

Click here for more about this divestment effort.

ECONOMIC AND TECHNO-SCIENTIFIC RE-ENGINEERING TO ENHANCE THIRD WORLD HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Ambassador Gen. GG Umo, of the Embassy of Nigeria to the Holy See, carefully crafted a very informative international conference that highlighted his country’s efforts to enhance human development through economic and techno-science re-engineering.

Selected speakers created a realistic scenario of what is currently the situation in the Developing World, and most specifically in Nigeria. Starting with poverty as the root cause of most of the problems, presenters demonstrated the importance of utilizing the Sustainable Development Goals as the means to make progress. They noted how advantages are gained when leadership is responsible, and governments accept the challenge to stand up to ethical standards in managing finances. Another way to understand the level of well-being in a country is the rating scale of the Human Capital Index as it has the tabulation of the opportunities provided by a country for education, employment and healthcare. The meeting concluded with the sharing of the exemplary response of Nigeria’s handling of Ebola. Through a coordinated initiative once the disease was diagnosed, it was contained in the region of the infections.

With the willingness of many of the participants, to turn the challenges into opportunities, the meeting created a spirit of hope-filled engagement for additional steps to move development forward for Nigeria and other Africa countries.

The conference concluded with the grand celebration of 58th Independence Day anniversary of Nigeria from Britain.

VATICAN-URBANIANA CONFERENCE ON WATER

A Conference on Water was held on November 8, 2018 at the Pontifical University Urbaniana and co-sponsored by the Vatican Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, as well as supported by several nations’ embassies.

“As water scarcity becomes the new normal, how do we manage this scarce resource?” Perhaps this question sets the tone for the challenges of the Conference on “The management of a common good: access to save drinking water.” Mons. Bruno-Marie Duffé, Secretary for the Dicastery said that in our modern life we have de-sacralized water, have made water a ‘useful’ commodity and almost lost the ‘common good’ mystical aspect it has traditionally enjoyed. Now we ‘reason’ how to use it, it is reduced to an object. As he concluded his reflections Mons. Duffé said we are called to a level of responsibility, one for another. Water is a part of the ‘commons’ of humanity; no one can own water, if one finds it, one must share it. Pope Francis calls us to be children of the common homeland of the earth.

Prof. George Panyin Hagan from Ghana gave a powerful testimony to water and Spirituality in African cultures and tradition. “I have no religious text to go to,” he said, “but I use a local proverb: when a chicken drinks water it must lift its head to swallow. It is like the recognition of God in the life of the human being, the relationship of the human being with others. Africans believe all of creation acts in integrity with all else in creation. So the spiritual
and the natural realm of Africans, the lived experience and the collective consciousness are connected. Water is both spiritual and natural. Water connects all living beings with God and droughts and famines are seen as the non-integral conduct of humans with each other in the environment.” Conclusion: the management of ecology, biodiversity, water is necessary for life.

De Abdelmajid Tribak spoke of Islamic spirituality and the symbolism of water, saying “We humans are all just part of the divine creation of the world and we must manage it.” Hanssandra Ghiri spoke of the mysticism of Hinduism and water. Eight hundred and seventy million people will face problems accessing clean water by 2040 and Keila Maraes Giffoni mentioned that water is a habitat for Amazonian peoples; water binds all together in Amazonia.

Governance and responsibility in relation to the use of water was the focus of the afternoon. Legal problems related to the use of water, the lack of water in healthcare facilities leading to even more (unhealthy) health care issues, pollution of water and solutions in the view of SDG 6 (Sustainable Development Goal) of the UN Agenda 2030. Adriana Opromolla of Caritas Internationalis spoke of hopeful experiences from the field.

Other speakers told of their experiences in water management, a vision from a multinational water company, the need for the civil society voice and overall integrated management of water resources at international level, at national level and at local level. Cardinal Turkson of the Dicastery also used a Ghanaian proverb: “When the elephant swims the water is finished” meaning when the big one speaks no-one speaks after. Cardinal Turkson said the Holy Father has sent this Conference on water a message. “So let me just thank each and all of you and we will conclude with my proclaiming to you the message of Pope Francis.—Contributed by Ken Thesing, MM, JPIC Representative of ICR at FAO

FOLLOW UP WITH THE CONFERENCE ON WATER

A selected number of speakers and participants at the Conference sponsored by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development entitled “ Governing a Common Good: Access to Drinkable Water” were invited to follow up with the themes and issues discussed. Twenty-nine participants attended this meeting which is part of the process the new Vatican Dicastery is pursuing in terms of the pastoral methodology for social issues—it is not just to have information but how do we process them for action. Mons. Bruno Marie Duffé, secretary of the Dicastery, and Tebaldo Vinciguerra, an official from the same Dicastery, guided the reflections in exploring ways to action to make sure access of drinkable water is not only the matter to be dealt with by government only but also by the Catholic Church as an influential faith-based community.

Here are some of useful ideas that came forward:

- Access to drinkable water as a human right demands action on the part of policymakers as they decide on financial priorities, considering that there is a lot of ideologies that determine lines of action.
- A call to abandon false ideas on water often done by manipulation of public opinion in order to avoid facing the reality.
- The magnitude of the scarcity of drinkable water and the problem of contaminated water is often underestimated.
- There is a lot that the Catholic Church can do to make sure more people have access to drinkable water considering the education, health, environmental and other institutions run by Catholic Church. One participant called for the Catholic Church to take leadership in coordinating governance of water, especially in the developing countries.
- Another area is awareness raising taking the occasions of World Day of Water and engaging with national and international actors on the issue.
- Other participants pointed out issues related to: interreligious stimulation and collaboration, meaningful data collection analysis, publications in technical magazines on the moral aspects of water, healthcare and health facilities, finance, education, inaccurate definitions of indicators, awareness, advocacy and policy at national and international level.

Now the challenge is to put ideas into practice.

AEFJN AT 30 YEARS: LET’S GO ON

The Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) Annual General Assembly (AGM) was held in the Casa Generalizia of the Missionaries of Africa Rome, on the of November 8, 2018. This was also a celebration of the 30th anniversary of foundation of the Network and in his report, the President Fr. François de Paul Hounon, SMA, paid homage to the founding fathers of the Network and invited the current members to keep the network going. The secretaries and the policy officers of Brussels who were present gave specific cases followed by the Secretariat and the Antennas. All were in line with the Plan of Action 2013-2018.

The core economic advocacy dossiers for the current Plan of Action have been streamlined to two; namely, ‘Corporate Social responsibility and Food Sovereignty’. Some of the strategies are:

- To develop Christian reflections on each issue based on the Bible and the Catholic Social Teaching;
- Lobby the EU institutions, the national governments and parliaments;
- Link each policy with its impact on Africa and African people;
- Collect and communicate stories, success stories and case studies from Africa;
- Continue capacity strengthening in Africa on economic issues;
- Raise the profile of AEFJN both internally and externally.

The members present unanimously adopted the new Plan of Action that will be our road-map for the next four years (2019-2022). The new plan of action is an orientation towards an African-driven advocacy… AEFJN remains committed to key economic issues in the relations between the European Union (EU) and Africa.

André Claessens, MSC the incoming AEFJN chairman and a member of the network’s executive committee, urged the Assembly to commit more to advocacy and lobby. With congregations experiencing diminution of their members and even their finances, it is more than necessary to work in network and to be involved in advocacy in order to be more efficient in our fight against injustices.

To be effective, the fight against injustices cannot but be through advocacy and lobbying. No one can do it alone. The cooperation of everyone is highly needed. Only by giving time, personnel and resources to AEFJN (a tool for advocacy and lobby) will we continue to move forward in our efforts to build better economic bonds and relationships between Africa and Europe. Advocacy was supported unanimously by the members.

Members of congregations, especially those with presence in Africa, are invited to join AEFJN as members. Please write to: president@aefjn.org.

The full report is available of the JPIC website.

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**SPANISH–PORTUGUESE JPIC PROMOTERS: ANNUAL PLANNING AND REFLECTING ON CHANGING THE WORLD**

The November meeting of the Spanish–Portuguese JPIC Promoters had two agenda items: finalizing of planning for the year and a reflection on “I am the change I want to see in the world”. The first Agenda was moderated by Sr. Rosa Maria Ramos, ODN. She coordinated the group to make sure the 2018-2019 Program of meetings based on the theme: The Kingdom of God is Justice, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit was developed into sub-themes and working groups were formed for the presentation. The program is available in Spanish on the Spanish JPIC website.

The second part of the meeting was a reflection by Sr. Lilia Celina Barrera, HTCSF on the call for men and women religious to make a difference regarding the things we see, read and aware of and to avoid indifference, for “we are the change we want to see in the world” on justice peace and care for our common home! The reflection was based on the parable of the mouse (Spanish and English) who saw that the farmer bought a mousetrap and informed all the animals present in the house, but nobody really cared. At the end, the chain of events affected the life of all the animals. This parable resulted in a dialogue in which everyone concluded that EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED; to ignore it has global repercussions.

Participants shared a reflection on a story or a news piece from newspapers and each highlighted some of the ideas or action clues that have been emerging in the sharing and that express the desire to be, ourselves, the change we want to see in the world. “If you want to change the world, change yourself” (Ghandi); The
best way to change the world is to help those in the context in which you are living. Think globally, act locally. Act on environmental issues, educate and teach to cultivate reusing and recycling habits. Stop being a spectator and get involved in the city, village or community in which you live. If I change, little by little things can change. It is important to continue dreaming, in dreams there is much of the truth of the gospel.

Sr. Lilia concluded with the presentation of a slideshow titled “Conectando ideas” from Ciudad de Corrientes. TEDx, Argentina.

**JPIC PROMOTERS FORMATION WORKSHOP 2018**

The JPIC Commission Secretariat held a four-day formation workshop from November 14 to 17 at Casa per Ferie Enrico De Osso. Thirty-seven members of various religious congregations and societies of apostolic life took part in it. Several JPIC coordinators of Marist Sisters and the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) came from different parts of the world to attend the workshop. Some newly appointed JPIC Promoters from English and Spanish/Portuguese speaking generalates in Rome were also present. The theme that was developed in this workshop is “Building Right Relationships: a Call to Holiness in Contemplation and Action”. All participants were asked to read Pope Francis’ Encyclical *Gaudete et Exsultate*, integrating it with *Laudato Si: on Care for our Common Home.*

The program was very intense, beginning with the spiritual component from everyday liturgy readings with the working groups introducing their issues in a prayerful way to invite new promoters to join their groups—animation on Integrity of Creation, Refugees and Migrants, Food and Agriculture, economic justice for Africa, and gender justice in the church and society. Some networks of religious organizations also presented their issues: The Service of Documentation and Study on Mission (SEDOS); Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN); Religious at the United Nations. An official from the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development came to speak about the social Ministry of the Universal Church.

The themes that were presented reminded everyone the necessity to continue to consciously engage the SEE, JUDGE, ACT methodology of social analysis. The program emphasized the necessity of establishing structures for JPIC animation at the congregational level. Participants had the opportunity to think about how they are going to carry on their JPIC ministries in their congregations. The last two days were dedicated on preparing a plan and possibly to report back to their leadership teams. After three months, the JPIC secretariat to make sure the workshop was useful.

**SHINING A LIGHT ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT AREAS**

A panel discussion and film screening was held at the Jesuit Curia hosted by UK Amb. Sally Axworthy to the Holy See and H.E. Jean Comet d’Elzius, Amb. of Belgium to the Holy See. The purpose of the round table was to share the work and commitment being done to combat the scourge in countries where rape and sexual abuse are weapons of war. Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, developed the importance that the Vatican has to eliminate the impunity of this warfare targeted, specifically at vulnerable women and children. This is an effective means to humiliate and defeat a country. He spoke of the need to work together to counter this tactic in terrorism and to find ways to support the victim. He gave examples from many countries where he had personal relationships and so these crimes against humanity are particularly disturbing to him. He also commended
the work of men and women religious in this area. Fr. Tom Smolich, SJ, International Director of Jesuit Refugee Service, spoke on behalf of the assistance to victims. Sr. Sheila Kinsey, FCJM, shared the female religious perspective. A video of Fr. Bernard Ugeau, M.Afr, who has a school for over 200 girls who had been abused in Bukavu, addressed the need to reform the political and judicial systems and to offer jobs. The evening closed with the film screening of “The Man Who Mends Women” (English and French), about the work of Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Denis Mukwege, which graphically depicts the horrific reality in the DRC with the abuse of women. The evening closed with the film screening of “The Man Who Mends Women” (English and French), about the work of Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Denis Mukwege, which graphically depicts the horrific reality in the DRC with the abuse of women.

**Article in Vatican News**

**UISG Declaration Against Any Kind of Abuse**

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**PRAYER INTENTIONS OF POPE FRANCIS IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY**

**Universal**—In the Service of the Transmission of Faith, that people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time. A video on the intention becomes available on the first Friday of the month.

**1 January**—World Day of Prayer for Peace message from Pope Francis: “Politics must serve peace.”

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**INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF OBSERVANCE**

**1 December**—**World AIDS Day** is an opportunity to show support for people living with HIV and to pray for those who have died.

**2-14 December**—**Conference of the Parties (COP 24)** will be held at Katowice, Poland. The purpose of COP 24 is to finalize the rules for the implementation of the climate change promises under the Paris Agreement. This framework deals with the greenhouse gas emissions and the ways to keep global temperature risings to below 2 degrees Celsius with efforts to pursue only 1.5 degrees Celsius. See Bishops letter of support.

**2 December**—**International Day for the Abolition of Slavery** has the focus of eradicating contemporary forms of slavery. “Slavery is not merely a historical relic...more than 40 million people worldwide are victims of modern slavery.

**5 December**—**World Soil Day** aims to connect people with soils and raise awareness of their critical importance in their lives, “to communicate messages on the importance of soil quality for food security, healthy ecosystems and human well-being.”

**9 December**—**International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime** seeks to raise awareness of the Genocide Convention and its role in combating and preventing the crime of genocide.

**9 December**—**International Anti-Corruption Day** brings awareness that to end poverty and ensure lives of dignity we need to fight corruption in all aspects in all countries.

**10 December**—**Human Rights Day** reminds us to promote and protect human rights. This year, Human Rights Day marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being.

**18 December**—**International Migrants Day** stresses the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants.

**20 December**—**International Human Solidarity Day** focuses on the need to work together to fight poverty.

*Click here for a listing of the international days for the year.*

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**JPIC PROMOTERS MEETINGS IN DECEMBER**

**3 December**—English Speaking CORE Group from 3 pm to 5 pm at the Fratelli

**4 December**—Integrity of Creation Working Group (ICWG) from 2 pm to 4 pm at the Fratelli

**4 December**—Africa Working Group, 3:30 to 5:30 at Missionaries of Africa

**5 December**—Spanish Portuguese Promoters meeting with the topic JPIC, Nonviolence and Human Dignity from 9 am–12 pm

**15 December**—English Promoters Christmas party begins at 5 pm with Mass and a potluck following at Maryknoll College, Via Saldegna 83

**19 December**—English Speaking JPIC Promoters meeting 3 pm to 5 pm at the Fratelli Pedro Room (-1 level), with the topics “JPIC with Youth” and “The COP 24 Experience.” Sr. Nathalie Becquart, Xavier, participant on the Synod of Youth will share insights (via Skype Canada) from her experience of the event, focusing on how the JPIC concerns were promoted. This follow-up on COP 24 will be an informative exchange by participants who attend various sessions at the conference in Poland. Please join us for what promises to be a very interesting and
enriching time. If not in person, you can join through Skype by sending your Skype name to jpicroma@gmail.com to set-up the connection.

SAVE THE DATES

12 January, 9 February, 9 March and 6 April 2019 at 9:00 am–12:30 pm: “Consecrated Life, Migrations and the Challenges for the Christian Community”. The training sessions will be conducted in English, Spanish and Italian with simultaneous translations. There is also the possibility of following the training online. The last session will be dedicated to practical examples from religious institutions providing services for migrants and refugees in Rome. See the flyer in English, Italian and Spanish for details. Contact UISG to sign up.


SEARCH FOR A MALE EXECUTIVE CO-SECRETARY IN THE JPIC COMMISSION SECRETARIAT

In 2019, Fr. Felix Mushobozi, CPPS will be completing his six years of service as executive co-secretary of the JPIC Commission. We are very grateful for the many ways he continues to share his priestly ministry and deep concern for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The JPIC Commission of the USG-UISG is searching for a male religious to work full-time, together with a female religious, as executive co-secretary in the Commission’s Secretariat Office in Rome, Italy.

It is important that this person have sufficient experience in justice, peace and integrity of creation concerns, that he be fluent in English and have some knowledge of Spanish or fluent in Spanish and have some knowledge in English, and capable of teamwork. He must possess computer and organizational skills. Contact jpicroma@gmail.com for more information not later than March 15, 2019.

“He came that we may have life most abundantly!”

John 10:10

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