



Sisters of the Precious Blood

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Please consider saving paper, ink and the environment —print only if necessary. We have eliminated much of the heavy color areas to minimize the use of colored ink. Thanks

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Laudato Si — an invitation

to see environmental issues as a big complex part of our needy social networks.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters (Monroe MI) took risks and have ‘recycled and reused’ the land of their motherhouse area instead of taking down old buildings and making new ones. A Sinsinawa Dominican Sister wanted to make a retreat center with ecology goals and did so amazingly using a very old and run down farm. Both projects have become learning labs for residents nearby and afar showing what can happen when goods and buildings are recycled instead of thrown away.



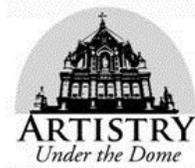
Read the article in the April 2016 issue of the **U.S. Catholic** titled “Organic habits: Why nuns are pioneering the green movement” <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201603/organic-habits-why-nuns-are-pioneering-green-movement-30589> to read all about it. How can we, as Sisters of the Precious Blood, listen to Pope Frances as he writes in *Laudato Si* “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. These problems demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” Of course, it is women who suffer the most poverty and exclusion when the environment suffers.

By Marie Kopin, C.P.P.S.

ASSEMBLY DIRECTIVES

we will ...

- Continue to articulate and integrate our Spirituality in our sharing among ourselves and with others.
- Increase our use of social media to promote Precious Blood Spirituality.
- Stand with the marginalized, make a collective commitment to promote and witness nonviolence, and strive to effect reconciliation among God’s people.
- Act responsibly in the use and care of our planet’s resources.
- Network with other individuals, agencies, and groups to be effective in our current reality.



Artistry Under the Dome

The fourth annual **Art Fair**, held at St. Charles Senior Living Community in Carthagen, April 1, 2, & 3, was a huge success! Thirty-one artists from either Mercer or Auglaize County participated and each one had an eight foot booth to display their creations. Some art work from 6 high schools was included.

Nearly 1,200 people came to the Art Fair and were amazed at the variety of media; such as pottery, paintings, photography, woodwork, glass blown art and more. Visitors marveled that so many artists are from the local area and at their great talent.

This Art Fair was a dream of Sr. Martha Bertke, who was founder of this annual event and continues to serve on the planning committee. Her involvement, with other committee members, has been crucial to the success of this Mercer County exhibition. Recognizing the critical importance of beauty in our lives, she is very pleased with the attendance, the fine compliments received and all who worked together to make this a tremendously positive event.

— Martha Bertke

DEATH PENALTY LOBBY DAY

Sisters Pat Will and Jeanette Buehler joined over 175 advocates in the death penalty lobby day led by Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE) on April 12. The morning program provided opportunities for legislators sponsoring reform or abolition bills to address those present, give their support to OTSE members and update status on bills. Speaking also were family members who shared how they are affected by incarceration of loved ones as well as by 3 men found innocent in death penalty cases. In the afternoon attendees met with legislators and/or staff members from their districts to share concerns and to learn the positions held by the state senators and representatives. Bills to take action on are:

Senate Bill 67, The Racial Justice Act proposes to allow individuals sentenced to death to appeal the sentence if there is belief that race was a contributing factor to the sentence being sought. **Senate Bill 154 and House Bill 289** call for the death penalty to be abolished; replace current Ohio Death Penalty with life without parole.

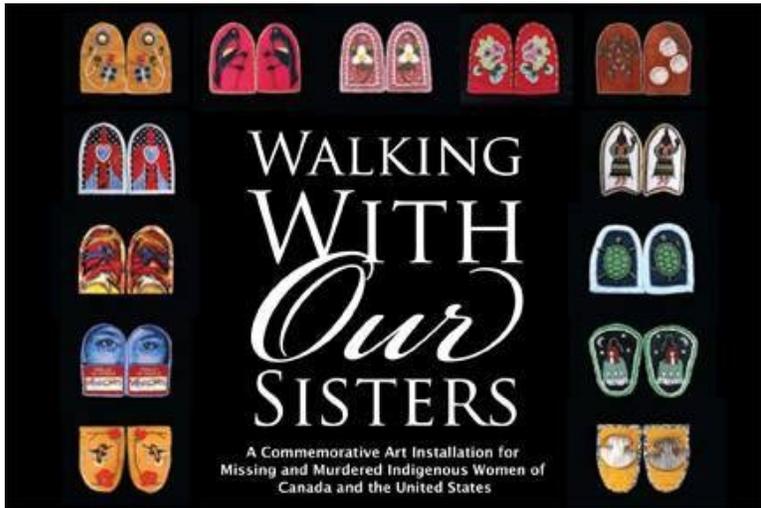
Senate Bill 162 prevents execution of individuals who suffered from serious mental illness at the time of the crime. (Awaiting committee vote in Senate Criminal Justice.)

— Jeanette Buehler & Pat Will



Walking With Our Sisters”

<https://youtu.be/m85N5CFvUMg>



An awesome exhibit featuring colorful artwork honoring and remembering 1,775+ tribal women and girls who have been disappeared or murdered, "Vamps," the top toe part of a moccasin, have been created by artists who knew or are related to these women. Beautifully beaded and embroidered on various colorful materials, they remain "unfinished" footwear as a reminder of unfinished lives. Go to <http://walkingwithoursisters.ca/> to see the artwork and an explanation of the portrayal designed to honor these abused women and girls.

I was privileged to work with the group here putting it up at our Saginaw Chippewa Nation's Ziibiwing Cultural Center near where I live. After the exhibit materials arrived and we began to set up our exhibit, I unpacked a number of boxes of vamps wearing white cotton gloves, and carefully handling them, one pair at a time passed them on to others who on their hands and knees fit them into our layout on the floor. Each pair had a name with it, and some had photos on top. It was a very spiritual experience with everyone getting "smudged" (cleansed) as they entered the exhibit area. Throughout there was a background of song and drumming. The following day we held the "Grand Opening" which included a number of women who fasted and prayed outside in a Tee Pee from dawn to sunset. Guests came some travelling more than a day's journey. Many volunteers pitched in for the opening days' program which included a presentation on why Native American Women wear skirts. I came to realize how we, as women, can connect more to the earth using floor length clothing. Just think of how it was when we Sisters wore those long habits!

After the exhibit April 23 – May 7, 2016 it will take us a week to sort the vamps and pack them carefully back inside the "bundles" (cardboard boxes) so they can go safely to New Hampshire, and then back to Canada where it is booked through 2018. If you know any tribal groups, especially those here in the USA who would like to sponsor this exhibit please encourage them to contact the Michigan Saginaw Chippewa Nation for details.

Marie Kopin, C.P.P.S. 4/2016

RACISM

“The time is right for a new national effort to deal with the racism that continues to plague our society” wrote a recent blogger. The situation in the United States could not make the argument stronger. With 5% of the world’s population but 22% of the world’s prison population, and blacks who are 12% of the U.S. Population making up 40% of the U.S. prison population, the need for a “new national effort” is evident.

A recent headline in the New York Times suggests a ‘new national effort’ might be underway: “*Georgetown Confronts its Role in the Nation’s Slave Trade*”. The article continues, “What does the University owe descendants of 272 slaves?”

Georgetown’s records list the names of the slaves who, in the fall of 1838, were loaded onto ships in the busy harbor of the nation’s capital, headed for plantations in the deep South. They were sold to help secure the future of their owners, the Jesuit priests of Georgetown University.

Since last fall, a University working group, galvanized by student demonstrations, has been studying ways for the University to recognize and make some amends for the University’s involvement. Already, the names of two Jesuits involved in the sale have been removed from campus buildings. An alumnus, Richard Cellini, CEO of a technology company, has set up and begun to fund the “Georgetown Memory Project. Some descendants of the 252 men, women and children sold in 1838 have already been located; one woman, rather than asking for compensation, said only that she would like to see her ancestor, Neely Hawkins’ grave. They found it in the Catholic Cemetery at Marin-gouin, LA. (NYTIMES, April 17, 1916)

—Barbara Agnew

Sr. Helen Prejean with the Death Penalty

For many years, Sr. Helen Prejean, a member of the Congregation of St. Joseph, has been on the road talking about the death penalty to anyone who will listen. That is about to change, at least for a time. At the end of October she will be heading into a writing retreat in order to complete her third book. She will not be abandoning her efforts to end the death penalty. Far from it! She hopes that the book she will be writing, a spiritual memoir called *River of Fire*, will spur more people to action, as her earlier books did. Her first two books are: *Dead Man Walking* (1993) and *The Death of Innocents* (2004).

The address of her ministry: Ministry Against the Death Penalty, 3009 Grand Rt. St. John, Apartment #6, New Orleans, LA 70119 Or, go to her Facebook.

—Martha Bertke

So much needs to be done to combat the devastating effects of climate change.

The guiding team for the Mercy International Reflection Process has developed digital resource collections of videos and readings on several of these topics. You may find them here:

Water: <https://sway.com/3FgROLmHJReau5HP>

Consumerism: <https://sway.com/o4ODkV1CUnBRjq67>

Fracking: <https://sway.com/EEgPPd05XjCwkYB9>

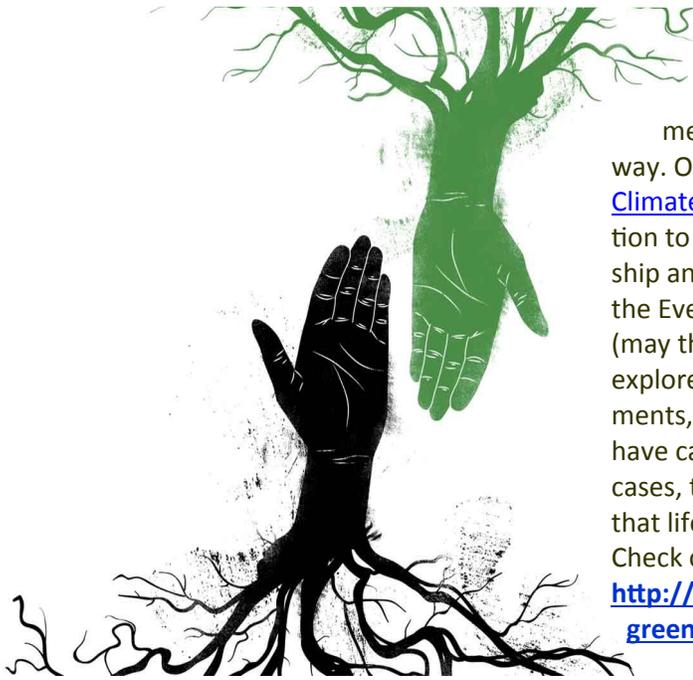
Climate Change: <https://sway.com/r8zuwDiwgTl9bKdk>

Environmental Devastation: <https://sway.com/ZS87tw4GohhoCxsH>

Check out these links and decide how you want to be active.

—Mary Lou Schmersal





A beautiful thing is happening: Advocates for racial justice and for environmental protection—too often, movements quite distant from each other—are coming together in a new way. One can see it in the campaign of [National People's Action](#) and the [Climate Justice Alliance](#) to push for a just and locally empowering transition to clean energy; in the [New Economy Coalition's](#) inclusive membership and commitment to front-line communities; and in the projects of the Evergreen Cooperatives, in inner-city Cleveland. These new efforts (may they multiply!) are grounded on a strong foundation. When one explores the roots of both the environmental and civil-rights movements, one finds a strikingly similar radical critique. Both movements have called for a deep restructuring of society and the economy; in both cases, that call is based on an affirmation of life and the devoted care that life requires of us.

Check out this link for more detailed information

<http://www.thenation.com/article/a-radical-alliance-of-black-and-green-could-save-the-world/>

—Jeanette Buehler

The Missionaries of the Precious Blood recently featured a detailed interview with Sr. Mary Ann Bremke describing how and why the Literacy Center was established. Originally begun with a one-on-one tutoring approach, using basic reading and math texts, today, they have created five programs that focus on adult basic education, general equivalency diploma (GED), English speakers of other languages (ESOL), license preparation and adults with other needs.

Mary Ann says: "I read somewhere that mercy is the form love takes when it encounters misery. If this is a definition of mercy, then I can truly assure you that the Brunner Literacy Center is all about Precious Blood people and their response in participating in sharing God's love and mercy". Go to <http://cpps-preciousblood.org/media/streams-of-mercy/sr-maryann-bremke-c-pp-s.html> to enjoy the entire interview.



Co-founders of the Brunner Literacy Center, C.PP.S. Srs. Helen Weber (left) and Maryann Bremke (right).



LAUDATO
SI'

CARE FOR
CREATION

Take a look at AMERICA 's links <http://americamagazine.org/sections/laudato-si> for many practical and interesting ways to understand and think about Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si. Are you or anyone you know discussing this document or trying to implement it in any way Let us know what you are doing (or thinking of doing). Let's dream big!

In addition to the use of gender-inclusive language, a first in official Catholic social encyclicals, one of the most amazing aspects of "Laudato Si" are the footnotes. Check this out for a listing of creation care (Catholic and other faith-based) organizations: <http://www.catholiccreationcare.com/organizations.html>



How does your garden grow by now? With all the cool and wet temps, only a few flowers are germinating here but the flowering trees have been glorious.

How about taking some photos to share with the rest of us? Or even share your frustrations and disappointments. The task of rebuilding the frame around my garden space has begun with the old railroad ties dug out thanks to Tommy our neighbor. Now for the replacement edging.

Gardening can be a creative and de-stressing outlet. I am hoping to plant geraniums next week and have already made a pie from the rhubarb that is doing so well. Hope you find digging in the dirt a delightful respite no matter how much of it you cultivate.

How are you making an effort to conserve and enhance the part of earth that you live on? <https://youtu.be/akK7diU4Kgc>

—Mary Lou Schmersal

Earth Day took place on Friday, April 22. The very next day Srs. Barbara Ann Hoying and Martha Bertke exchanged plants. Barb gave Marty some lavender creeping phlox plants to enhance the beauty of her flower bed. Marty gave Barb some strong roots of peppermint plants, which add lovely green color to outdoor space and can be served with food items. Both of them have benefitted from the exchange and they did another deed to care for the earth, our common home.

—Marty Bertke



Phlox



Peppermint



send us your articles (approximately 125 words or less) for our next issue Grassroots is due **JUNE 1** so we can meet our goal of having it in your hands by **6/9/2016**. Please submit to Marty Bertke m.bertke@hometowncable.net

.....or to Mary Lou Schmersal cppsnews@bright.net

Your contributions make all the difference!

We're on the Web!
www.preciousbloodsistersdayton.org