

Sisters of the Precious Blood

Volume 1, Issue 9
SEPTEMBER, 2016



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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Stories from around our CPPS world

If you know Sister Ritamary Bulach, you quickly realize here is a woman who lives a simple life.

When asked to submit an article for this issue of the GRASSROOTS newsletter, Ritamary quickly responded with a yes. She is definitely focused and declares: "In regards to the Assembly directives, my focus is on the environment."

The directive states: *Act responsibly in the use and care of our planet's resources*. Practical, down-to-earth and making a difference wherever she can, Ritamary says, "I try to live simply, that is, I try to live without having a lot of "stuff." Also, I will recycle whenever I can. I live at Salem Heights, so I choose to use our general cars and the general computers. When I go shopping, it is for the essentials or necessary items, always keeping it simple."



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.



When you talk with Sr. Ritamary, she tells of the delightful outdoor walks she takes because she enjoys being in nature and she tells, too, about the birds that she loves to watch. God's creation is wonderful!

—submitted by Ritamary Bulach & Martha Bertke

HOMICIDE PRAYER VIGILS

One of the headlines in the *Dayton Daily News* in mid-August stated "Six Homicides in Less than 10 Days." Six lives snuffed out by gun violence and most of the victims had not even reached their prime. As I was pondering the pain and anguish these families were suffering, Sr. Jeanette Buehler was already setting up three Prayer Vigils for the next Saturday and mapping directions to these sites. Her encouraging e-mails notified all those who regularly attend and more names are added to the list each week.

Two dedicated men from Precious Blood Parish canvas the neighborhood of each site the day before the vigil and pass out fliers inviting them to participate. I wondered how many of the "regulars" would attend all three vigils. I was grateful to see more than thirty participants at each location joining with

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friends and neighbors of the victim to pray together and share their grief. Our Prayer Leader was a woman from Potter's House who led us in spontaneous Prayer, Scripture Reading, Sharing, and Song.

As I reflected on these three homicide vigils, I realized how the seed that was sown by our Precious Blood Sisters over ten years ago has grown to include Prayer Leaders from eight inter-denominational churches and several other groups. I am always touched by the passionate response of the participants who come Saturday after Saturday, with prayerful hearts to promote and witness non-violence. We are helping to transform neighborhoods, one block at a time.

submitted by — Sister Rosemary Goubeaux

Assembly Directive: **Stand with the marginalized, make a collective commitment to promote and witness non-violence, and strive to effect reconciliation among God's people.**

Here are ways you might consider as you celebrate the sacredness of our earth:

- * Drive less and combine trips.
- * Set out in good time on journeys, so there is time to drive slower.
- * Book non-stop flights when possible.
- * Carpool and use public transportation.
- * Walk (for the HEALTH of it!).
- * Plan a meatless or vegetarian meal on a regular basis.
- * Cut down on take-out foods.
- * Buy local produce.
- * Grow some of our own food; if you only have a small space you can grow in containers.
- * Be more aware of what I purchase – choose recycled, organic, energy efficient products.
- * Check sources of wood and peat when buying furniture or compost.
- * Remember to use/bring cloth shopping bags.
- * Use cloth napkins and dish towels in lieu of paper napkins and paper towels.
- * Use green household cleaners.
- * Use hand tools instead of electric ones.
- * Unplug appliances when not in use.
- * Use a clothesline to dry clothes in lieu of dryer.
- * Consolidate loads of laundry.
- * Replace toilets with low flow system when renovating.
- * Use less water when prepping dishes for the dishwasher.
- * Take shorter showers.
- * Become more educated on global warming.

- * Support legislation to reduce CO2 emission and clean air.
- * Be more aware each day that I am in relationship not only with humans but with Mother Earth.
- * Grow in awareness of how I can care for creation.
- * Endeavour to carry on living sustainably.
- * Support and affirm younger persons when they take steps to conserve.
- * Discuss carbon footprint with family.
- * Educate others in ministry to understand carbon footprints and act collaboratively.
- * Spread the good news of what can be done and how we might be destroying God's world for future generations.
- * Pray for conversion of hearts among first world people.
- * Pray daily for the reduction of global carbon footprints.
- * Daily ask God to help me to be more responsible for caring for creation.

Possible Group Commitments:

- * Bring cloth napkins to group meetings.
- * Look for other ways to reduce carbon at our meetings.
- * Set up at least one meeting using the internet.
- * Share Carbon Footprint 101 video with others.
- * Share meeting agenda with other groups.
- * Write to supermarket headquarters to highlight the awful waste of packaging.

What is my commitment? What am I doing to live into this commitment?



States and Jurisdictions with no recent executions (updated August 18, 2016)

Although the United States is considered a death penalty country, **executions** are rare or non-existent in most of the nation: the majority of states — **31 out of 50** — have either abolished the death penalty or have not carried out an execution in at least 10 years. An additional five states have not had an execution in at least five years, for a total of **36 states** with no executions in that time. Only six states carried out an execution in 2015, and only three states (Tex., Mo., and Ga.) accounted for 86 percent of the executions. Three additional jurisdictions (the District of Columbia, the Federal Government, and the Military) have not had an execution in at least 10 years.

Assembly Directive: ... make a collective commitment to promote and witness nonviolence . . .

Submitted by: Martha Bertke

SOE Biannual Conference Provides Networking Opportunities for Women for Healing the Human Spirit and Restoring Earth's Life Support Systems

Marie Kopin presented a workshop entitled "Fungi's Partnership with Plants and other forms of Life" at the 12th biannual conference of the international **Sisters of Earth** (SOE) networking group in July at the Presentation Center, Los Gatos, Calif., July 7-10, 2016. The PowerPoint presentation about our congregation's many environmental activities was shown and appreciated in an open display table area.



The theme this year "**Zest for Life – Partnering with Our Sacred Earth Community**" envisioned this an effort to rekindle and enhance our ZEST FOR LIFE in face of the dark reality facing us. It attracted some 90 women attending from Canada, the USA, Germany, New Zealand, South America, and Africa. Most were Catholic Sisters or affiliates/co-members of religious congregations. We shared a deep concern for the ecological and spiritual crises of our times. Go to <http://sistersofearth.wikispaces.com/> for more information about this organization.

Led in prayer by the 4 main speakers before each session we enjoyed the presence of the local Mutsun Ohlone tribe "Grandmother" who prayerfully welcomed all who gathered in assembly at the beautiful Redwoods area of the Conference Center.

The main speakers described the impact of resource extraction — a new form of "Colonization" happening right now. This includes the plight of indigenous people when there is mining of tar sands (Alberta, Canada), testing and detonation of nuclear stockpiles (Mid-West USA), and fracking in the upper Amazon region on and near tribal lands.

They also spoke of the notable effect on psychology when cultural morays have been forcibly changed. Tribal women have suffered high rates of violence and murder, substance abuse, and suicide after the cultural influence of 'conquers' from Europe; it is three times the amount white women suffer today.

The National Catholic Reporter has summarized this event in a Global Sisters Report. Go to this link for more details: <http://globalsistersreport.org/news/environment/sisters-earth-convention-brings-together-women-committed-caring-planet-40951>

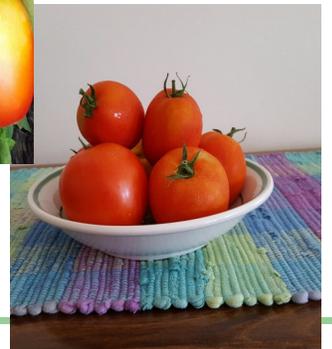
Assembly Directive: care of our earth's resources, stand with the marginalized, network with others

submitted by Marie Kopin

A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence and
your tender love.
Praise be to you! Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature
in your risen glory.
Praise be to you!
Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!
Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you

In the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.
God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good,
advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you! Amen.



Tomatoes from the plants in my back yard to my dining room table
—Marty Bertke

• **Assembly Directive: We will Act responsibly in the use and care of our planet's resources.**

Pope Francis has declared Thursday, September 1, 2016, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation



According to Pope Francis, “The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation”

Officially joining the Orthodox Church in this day of concern for creation, Pope Francis invites everyone — believers or not — to participate in both prayer and action.

“*Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.*” (*Earth Charter*, quoted in *Laudato Si'* par. 641)

PRAYER

Many will use the following prayer, found in the Pope’s encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*:

A Prayer for Our Earth (*Laudato Si'* following par. 68o)

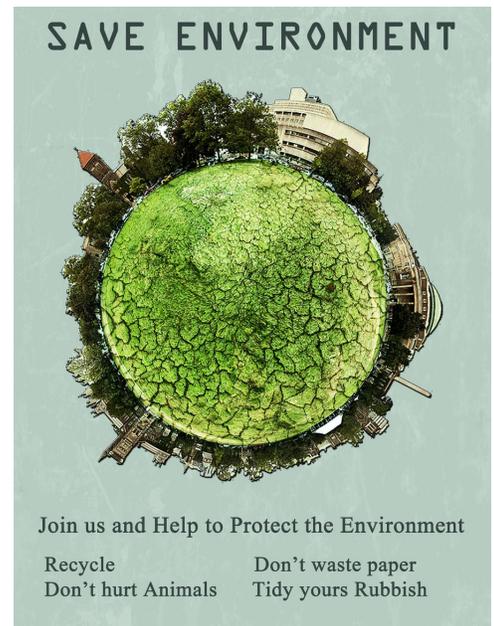
All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. Amen.

ACTION

Possibilities of action for living simply and sustainably are endless, but the ones below make a major impact. These actions interconnect with others, especially care of water:

1. Contemplate creation’s beauty, mystery, and interconnections, and rejoice in the divine presence living and acting in our world.
2. Vote for candidates proven to care for all creation, to resolve conflicts nonviolently, to assist the poor, and to increase love on our planet.
3. Lobby legislators on issues of importance for people and planet, such as:
 - invest in renewable energy; stop subsidies to fossil fuels
 - increase negotiating skills; stop expansion of weapons systems
 - reduce inequality
 - foster organic agriculture; stop monocrops and toxic chemicals

4. Reduce extraction and use of fossil fuels:
 - transition to renewable energy at home and work
 - reduce use of plastic, especially plastic water bottles and plastic bags
 - reduce gasoline use by reducing car and plane trips and staying below 60 on highways
5. Eat responsibly for the planet
 - reduce factory-farmed meat consumption
 - increase fair trade, organic, and local produce (and products)
6. Protect trees
 - reduce paper use
 - use 100 percent sustainable paper
 - plant trees and/or support groups that do



7. Reduce use of electricity
 - turn lights and fans off when not in use
 - reduce use of a/c, dryer, iron
8. Reduce consumerism
 - make do with what you have whenever possible
 - share when possible
 - buy recycled goods

What can you do to make a difference?



—AN ECO-PARISH GUIDE —BRINGING LAUDATO SI' TO LIFE

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Called to be 'border crossers'



How can the border-crossing spirit be applied to today's society?

Unlike the church's general ideal of religious life as monastic, women religious were active and mobile. In the early period time from 1727 to 1917, mission was the primary value of those women, and whenever they had conflicts with the hierarchical church – often the bishops – they left for new missions. In this way, the women religious in the U.S. lived the vocation of border-crossing, challenging the stable and cloistered life which had been forced upon them by the church. The great durability and capacity for mobility were foundational elements that constructed the identity of women religious in the U.S. The borderland was such a space for transformation and empowerment for the early sisters.

For the past 50 years, since the Second Vatican Council, women religious in the United States have tried faithfully to renew their religious life. The whole movement of women religious in the U.S. can be called a process of *Ressourcement*, *Development*, and *Aggiornamento*, which literally means going back to the source and adapting to the changed conditions of the contemporary world. In this radical movement, women religious have situated themselves at the borderland.

How can the border-crossing spirit be applied to today's society?

Just as some early sisters struggled with the race issue, trying to found communities for women of color, in the mid-20th century, as racial injustice grew less acceptable in the U.S., Catholic women religious were among the first to speak out and jump into action: Sisters of many congregations marched in the streets in Montgomery, Ala., and registered voters in Georgia; they provided education for children of color who were turned away from churches and schools; they ministered to immigrant communities; and they defended the rights of Native Americans to keep their land and maintain their cultures.

Yet, racism within communities of women religious was still prevalent. Most women religious preferred to maintain white communities than to reflect the multicultural reality around them. Furthermore, today we sense resurging racial injustice. Women religious must continue to fight for racial justice as well as to make their communities multi-ethnic and multi-cultural.

<http://globalsistersreport.org/column/trends/legacy-border-crossing-spirit-27891>

[Sophia Park](#) Jul. 16, 2015



send us your articles (approximately 125 words or less) for our next issue *Grassroots* is due **OCTOBER 1** so we can meet our goal of having it in your hands by **10/7/2016**.

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