

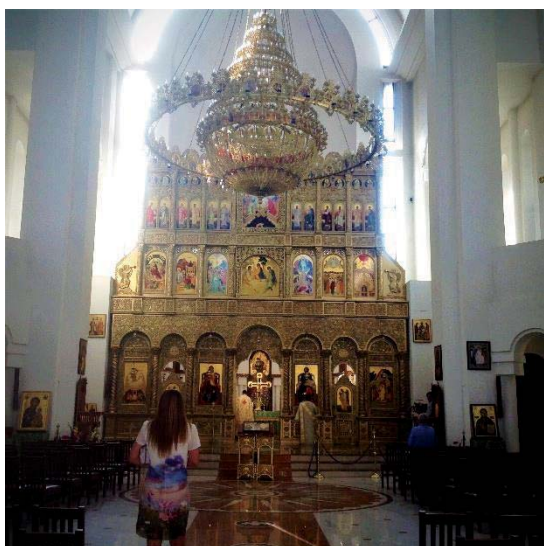


Franciscan Sisters Congregational JPIC Newsletter

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Romania: “Laudate Omnes Gentes”

By S. Lydia Fecheta



Orthodox Church in Timisoara

On September 1, the Liturgical year begins in the Orthodox Church. In Romania about 89% of the people are members of the Orthodox Church so this day is always celebrated with special prayers. The Orthodox Church has annually celebrated September 1 as a day of prayer for creation since 1989. In 2015, Pope Francis declared this a day of prayer for creation for the entire Roman Catholic Church as well. This year, for the first time, Pope Francis proclaimed September 1-October 4 the “Season of Creation”, when we pray and act together with the Church around the world for the care of creation. Under the theme “Laudate omnes gentes” we celebrated on September 4, in Caransebes, a Vespers with the special concern of the Church for the care of creation. With psalms and songs, we praised God for everything he had created—the plants, animals, the heights and the depths—and for all humankind. In the prayer “the Canticle of St. Francis” the deep connection between the Word of God and Creation in the proximity of nature shone forth. With the reading from the Book of Genesis, we were again told that everything that God has created is good. Everything that is created has a significance and is important for our life. In a time of silence, we meditated on the verses of the Canticle of St. Francis, and with the Magnificat we entrusted all creation

to the protection of the Mother of God. With the intercessions, we expressed our gratitude and joy for the richness of the earth, and asked God for the blessings of many people's concerns.

In our daily work and prayers, we remain deeply connected with our Mother Earth, which bears signs of suffering and wounding all over the world, but also reveals to us the beauty of God's presence.



Hay stacks near Caransebes



Beautiful sunflower field



Farmer in his horse drawn cart

Malawi: By Caring For Earth, Earth Cares For Us

By S. Raynelda Saragih



Learners and teachers of St. Francis school performed different activities to show their appreciation of hosting visitors and thanking the Sisters' community in Indonesia for they offer of Sister Flaviana to work and assist at St. Francis Orphan project based in Madisi.



Sister Klara introduced Sister Flaviana in the Madisi Parish



Other activities include poems and traditional dance (chisamba)

National Examinations



From September 17th to 19th the standard 8 learners were writing national examination. From St. Francis Primary School, there were 105 candidates. St. Francis is a cluster centre, which means students from other schools take their exams at our school. The other school hosted was Mtanila Primary school with about two hundred fifty candidates.

Commencing of third term

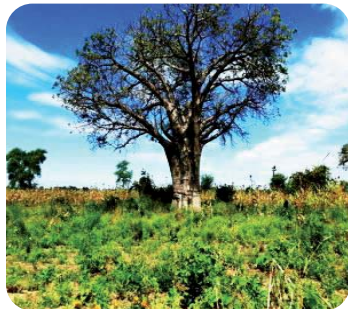


The third term, which is also the last term of the school year, started on 24th April 2017 with a total number of learners about one thousand five hundred. Since the term opened, the following activities were conducted: We have assembly every school day at 7:15am, then classes until 11am (thirty-five minute periods each). This is followed with extra classes as agreed per class. Interventions include

break time when all learners receive porridge and at noon they get lunch.

Charity works of the Sisters' community

Apart from teaching orphans, they also have other important duties such as caring for the sick, assisting the abandoned and the needy, caring for the environment, and provision of good health to different communities.



To work is to pray



After a long day of work in different aspects of life in general, we also relax. We take time to contemplate nature and interact with creation and one another.

Lord God you created the universe and all creatures visible and not visible. You also created human beings in your own likeness. You gave human

beings care over all creation. We ask you to give us happiness in your fullness so that we see in creation your glory.



Germany: Salzkotten Brings People Together

By S. Alexandra Völzke

The One World Circle organized by Dr. Waltraud Teigeler in Salzkotten was formed to explore ways to support women in the developing world to earn a living through the crafts that they create. Out of this was born the One World shop. The shop supports women artisans by importing their crafts and selling them at a just price, thus enabling the women to support their families. The shop was recently updated and so there was a little festival with interesting people, live music, finger food and new products from all over the world.



Dr. Teigeler and S. Bea Hernandez at the One World shop in Salzkotten

Last year a control group was founded on the initiative of the One World Circle Salzkotten, along with the support of the city, to prepare an application for Salzkotten to become a Fairtrade town. First, partners and supporters at the schools, retailers, restaurateurs and church representatives were quickly found. Political representatives had decided last year to support the effort by using of fair trade products in the Town Hall. At the beginning of the year the application was submitted. Five criteria must be met for the application as a Fairtrade town. In addition to the use of fair trade products in the Town Hall and the formation of a Steering Committee, five shops must be named that sell fair trade products. The number of shops required is based on the size of the city of Salzkotten. Also, three restaurants as well as a school, a club or a parish must be specified as using fair trade products. Educational activities by associations or schools and at least four media articles on the topic of fair trade are also submitted with the application. In April, the Steering Group received the information that the city of Salzkotten meets all criteria and was awarded the official designation as a Fair Trade Town. The official award ceremony in the city of Salzkotten took place on May 31. The Fairtrade Honorary Ambassador, Manfred Holz, handed over the award certificate and now the city of Salzkotten may bear officially the title of fair trade town. "We are very pleased with this award. The One World Circle took the initiative and campaigned for an application. The Fair Trade label stands for sustainability and a fair dealing with producers in developing countries. This designation makes visible these criteria for the customers. We have found many partners in Salzkotten supporting the sustainable idea ", so says Mayor Ulrich Berger.



Presentation of the certificate to the Steering Group (L to R.): Theresa Goedeke, Dr. Reinhild Allhoff, Mayor Ulrich Berger, Manfred Holz, Maria Theresia Möller, Miriam Arens, Ursula Sommer and Renate Plonka (photo on the left)
Mayor Ulrich Berger thanks Dr. Waltraud Teigeler for her Fairtrade town efforts with a basket of the Sälzer. (right photo)



Celebration of the World Day of Creation

that face us. This was a wonderful way to end the month of September which had been designated by Pope Francis as our Season of Creation.

The women of the evangelical community Salzkotten and the KFD St. Johannes and St. Marien were all invited to celebrate the World Day of creation. This day originated in Germany in 2011 in the work community of Christian churches (ACK) at the suggestion of the Orthodox Church. In Salzkotten, this day has been celebrated for 5 years. So, on Friday, September 29, 2017, about 50 women and 1 man gathered in the Evangelical Church and prayed for our endangered Earth and praised the creator for all benefits in Psalms, songs and dances. **After the prayer, everyone gathered in the rectory** for the possibility to exchange ideas at a dinner on personal and global challenges

USA: Wheaton Franciscans Celebrate Season of Creation and Season of Peace

By S. Beatrice Hernandez



This graphic was accompanied by the quote: From September 1 to October 4, Christians around the world are praying and caring for creation. It's the "Season of Creation" celebrated by Christian churches around the globe. Please join us as we praise God for the wonder of creation and reflect on how we can change our lives in order to protect creation for future generations.

From September 1 through October 4, the FCJM-US Province celebrated the Season of Creation, called for by Pope Francis. During this time, daily facebook posts were created by Covenant Companion Jeanne Connolly to remind all of us of the precious gift of creation which reveals the divine presence to us. Each post included a quote and graphic inspirational message.

From September 17 through October 8 the US Province also celebrated the Season of Peace. This season included the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis on Sept. 17, the International Day of Peace on Sept. 21, International Day of Non-violence on October 2, the Feast of the great peacemaker St. Francis on October 4, and the Feast of Mother Clara Pfaender who believed so much in the power of love. One special event that took place during this time was the Concert Across America. On Sunday, September 24, over 350 events were held in 43 states.



Harpist Laura Utley



Candle of hope (green), forgiveness (yellow), love (red), and peace (blue) were used to light the tapers of participants

At Our Lady of the Angels motherhouse, the US Province hosted its second annual Concert Across America to raise consciousness about gun violence in the US and to promote peace and non-violence in our local community, our country and around the world. The event consisted of an interfaith prayer service and harp concert, featuring beautiful, peaceful and healing harp music by professional musician Laura Utley. After a moving harp prelude, the service opened with an acapella rendition of *Finlandia* sung by S. Sylvia Wehlisch. S. Georgene Wilson began each of 5 segments of prayer with the sounding of the "singing bowl", which was followed by a wonderful harp solo, a brief prayer (from the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Christian traditions) and a few minutes of silent reflection. As we listened,

prayed together, and joined in silent meditation, each participant breathed in peace, love, hope and forgiveness and then sent this energy into the world. As the concert drew to a close, 4 candles were lit representing hope, forgiveness, love and peace. Each participant was invited to light their candles from one of these and place it in a box of sand, sending forth this energy of transformation. All voices then join our cantor, Melanie Teska, and the harpist in the song *This Is Our Cry*.

East Timor: Praying for Peace

By S. Marie Jose Gonzaga



On September 9, 2017 a group of FCJM associated young people conducted a prayer together about peace in the world. It was held at the grotto of Maria Golgota in Comora Dili, Timor Leste. The activities included pilgrimage to the grotto, a talk by S. Marie Jose about peace and unity, followed by the praying of the rosary for peace in the world. During the service, all present shared their thoughts and experiences about peace. The sharing was well received and enjoyed by all. This prayer service brought a renewed sense of peace to the hearts of all participants. Everyone appreciated the importance of peace in our own hearts, in the community, the Church and the country. The children left with enthusiasm to build unity for peace individually, in their families, communities, church and society.



Indonesia: Annual Meeting of FCJM Province of Indonesia

By S. Klementina Sinaga

22-26 September 2017 were special, grace-filled days for the FCJM Province of Indonesia. In Montelucio, the Indonesian Province held an annual meeting attended by DPP and motherhouse community along with representatives from 30 communities, including Timor Leste and Wera Flores. Also invited to this annual meeting were the Coaching Team in Indonesia and Timor Leste, the Warta Team, the Liturgy Team, the JPIC Team, the financial commission, the Polyclinic Balige feasibility study team to become the type D hospital. In addition, the FCJM Writers Team was also present, along with the DPP (Dewan Pimpinan Provinsi) advisory team, the spirituality of the congregation, the palm oil commission, Panti Pius Orphanage, Togizita Dormitory, YPHK, and the JECA Foundation. The Annual Meeting of the Province of Indonesia opened with a recollection guided by Father Elias Sembiring with the theme: *Go and be a blessing in the heart of the world*. Going and moving means daring to leave security zones, and ready to go out. Going out also means willing to take unsafe risks. We are called to dare to face new things even though worrying is scary. We want to adapt, to bring good to others in whatever we do. We believe that we are sent by Jesus to proclaim eternal life. The work of Franciscans, even those in high position, is not to play the power game, play the command game, but to be with others as equal with them, because all the work is sublime. Be a blessing in the heart of the world. Be blessed by human beings here and now. Francis says everyone is a blessing. As a follower of Francis, we must be with one another in love and service. Such was the direction given by Father Elias Sembiring.



On the second day until the third day, every team of the community reported about the progress experienced during the past year. On the fifth day of 26th September 2017, the participants of the FCJM annual meeting went on an outing, for a refresher after 4 days of intense meetings. The meeting went smoothly.

Brazil: Rural To Urban, Country to Country Migration Challenges Santarem

From an interview with S. Aleunice by S. Bea



Tapajós River near Itaituba is the site of the proposed Jatoba Dam

Changes along the Tapajós and Amazon Rivers are greatly affecting the ecology and people of the state of Pará in Brazil and contributed to the rapid growth of the city population. Construction of electric dams along the Tapajós River are still planned, with some already under construction. Three more large hydroelectric dams were proposed for the mainstem of the Tapajós River in the state of Pará – São Luiz do Tapajós, Jatobá and Chacorão. Together they would flood a total of 198,400 hectares (ha), including 11,000 ha of the Amazonia and Jurueña National Parks and over 23,000 ha of the Itaituba I and II National Forests. These dams would also have significant impacts on several indigenous lands and communities, including the Mundurucu, Apiaká de Pimental, Akaybãe, Remédio,

Sai Cinza, São Martinho and Boca do Igarapé Pacu. In August 2016, the federal government of Brazil cancelled licensing for the mega dam of São Luiz do Tapajós which was plagued by insurmountable legal obstacles: the flooding of indigenous lands that would cause the forced removal of indigenous Mundurucu people from the traditional Sawre Muybu territory – prohibited under Brazil's Constitution - and a series of other adverse social and environmental consequences of immense proportions that made it impossible to confirm the project's viability. Brazil's Environmental Minister Jose Sarney Filho recognized that the strident opposition of the Mundurucu, coupled with the irreversible environmental impacts of the São Luiz do Tapajós dam and the country's ample ability to meet its energy needs with clean alternative sources such as solar and wind power, made the project "expendable." Despite this conclusion, other dams are still planned. (taken from article from *International Rivers: People, Water, Life*)

The dam building, as well as the collapse of the rural jute growing industry, has lured many people in Pará away from the land and into the city hoping for work. Big agro-business companies offer to buy small landowners out of their property. These companies grow huge single crop farms (primarily soy) with the aid of herbicides and pesticides, which contaminate the land and nearby rivers, streams and groundwater supplies. Small landowners take the offered money, move into the city, and when the money runs out and they are unable to find work, they have nothing. They find themselves with no job, no place to live and no hope, which leads to hopelessness, fear and violence.

According to the United Nations, over 50% of the global population now lives in urban settings. In Santarém, as in many cities, the rate of urbanization has outpaced the local economy's ability to integrate the incoming population into the wage-earning economy of the city. In such settings, creating opportunities for subsistence livelihoods have become essential. Small home gardens, primarily managed by women, are used to support family units where under or unemployment is widespread. Only 1-2% of fruits and vegetables grown in these gardens are commercially sold as a form of income. The foods and other materials such as medicines gained by the flow of plants supports life in a city where there are not enough wage opportunities for those seeking formal employment. (summarized from *Urban agriculture in Santarém, Pará, Brazil: diversity and circulation of cultivated plants in urban homegardens*, by Antoinette WinklerPrins Perpetuo Socorro de Souza Oliveira) S. Raimunda is facilitating group

discussions in surrounding small towns about the importance of protecting the environment and the value of the person. The land sustains life and is not just a vehicle to get money.

The city of Santarem is presently expanding the Fluvial City Docks on the Amazon river to accommodate large ships. In addition to this, Cargill operates a private port near the docks, which has a storage capacity of 60,000 tons of soy. This dock was built by Cargill without the required environmental impact study. Its presence has greatly accelerated the clearing of rainforest and displacement of small farmers to make way for large soy plantations, now that transport of large volumes of soy is possible. In addition to the environmental damage done to facilitate massive soy production, it is feared that these large ships, and increased amounts of shipping, will contaminate the river on which many people depend for their livelihoods. Increased shipping has also led to a rapid increase in road construction within the city and surrounding area to accommodate the increased trucking of shipments from the river to other parts of Brazil. Road building has increased air pollution due to truck traffic and has displaced many poor people from their homes.



Adding to Santarem's rapid expansion difficulties is the recent influx of some 50 Venezuelan refugees. With their homeland suffering from economic collapse and growing food shortages with near starvation conditions, many have fled to Brazil for survival. These 50 refugees managed to make it to Santarem with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Some Franciscans gave them a temporary home in what used to be their novitiate house. They have yet to find jobs, permanent housing, and a way to feed their families. The government of Santarem does not feel responsible to provide for these

newcomers, and so far, the federal government has no response. For this reason, the Church is trying to do what it can to help those in need. Santarem has not faced this problem before and the situation is sure to test their hospitality, generosity and commitment to care for the least among them.

Netherlands: Care for the Poor and Care for Earth

By Mirjam Wolthuis

As mentioned in the July JPIC Newsletter, S. Bea and I had the privilege of visiting the Catholic Worker House in Amsterdam in July. There we learned that they are housing 6 refugee families, along with the core community of the Jeannette Noel House. The chapel is shared by the Christian core community and the several Muslim families who also use it several times a day. Most of the refugees coming to the Netherlands at this time are from the Middle East and north Africa—mostly Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. When they arrive in their new country, they are assisted by volunteers to find a place to live, learn basic Dutch language, and apply for asylum. Since they come with only the clothes on their backs, some of the Sisters help to knit caps, sweaters and scarfs for them. Some also help collect donations of clothes and basic household items which are taken to Noel House. After joining the core community for vespers, S. Bea and I had a wonderful meal with the Noel House residents. We greatly enjoyed the food and conversation.



S. Bea sharing supper with refugees and core community at Catholic Worker House in Amsterdam-Jeannette Noel House

At the Alverna motherhouse we have prioritized care of the earth in response to the Green Summit that we held over the last year. As a part of this effort, we have allowed the grasses to grow in a natural way. We have already experienced the return of coots (a type of small duck) and other creatures to the tall grass habitat along the canals. The beautiful flowers planted in the outdoor gardens and in flower boxes also provide nectar for bees and butterflies. All of these efforts are little ways that we can each make a difference to our planet home—Mother Earth.



S. Bea discovered a duck family building a nest along the canal in Ardenhout



Flowers at S. Auxeline's home in Voorhout