

April 2017

Volume 3, Issue 2

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

A social justice newsletter of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order St. Francis



Special Interest Articles:

- Finding Our Balance Post Election: Five Why Process
- Earth Day



Individual Highlights:

- The Changing Face of Immigration 2
- Earth Day 2017 3
- MLK, Jr. Day in Stevens Point 4
- Catholic Nonviolence Initiative 4
- International Women's Day 5
- Ecumenical Advocacy Days 6

Sr. Cecilia Marie Morton, Sr. Donna Wilhelm, Sr. Dorothy Pagosa, Jennifer Dillon, Sr. Marjorie White, Maxine Smith, Sr. Rose Grabowski, Sr. Shannon Fox
—Social Justice Committee

Our April Issue *by Sister Marge White*

As I was preparing this newsletter, I couldn't help but focus on our current national polarization. Therefore, I have included a process from the *Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue* entitled the **Five Why Process** that you may find helpful in conversing with one another, especially when we hold different views.

April is also the month we celebrate **Earth Day**. As Franciscan men and women we are committed to the care of this planet and all creation.

As the country continues to struggle with **immigration**, I have included an article from the Migration Policy Institute. I found it most informative.

I couldn't help but give a nod to the **International Women's Day** which was celebrated on March 8th. I found the basic values upon which the movement is based very interesting. I have included them for your reflection.

I hope that you find these and the other articles both **informative** as well as **formative**. ■

FINDING OUR BALANCE POST-ELECTION FIVE WHY PROCESS



The election of Donald Trump as President and the initial directives of his Administration have done very little to bring us together as a nation. In fact, they have made the divisions among us even more pronounced. As a people we seem to be traveling on separate landscapes which are beginning to move and could be on a collision course.

Many of us have been surprised to find ourselves on opposite landscapes from colleagues, friends, and family who made different choices. We are finding it difficult to

engage in conversations about the election and its aftermath and our attempts often end in emotional outbursts and disagreements. More often we avoid making the attempt.

This is a dangerous situation at the very time in our nation's history when we need to be engaging each other in healthy discussions and dialogue. We need to come to a greater understanding of each other, of what divides us and why, so we can begin to heal our wounds, acknowledge points of agreement, and move our

nation forward to a better place.

With that purpose in mind, the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue (ICCD) offers this suggestion for building bridges among the multiple landscapes by engaging in a process that accesses each person's emotions in a peaceful way that leads to greater understanding.

The *Five Whys* originated as a rational problem-solving process by the Toyota company in Japan. It was further developed by Peter Senge, a leader in

Continued on p. 2



Five Why Process continued from p. 1

systems thinking and adult learning. In *Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation and Dialogue*, ICCD chose to use the process in a different way by focusing the why questions on our emotions. We found that it allowed us to probe more deeply into why we feel what we feel in our experiences and decisions.

The process invites us to stay with the same emotion long enough to be surprised by what emerges within us. We hope it will help us come to a better understanding of each other and that this could be a first step in moving forward.

The process can be used with one person or in small groups. While the process will lead each person to a greater self-understanding another significant goal is for us to listen to and begin to appreciate the other's positions and concerns. In the process, there are no debates, arguments, or judgments.

The 5 Why Process

When I reflect on the election of Donald Trump as President and the initial directives of his Administration I feel

(write the emotion on this line)

1. Why do I feel this way (the emotion)?
2. And why does that (answer of #1) make me feel this way (the emotion)?
3. And why does that (answer of #2) make me feel this way (the emotion)?
4. And why does that (answer of #3) make me feel this way (the emotion)?
5. And why does that (answer of #4) make me feel this way (the emotion)?

Begin a conversation. When ready, close the process with a prayer of gratitude.

© Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue, 2017. Used with permission. ■

The Changing Face of Immigration



The recent focus on walling off the entire 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border, adding thousands of Border Patrol agents, and keeping “bad hombres” out obscures the quiet reality that has been unfolding at the Southwest border over recent years: Unauthorized Mexican inflows are down dramatically; rising Central American arrivals are seeking humanitarian protection, not evading detection; and flows are diversifying.

Apprehensions of Mexicans crossing the Southwest border without authorization dropped to a near 50-year low in fiscal year FY 2015, with the

186,017 arrests recorded that year a fraction of the 1.6 million peak hit in FY 2000. In FY 2014, unauthorized migrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (known collectively as the Northern Triangle of Central America) were encountered in greater numbers than migrants from Mexico, marking the first such occurrence. After a decrease in FY 2015, apprehensions from the Northern Triangle again outpaced Mexican ones in FY 2016.

Beneath this historic shift lies a subtler one: Not only have Central American arrivals at the border overtaken the traditionally dominant Mexican flows,

but the flows of foreign nationals arriving without prior authorization are diversifying, with growing numbers of Cubans, Haitians, and Africans and Asians of several nationalities.

This trend was particularly evident in FY 2016 when U.S. Customs and Border Protection recorded at least 55,000 arrivals without prior authorization through the first eleven months of the year by people from outside Latin America, the vast majority presenting themselves at ports of entry rather than seeking to evade detection. Most of these were Cubans and Haitians seeking admis-

Continued on p. 3

The Changing Face of Immigration... continued from p. 2

sion to the United States via preferred channels.

Although the overall flows at the border differ somewhat in their underlying drivers, timelines, and characteristics, they have all contributed to an increasingly complex situation at the U.S.-Mexico border and along routes through Central America and Mexico to the United States.

These migrants pose new immigration and foreign policy challenges for U.S. officials and regional governments, and are reshaping regional attitudes toward migration. As the Trump administration presses ahead with plans to seek congressional appropriation for billions of dollars to wall off the border and add new Border Patrol agents, the changing patterns of arrivals have important implications for current policy debates.

Regardless of actions by U.S. and regional governments, the push factors for many of these diverse flows will not abate

anytime soon. As Brazilian political and economic conditions continue to deteriorate, there is diminishing hope for a better life for the tens of thousands of Haitians still living there. Haiti itself is still recovering from Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 and the spread of cholera that followed.

While African and Asian migrants are also escaping poverty, thousands also flee persecution and apply for asylum in the United States. Though the flow of Cubans is somewhat different, in that it may have been motivated largely by pull factors, Cubans continue to struggle economically. Further, the pull factor of deep and intricate family ties in the United States, developed over a century, will not dissolve with the end of “wet-foot, dry-foot.” ■

Excerpted from Migration Information Source, the on-line journal of the Migration Policy Institute

“We embrace our immigrant roots and identify with the struggle of all people to find a home in this world.”

SSJ-TOSF Congregational Commitments
26th General Chapter

Begin Making Plans for Earth Day 2017

Earth Day will be celebrated this year on **April 22**, one week before the People's Climate Movement rally in DC.

Recognizing that education is the foundation of progress, this year's campaign is all

about environmental and climate literacy.

With a variety of [resources and toolkits](#), the **Earth Day Network** offers a great deal of useful information. Take advantage of these resources and learn more about greening our schools and

communities, composting, and much more.

Franciscan Action Network (FAN) urges members to get involved. Join an action near you or organize something on your own.

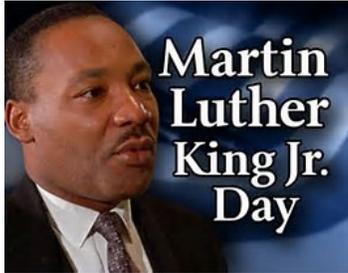
Only with everyone acting will we affect change. ■



FACT: If everyone in the world lived the way people do in the U.S., it would take five Earths to provide enough resources for everyone.

Just five countries—including the United States—create more than 50% of the global CO2 emissions. In 2010, the world produced nearly 34 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide from fossil-fuel burning, cement production, and gas flaring. Fifty-eight developed and developing countries have set [carbon reduction pledges](#) for 2020; however, it's projected that those pledges will still result in the planet becoming 3°C warmer.

Source: National Wildlife Foundation



MLK, Jr. Day in Stevens Point by Sister Rose Grabowski

Our 11th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Community Celebration was held February 27, instead of January 17, due to weather cancellation. This is an Interfaith Event, for which I am a committee member. In celebration of Dr. King, the day is held to recognize and honor his achievements.

Our speaker, **Stuart Stotts**, is an award-winning singer, author, and story-

teller. He has worked as a full-time performer since 1986, giving workshops for teachers, parents and librarians. Copies of his book, *We Shall Overcome*, based on the song that changed the world, were purchased and donated to the libraries of the area's cities and schools.

Each year Justiceworks, Ltd. awards a person who has made a difference in our community. This year's

awardee was Tiffani Kruger, a founding member of the non-profit Evergreen Community Initiatives begun in 2010, now serving as Committee Chair.

Tiffani, along with many volunteers, has served the Stevens Point community through such endeavors as *The Place of Peace*, *Food Fill Up*, *Movies in the Park*, *Smile for Christ's Sake*, *Tiff's Kids Closet*, *Tree Huggers* and the *Stevens Point Warming Center*. ■

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative, a project of [Pax Christi International](#), the Catholic peace movement, affirms that active nonviolence is at the heart of the vision and message of Jesus, the life of the Catholic Church, and the long-term vocation of healing and reconciling both people and the planet.

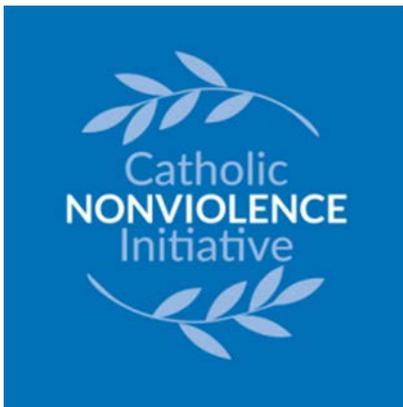
This bold effort was launched at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome April 11-13, 2016 and co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International, and other international bodies.

Lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests and bishops from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Oceania gathered to call on the Catholic Church to take a clear stand for active nonviolence and against all forms of violence.

In his message to the conference, Pope Francis said, "*Your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution.*"

The conference's statement calls on the Church to:

- **Continue developing Catholic social teaching on nonviolence.** In particular, we call on Pope Francis to share with the world an encyclical on nonviolence and Just Peace;
- **Integrate Gospel nonviolence explicitly into the life, including the sacramental life, and work of the Church** through dioceses, parishes, agencies, schools, universities, seminaries, religious orders, voluntary associations, and others;
- **Promote nonviolent practices and strategies** (e.g., nonviolent resistance, restorative justice, trauma healing, unarmed civilian protection, conflict transformation and peacebuilding strategies);
- **Initiate a global conversation on nonviolence** within the Church, with people of other faiths, and with the larger world to respond to the monumental crises of our time with the vision and strategies of nonviolence and Just Peace;
- **No longer use or teach "just war theory";** continue advocating for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons;
- **Lift up the prophetic voice of the church** to challenge unjust world powers and to support and defend those nonviolent activists whose work for peace and justice put their lives at risk. ■



International Women's Day – March 8th

Following were values highlighted in this year's march, celebrated March 8th.

JUSTICE

While the concept of justice may differ across cultures, the notion of justice is based on respect and equality amongst people. Justice means being afforded the same equal rights and opportunities as men. The call for justice across the world still prevails as women seek equal treatment, conditions and opportunities to that of men.

DIGNITY

Dignity, as a value, refers to the idea that all people have the right to be valued, respected and receive ethical treatment. The word is derived from Latin *dignitas* meaning worthiness.

HOPE

Hope is the feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen.

EQUALITY

Equality means ensuring all people have equal opportunities to make the most of their lives and talents, and that no one has poorer life chances due to their background or status – the very core of International Women's Day. Gender equality refers to women receiving and accessing the same

opportunities and benefits as men.

COLLABORATION

Strength in numbers and voice are critical in driving change. International Women's Day was founded on collaboration, and this continues to be a key element of its power to this day.

TENACITY

Around the world today, as in the past, exists an extensive number of groups and networks all working to improve the social, economic, cultural and political status of women – and International Women's Day is the major day for rallying action, driving visibility and applauding women who make a difference through their achievements.

APPRECIATION

International Women's Day provides a specific and designated moment each year to identify and celebrate the successful achievements of women. Through celebrating success, populations not only become more appreciative of the role women play in contributing to society but awareness and expectation is increased that women will not be margin-

alized, discriminated against or absent from future successes moving forward.

RESPECT

Equality can only be achieved if the diversity, differences and qualities of women are truly valued. Respect for others is a key value underpinning the ethos and agenda of International Women's Day. Respect for others and respect for self both play an important part in forging gender equality.

EMPATHY

Seeking to understand others, caring for and valuing diversity, and appreciating differences are key to forging deep relationships to affect change. It's through the ability to understand and share the feelings of others that differing situations and perspectives can be grasped.

FORGIVENESS

Throughout history women have been mistreated. Focusing attention and effort on the way forward, reconciling discrimination through encouraging awareness and banding together to affect positive change is all part of what International Women's Day stands for. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

- ❖ The world produces enough food to feed all 7 billion people, but those who go hungry either do not have land to grow food or money to purchase it. Fight hunger in your community by collecting food outside a local supermarket. Sign up for [Supermarket Stakeout GL](#).
- ❖ Only 3% of the **world's water** is fresh **water**, and two-thirds of that is tucked away in frozen glaciers or otherwise unavailable for our use. As a result, some 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to **water**, and a total of 2.7 billion find **water** scarce for at least one month of the year.



Save the Date for Ecumenical Advocacy Days

The theme of this year's [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) (EAD) is quite fitting, considering the year we have just had: **Confronting Chaos, Forging Community**.

Over the past year, our nation has experienced a divisive election season in which racism, xenophobia, and religious bigotry were a constant. A new time calls for new strategies.

We hope you'll join us at EAD this year from **April 21-24, 2017** to meet new people, learn new strategies and form strong networks that support and embolden us to meet the demands of this new time.

As people of faith we are challenged to speak and act boldly and courageously to end racism, materialism and militarism. We hope to see you there. Information on registering and housing is on the [EAD website](#). ■



Confronting Chaos, Forging Community
Challenging Racism, Materialism and Militarism

Annual National Gathering & Congressional Lobby Day
April 21-24, 2017
Washington, D.C.




[AdvocacyDays.org](#)

"We continue to influence our public officials to pass legislation that supports the human rights of all through email campaigns, public meetings, letter writing, phone calls, etc."

SSJ-TOSF Congregational Commitments
26th General Chapter

The **first day of spring** is one thing, and the **first spring day** is another.

The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month.

Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933)
Fisherman's Luck (1899)

#Mercy2Earth

The [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#) is organizing a unique initiative called [Mercy2Earth](#).

Working off Pope Francis' [message](#) on World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation last September, they have developed a campaign for Lent.

The campaign has two moments: **Lent** (March 1-April 13), a time for us to examine our own

lifestyle choices, and **#Mercy2Earth Weekend**, April 22-23, when two important celebrations take place, Earth Day (April 22) and Mercy Sunday (April 23). This will be a special weekend for Catholics to take action in their communities through advocacy, education, and prayer, to bring mercy to our common home!

More information can be found at their website [Mercy2Earth](#).

REMEMBER...

We welcome your submissions in the form of

- "Sightings"
- Brief write-ups of your activities, "prototypes," suggestions for workshops, books, articles, films, resources.

Note: The **next issue** of *We Commit Ourselves* will be published in **June**.

Please send any items for inclusion in this next issue to **Sister Donna Wilhelm** by **May 25th** – the feast of the Ascension.

~ Your Social Justice Committee