

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2023 | VOLUME 7 ISSUE 10



GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

- *Offering our Prayers for the People of Palestine & Israel*

Wherever we are, Mercy Global Action joins other Catholic religious organisations at the United Nations to undertake silent prayer for peace each day at 9AM, focusing our intentions on the people of Palestine and Israel. To help guide that reflection, we offer an excerpt from 'A Prayer for this moment' by Rabbi Alissa Wise. We encourage you to view the full prayer [here](#).

May the One Who Comforts hold all those grieving and traumatized and frightened for however long it takes

May the One Who Releases the Captive release all those caught and bound

May the One Who Makes Peace illuminate paths of peace for those seeing only paths of violence and vengeance

May the One Who Loves Justice fortify us to reinforce our solidarities with all those who share our vision of justice and dignity for all people

May the One Who Knows Hope instill in us the confidence to imagine wholeness, safety, and freedom for all people

May the One Who We Need be there for us as we waver and struggle, as we are confused and uncertain until we find solid ground once again

May the One Who Remembers allow us to hold in one hand 75 years of occupation, dispossession and violence and in the other a future of peace, justice and freedom

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS
ISSUE:

ANGELA REED RSM

CECILIE KERN

COLLEEN SWAIN

JEMIMA WELSH

MARIETTA LATONIO

ISABEL SALTER

ELEANOR MORELAND



At the United Nations

THROUGH OUR ECOSOC LENS...

• *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*

On October 17, the MGA team attended the official commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The turnout was spectacular and the atmosphere, upheld by impassioned speakers and moving musical performances, was one of hope.

This year's theme was 'Decent Work and Social Protection: Putting dignity in social practice for all.' We heard from a variety of young speakers about what 'decent work' means to them, many of whom are involved in Life Project 4 Youth - an international movement of local organisations which specialise in the professional development of excluded youth living in extreme poverty.

Speakers' definitions of 'decent work' included earning a fair wage that is well above the poverty line, receiving social protections for themselves and their families, working in safe conditions, feeling free to express their work-related concerns, enjoying a work-life balance, and performing work that does justice to their skills and is aligned with their aspirations. Some speakers shared stories of hope, having found work which fulfils them and upholds their dignity, while others, who remain unable to find employment or are working in exploitative conditions, made pleas for change.

Cynthia Samuel-Olonjuwon, Director of the International Labor Organisation (ILO) Office for the UN, closed the event with a strong call to action. "575 million people will be living in extreme poverty by 2030 if progress does not accelerate. There is a need to mobilise effectively... Should I say aggressively... To hold our leaders accountable [to the reality] that decent work and social protection constitute the most sustainable and dignified way out of poverty."





Reflecting on the testimonies shared that day, she continued, “Having a job does not guarantee a life of dignity. It does not necessarily free people from poverty. So when we focus on just creating jobs, we haven’t started. It has to be decent work.”

[You can watch the event livestream [here](#) on the ATD Fourth World Facebook Page.]

- *Release of Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Laudate Deum!*

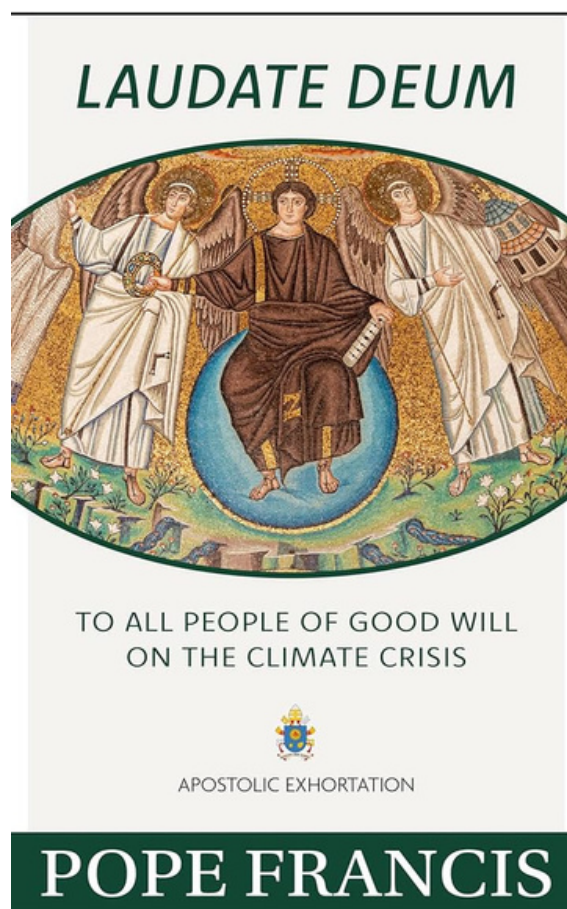
On the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and the last day of the Season of Creation, Pope Francis published Laudate Deum (“Praise God”), an Apostolic Exhortation building on his 2015 encyclical Laudato Si’.

There is an urgency to this letter, where Pope Francis writes, "Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point... It is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons." (2)

He comments on the causes of the climate crisis, including rebutting common objections made by people who would downplay or deny outright the severity of the threat posed by climate change. He also discusses the effects of continued climate inaction, especially on those rendered poor and vulnerable.

Pope Francis expresses disappointment in progress coming from past COPs, and describes the need for a revitalized multilateralism, that includes the meaningful contributions of civil society. He cites the Nobel Peace Prize-winning work of Sr. Denise Coghlan rsm and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines: "More than saving the old multilateralism, it appears that the current challenge is to reconfigure and recreate it, taking into account the new world situation. I invite you to recognize that “many groups and organizations within civil society help to compensate for the shortcomings of the international community, its lack of coordination in complex situations, and its lack of attention to fundamental human rights”. For example, the Ottawa Process against the use, production and manufacture of antipersonnel mines is one example that shows how civil society with its with its organizations is capable of creating

effective dynamics that the United Nations cannot. In this way, the principle of subsidiarity is applied also to the global-local relationship." (37)



As we approach COP 28 next month, we invite you to read this [new letter](#) and to reflect on ways that you and your communities can advocate for more urgent climate action. We also encourage you to view this UN Day Concert, '[The Frontlines of Climate Action](#),' featuring the [Environmental Symphony](#).



• *Sr Angela Reed rsm and Colleen Swain present at 2023 Mercy Education Conference*

Just one week after Pope Francis' release of *Laudate Deum*, Angela Reed rsm, Head of Mercy Global Action, and Colleen Swain, Leadership Development and Advocacy Associate presented at the [2023 Mercy Education Conference in Kingston, Jamaica](#). This year's theme was Earth Justice: Our Mercy Commitment to Care for Creation.

Angela Reed rsm presented the first Keynote, reflecting on the foundation of the commitment of the Sisters of Mercy to care for Earth and detailed the important work of Mercy Global Action and other Mercy initiatives promoting environmental justice.



Colleen Swain hosted a workshop on Environmental Justice as a Work of Mercy where participants unpacked questions such as "How can each of us commit to ecological conversion through our personal environmental practices and within Mercy schools?"

Participants also explored a [digital exposition](#) which featured a collection of activities and lesson plans focused on care for creation submitted by Mercy educators across the system. Read more about the [2023 Mercy Education Conference here](#).

- *Marietta Latonio and MELF Fellow, Theresia Tina, present at the International Federation of Social Workers Asia Pacific Conference*

On 5th November, Marietta Latonio (MELF Program Manager) and Theresia Tina rsm (MELF Fellow 2019-2021) presented at the IFSW Asia Pacific Social Work Conference in Cebu City, Philippines. Mayet and Theresia spoke to the theme of the conference - *The Sustainable Development Goals Halfway Point: Social Work's Contributions to Social Development* - by introducing the MELF Program and highlighting Theresia's MELF research on Degradation of the Earth and Waterways: Where have the Forests and Rivers gone in Oamug? To view Theresia's research, [see here](#).



- *Jemima Welsh presents at the Mercy Ministry Companions Conference*

Women's Leadership Development Associate, Jemima Welsh, recently presented at the second annual conference of Mercy Ministry Companions, the new Public Juridic Person (PJP) for the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISM PNG). The conference took place from 9-10th October at the Catholic Leadership Centre in Melbourne, Australia. This year's theme was 'Mercy Companions: Claiming our Identity'. Jemima spoke as part of a panel discussion on the subject of *contributing to our global Mercy community* and ran a workshop on understanding Mercy leadership through a modern lens. Read more about the 2023 MMC conference [here](#).



- *MELF Cohort 3 Fellows Reflect on Degradation of Earth...*



Webinar Two: Degradation of Earth



Sr Wendy [Flannery]'s presentation was an enlightening one with real example of what is happening in the world. Examples of extreme droughts in E. Africa is a reality to me. We are affected by floods in dry areas not to mention the prolonged droughts in North Eastern part of Kenya. The farmers are no longer able to predict weather for farming purposes. Displacement of people is felt in Kenya around lakes at the Rift Valley. Lake Nakuru's expansion for instance has led to displacement of hundreds of people from their homes. The floods reduced water salinity affecting the growth of the blue-green algae which is flamingo's main food source. Flamingos that took the largest portion of tourist attraction at Lake Nakuru flew to other parts of the continent in search of food. In June 2023, it was reported in the Kenya daily nation paper that Kenya lost 300 elephants in the recent drought. These are just but few examples of the effect of earth degradation on human beings and world life.

- Dinah Mwendwa (Cohort 3, Kenya)



As Sisters of Mercy, I agree with what Sister Wendy mentioned about responses to our vision and mission. We did respond and continue responding to those who are in need because of flooding and other calamities. As a community and together with our institutions (e.g Schools, hospital), involve in many different activities to care for the earth. To live in sufficiency is still a challenge. But most importantly, we need to get involved with organized actions pressuring governments and businesses to make decisions and choices that will not cascade the destruction but instead help in saving the earth. But we need to do this collectively. Just recently, the Conference of Major Superiors of the Philippines issued a statement in support of the people fighting against mining in Brooke's Point, Palawan. The statement called for the attention of the National Government and the mining company responsible in exploiting the place. There is power in being together.

- Sister Virgencita A. Alegado, rsm (Cohort 3, Philippines)



- *Updates from the MGA Women in Justice Leadership Task Force*

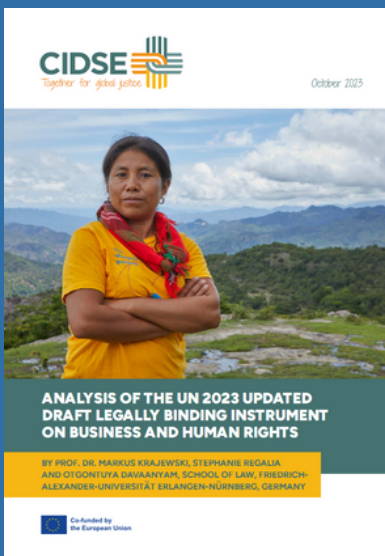
Members of the Women in Justice Leadership Task Force have continued to meet over the last few weeks to plan a targeted advocacy campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 Nov - 10 Dec) and the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This campaign will look at the common forms of violence experienced during the lifecycle of a woman, and put forward a range of best practice preventative strategies, policies and response programs from around Mercy World. The Task Force will also create a vibrant Instagram campaign to inspire conversation and change. Stay tuned!



“USEFUL RESOURCES



[Gaby Kinsman, Australia, reflects on her MELF Experience](#)



[CIDSE: Analysis of the UN 2023 Updated Draft Legally Binding Instrument on business & human rights](#)



[McKinsey & Company: Women in the Workplace 2023 Report](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS & INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAYS

- 1 November: All Saints' Day
- 11 November: Remembrance Day
- 20 November: World Children's Day
- 23 November: Thanksgiving in the US
- 25 November: International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which kickstarts the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 Nov - 10 Dec)
- 30 November - 12 December: COP28 - UN Climate Change Conference in United Arab Emirates
- 10 December: Human Rights Day & the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative fortnightly e-newsletter (MercyNews). Visit our website to discover more about MIA and our global activities: www.mercyworld.org
Subscribe to our e-newsletter to learn about our vision in action and the ministries carried out by our member congregations:

[\[Link\]](#)