

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

This month the MGA office spent much time abroad, with Angela Reed RSM making an in-country visit to Australia and engaging many Mercy Sisters and Associates in the theme of 'Breaking the Silence'. Using the MGA Mercy Justice Advocacy Approach, participants of numerous presentations and workshops were challenged to reflect on the experiences of the earth and community and then to work through various stages of analysis culminating in a commitment to action. Presentations were made at the Mercy AMSSA Conference, ISMAPNG Advocacy workshops, North Sydney Congregation Day, Parramatta Congregation Day and other events.



Photo Credit: Monte Sant' Angelo

Following the Australia visit Angela Reed RSM and Colleen Swain traveled to Cambodia where they led the Inaugural country immersion experience for the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship. A full report of the days in Cambodia can be read [here!](#)

As we are grounded in New York, we have been preparing for the 74th Session of the General Assembly, subsequent Climate Summit, and associated meetings. Read more about these meetings and ways in which Mercy Global Action will be engaging in these events on page 4.



THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

- *Season of Creation*



The month of September marks the Season of Creation, an annual celebration of prayer and action to protect creation. It begins on 1 September with a day of Prayer for Creation and concludes on 4 October, the feast of Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

As we continue through the Season of Creation, we stand with faith leaders around the world in saying we are "unite[d] as one family in Christ, celebrating the bonds we share with each other and with "every living creature on earth." (Genesis 9:10) The Christian family celebrates the season by spending time in prayer, considering ways to more sustainably inhabit our common home, and lifting our voices in the public sphere. This Season of Creation, we offer our reflections on the web of life itself, in the hope that they might provoke richer contemplation and deeper responses among us, brothers and sisters. We do it in ecumenical spirit and in acknowledging that Creation is given as a gift to all of us and that we are called to shared responsibility for its protection." (Read more [here](#)).

To guide us through each day of the Season of Creation, Mercy International Association has created guides filled with prayer, readings for reflection, contemplative videos, questions, and actions. Follow along [here](#) as we move into the third week.

- *MGA and Mercy to Earth Program*

To celebrate the season of Creation, Mercy International Association hosted a Mercy to Earth Programme at Baggot Street from 9-13 September. A number of speakers from around the mercy world gave input on their experiences in caring for our common home (See [here](#)). During the programme Sr. Angela Reed made an online presentation on issues related to the global water crisis. Drawing on the work of theologians Elizabeth Johnson and Cristiana Peppard, Angela outlined some overarching eco-justice concepts. Following this, participants viewed the movie trailer, 'Flow' and then engaged in a discussion on water justice, including the different advocacy strategies that Mercy Global Action has participated in. Angela concluded with a powerful quote from Indian Scholar and environmental activist, Vandana Shiva 'Today, we need to overcome a wider and deeper apartheid, an eco-apartheid based on the illusion of separateness – the separation of humans from nature in our minds and lives. This eco-apartheid is an illusion because we are part of nature and earth and not apart from it' (Vandana Shiva, Making Peace with the Earth: From a Destructive Anthropocene to a Creative Anthropocene, Guided by the Living Earth 2012)

- *Synod on the Amazon, What you need to know, and How to get involved*

In October 2019, a Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region will meet in Rome to discuss the theme "The Amazon: New paths for the Church and for integral ecology."

This is a timely meeting as situations for the earth and indigenous communities are "getting more critical in terms of violence, extractivism and other preoccupation situations". For resources on the October 2019 Synod to read our statement of support with Pax Christi International and others go to <https://justresponse.faith/synod-amazon>



THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- *Excerpt of Reflections during the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leaders Fellowship - Day 3 by Amy Thomas and Sr Theresia Tina*

The day was led with a prayer with the theme of “Welcoming” based on the main topic of the day on “Human Trafficking and Refugees.” The group reflected on the Gospel reading from Matthew 25: 35-40 with two questions; “When did you welcome someone into your space” and “when were you welcomed by someone else into their space?” There was robust discussion in pairs and then in the large group. The song “The Key of The Sea” accompanied the prayer.

Following this time of reflection, Sr Denise and members of her team in Cambodia led a panel on the theme of the day. The session began with exploring the different forms of displacement; including: refugees, asylum seekers, and those experiencing statelessness. A very moving segment of the panel was the sharing of stories by former refugees who had been displaced as a result of the Khmer rouge and the reign of Pol Pot in the 1970s. Experiences included stark conditions in prisons, having to completely abandon all possessions and walk for days with little food and water. It was very powerful listening to the experiences of victims of refugees and how they came to be where they are today. It was an inspiring session where we learned that the people who are marginalised themselves advocate for the good of others and help people to have a life with dignity and respect.

Some important facts that we heard during this session included:

- 1.2 million Cambodians go to Thailand to work, leaving their children back with grandparents.
- As refugees were returning to Cambodia in the early 90’s they were granted a form of reparations. They could choose between a plot of land, 50 dollars, or tools and a house. As much of the land still had active land mines, most chose the 50 dollars.

We were given resources including “Step By Step” and “Words From Faith” to help us reflect on the experiences of displaced people. And were asked questions such as what touched us and how we are moved to respond to these issues. Following our session on the stories of refugees and forced displacement we explored the international mechanisms that are in place to support refugees and asylum seekers. This led to a review of the the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees which was adopted by the United Nations in December 2018. We then moved into a discussion about displacement in our own countries and shared insights and concerns about the mass displacement of people throughout the world.



Photo Credit: Mercy Global Action

Read more daily reflections from the Mercy Global Action Emerging Leader Fellows at <https://www.mercyworld.org/newsroom/mercy-global-action-emerging-leaders-fellowship-melf-has-begun/>

At the United Nations **THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES...**

- *United Nations General Assembly to begin next week!*

The 74th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 74) will open on 17 September 2019. Each year in September world leaders of all 193 Member States gather together to make recommendations on international issues ranging from political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal, within their competence.

During the 74th Session, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene the 'Climate Action Summit 2019: A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win'. Starkly aware that global efforts to tackle climate change are running off-track, Antonio Guterres called the Climate Summit to mobilize political and economic energy at the highest levels to advance climate action that will enable implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Climate Summit, seeks to challenge states, cities, companies, and citizens to increase ambitions and actions towards Climate Change. Areas in which they are seeking action are: 1) social and political drivers of change; 2) transition to renewable energy; 3) industry; 4) infrastructure, cities and local action; 5) nature-based solutions; 6) resilience and adaptation; 7) mitigation; 8) finance and carbon pricing; and 9) youth and citizen mobilization.

The Climate Summit will commence on 23rd of September and greatly feed into the actions leading up to and our advocacy at the 25th Session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Read more about the Climate Summit **here**. Mercy Global Action will be attending the Climate Summit and a gathering of Faith Based Organizations on the Climate Emergency. Stay tuned!

Update on the **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



- *Mercy International Association Signs onto Global Fracking Ban Letter*

Leading up to the 74th Session of the General Assembly, Civil Society, led by Food & Water Europe/Food & Water Watch and the Breathe Project, has prepared an open letter to Secretary-General António Guterres calling on him to publicly demand a global fracking ban. An excerpt states:

"As you are aware, manmade climate change is the biggest and most comprehensive existential threat humanity has ever faced – apart from a nuclear war. Scientists confirm that we have maximum 10-30 years left to phase-out all fossil-fuels (including fossil gas) if we want to avoid overshooting significant climate tipping-points. Scientific evidence shows that methane emissions from gas extraction in general and from shale gas in particular are a significant driver of global warming and climate change."

This statement will be delivered to the Secretary General prior to the gathering of the United Nations General Assembly and Climate Summit. The statement further highlights a call to action regarding the 1) Negative climate impacts of fossil gas; 2) Environmental and public health implications of fracking; 3) Fracking supports polluting plastics industry and; 4) Fracking impacts human rights. The full statement can be accessed **here**.

MGA A WAY FORWARD...

As in past Newsletters we are featuring a section from the "MGA: A Way Forward" document. See [here](#).

UN ENGAGEMENT

The Sisters of Mercy have Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. This allows MGA to influence political decisions and to lobby for change at International, national and local levels. UN engagement requires visioning, planning and strategizing and oversight of the work in collaboration with the Mercy World. Leadership also requires navigating the dynamics and politics of complex international systems, networks, movements and alliances. Formal alliances over the long haul and learning intergovernmental processes are essential. This requires time devoted to understanding how the UN system (NY and Geneva) works, to responding to the changing environments, to collaborating with coalitions and preparing and coordinating advocacy positions. The UN operations in NY and Geneva are linked. Due to our focus on rights-based advocacy, we are using the Geneva system more often and with greater urgency.



Photo Credit: Mercy Global Action



“USEFUL RESOURCES

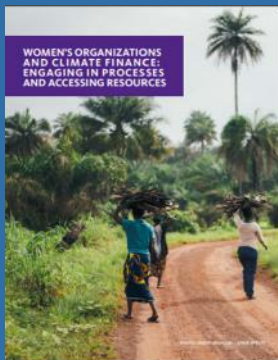
Season of Creation Toolkits -
Rahamim Ecology Center



Promising local practices for the
enjoyment of the right to health by
Migrants



Enhance Women's Organizations Role
in, and Access to Climate Finance



Faith For Forests with Dr. Jane
Goodall



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 1st September - 4th October - Season of Creation
- 16th September - International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 21st September - International Day of Peace
- 21st September - Colleen Presenting at Mercy Day Celebrations in Hartsdale
- 21st September - Angela panelist at 2019 General Assembly of Talitha Kum in Rome
- 24th September - Angela at Mercy Day and 25 year celebrations of Mercy International Association in Dublin
- 24th September - Colleen attending "Climate Emergency: Faith-based Organizations Raising Ambition - Leaving No One Behind"
- 26th September - International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
- 1st October - New Mercy Global Action Intern to begin
- 2nd October - International Day of Non-Violence
- 7th October - World Habitat Day

Mercy International Association (MIA) maintains a comprehensive and up to date website and produces an informative weekly 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: www.mercyworld.org/subscribe