

MERCY GLOBAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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GREETINGS FROM THE MERCY GLOBAL ACTION OFFICE!

“Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks. Listen to your heart, it knows.”

— Native American Proverb

The above Native American Proverb touched me deeply as I pondered the current world circumstances. The world has been facing the greatest health pandemic since the time of the Spanish flu and we know that whilst the COVID-19 virus does not discriminate, its impact is greater on those who have been rendered poor. We remember and pray for all who have died as a result of COVID-19, and we pray for a regeneration of life as we move forward.



These past weeks have also brought about a heightened awareness of racism, exposing deeply entrenched discrimination and marginalisation that exists not only in the United States but globally. Witnessing the video footage of the death...

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THEMATIC AREAS

DISPLACEMENT OF PERSONS

- *Listen to the wind, continued*

...of George Floyd leaves one feeling weak, in disbelief and horror. We pray in particular, for African Americans, and for all people of colour who are feeling the pain deeply. May all of humankind stand in solidarity and bring about change, so that all will be recognised for their inherent value and dignity.

As 'business as usual' has come to a grinding halt and we are called to look deeply into the state of our world and our own values, I find myself called to 'listen to the heart'. This week, I experienced a movement of the heart in two meetings that I attended. The first was during the meeting of the Mercy Global Action COVID-19 response taskforce. In this meeting we listened to many stories from around the world, reflecting on the impact that this pandemic has had on people and earth. As a group 'our hearts were moved', articulating that a mercy response evokes compassion, empathy and action.

Likewise, in a meeting with the Mercy Global Action Fellows, we found ourselves moved to tears by the personal sharing of one member of this unique community who, as an African American woman fears for the futures of her children and grandchildren. Many of us were speechless, recognising that no words of consolation would be adequate. Instead we listened to our hearts and in a unique way were able to offer empathy and a sense of solidarity.

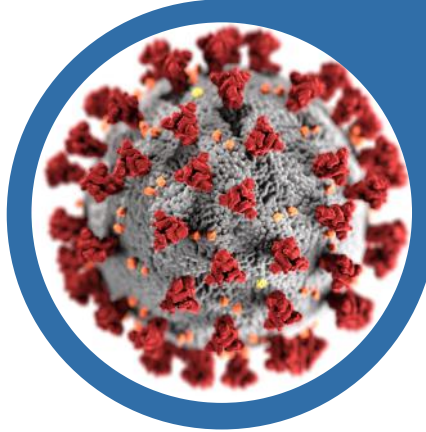
As people of Mercy, we continue to grapple with injustices throughout the world and know deep in our hearts that the only way forward is to work for the liberation of all, so that earth and every human may truly flourish.

-Angela Reed rsm, Head of Mercy Global Action -Mercy International Association

- *Angela Reed rsm Presents on Human Trafficking During COVID-19*

On May 29th, Angela Reed rsm presented on ACRATH's webinar "Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery – what are the facts especially in this time of Pandemic and what would Catherine McAuley be Saying?".

To access this webinar and learn more about the global implications see: <https://vimeo.com/423041576>





THEMATIC AREAS

DEGRADATION OF EARTH

- Do You Hear the Cry of the Poor?: Mercy Global Action's Participation in Laudato Si Week*

The world joined in prayer on the 24th of May on the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si. As we prayed, “open our minds and touch our hearts, so we may be attentive to Your gift of creation” we came to the end of a week of prayer, reflection, and education.

[1] Since Pope Francis published Laudato Si, we have been living into the call to care for our common home. By integrating spirituality, science, and social justice we seek to engage in a holistic and integral approach to caring for creation.



Catherine McAuley said, “The poor need help today, not next week.” Catherine’s sense of urgency stemmed from the harm she witnessed because of the lack of education, healthcare, and job opportunities. Today, we can see how the care of our common home is closely linked with the care of “the poor, sick, and ignorant.” We now count Earth among the poor and sick. Furthermore, Laudato Si connects the cry of the poor with the cry of earth, and the degradation of Earth affects the poor and most vulnerable among us first. Global temperatures rose 1.1°C due to pollution and is expected to rise to a catastrophic 3.2°C.[2] Already, we bear witness to increasingly devastating extreme weather events, rising sea levels, the loss of biodiversity, and an increased risk of zoonotic diseases like the coronavirus. Individuals and families who are forced from their homes due to the devastation from extractive industries, pollution, drought, and the loss of crops and livestock are already part of our global reality. This is the cry of the poor. This is the cry of Earth.

Laudato Si week held this cry in prayer and reflection, beginning with a two-day online retreat and a workshop on eco-spirituality with the Global Catholic Climate Movement. Prayer and spirituality root us in our advocacy and strengthen us all for the work ahead, as does our biblical call to stewardship. In a subsequent Laudato Si Week webinar on Advocacy, Cardinal Turkson discussed Pope Francis’ use of the term the gospel of creation. Creation, like the four written gospels, draw us into the story of God’s wondrous acts of love and salvation. Creation, the ever-evolving work of God, not only supports our human family, it also connects us to all living things.

The importance of understanding and integrating eco-spirituality and the science of climate change forms the base for our long-term conversion. Prayer and reflection alone are not enough to move people to action. “While we place our confidence in God, we must act as if success depended on our own exertions” (Catherine McAuley). The ...



Do You Hear the Cry of the Poor? Continued...

Laudato Si Week webinar on Sustainability highlighted the actions needed to preserve creation for the good of all now, and for future generations. Catholics, united by the call of Laudato Si, can create a more sustainable world. Dan Misleh, from Catholic Energies, shared success stories of converting churches to sustainable power. The sustainable projects not only save thousands of dollars in energy costs but work to protect our planet. Another story of hope came from Father Dario's work in Brazil with local communities facing displacement and pollution from mining companies.

Through uniting local communities and empowering the people, the grass-roots level made progress in their struggle to protect their towns, livelihoods, and seek greater corporate accountability. Last, in the Advocacy webinar, Anja Appel shared her work with the Austrian Bishop's Conference to divest from fossil fuel investments. She stated, "the investing of money is not ethically neutral... purchasing is always a moral act."

Everything from everyday acts, to corporate investing, and international advocacy matters in our ministry to save our common home and all life. God's call to be good stewards of creation takes on new life within our charism of Mercy and in the context of Laudato Si. Now more than ever, the call of the gospel of creation must not be ignored. "The way in which [we] relate to the earth is a test of the way we relate with God, just as it is when [we] respond to the poor, the hungry, the lonely, or the imprisoned." [3] The people, creatures, and resources of Earth are all integrally connected. We live only because we are cradled by the web of life God wove out of creation. Seeking to continue the work of Mercy begun by Catherine, we must now hold creation among the poor and sick whom we seek to serve.

Footnotes:

[1] "Common Prayer for the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si'." Laudato Si' Week 2020.

<https://laudatosiweek.org/prayer/>

[2] "Emissions Gap Report 2019: Global Progress Report on Climate Action." UN Environment Programme. 26 November, 2019.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/emissions-gap-report/2019/>

[3] Grey, Carmody. "Theological Imaginings: Mercy and the Degradation of Earth." Mercy International Association. <https://www.mercyworld.org/about/our-initiatives/mgp-themes/segment-2/theological-imaginings-degradation-of-earth/>



THROUGH OUR ECOSOC EYES...

- *Working Group to End Homelessness COVID-19 Statement*

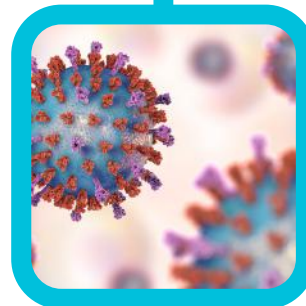
In response to the current coronavirus pandemic, Mercy Global Action has co-signed a [statement with the Working Group to End Homelessness](#). The statement highlights the needs of people experiencing street homelessness during this health crisis and the invisible homeless who survive in inadequate housing. As we continue advocacy for the human right to adequate housing, we must elevate the voices and concerns of people who are being left behind by States' coronavirus response and recovery plans.

Everyone is familiar with the precautions necessary to stay safe during the pandemic. We must stay home, use PPE, practice social distancing, and isolate if exposed. For people experiencing street homelessness or inadequate housing these life saving precautions are not possible. Many people do not have a home to stay in, others rely on shelters where social distancing and isolation are impossible. Additional health concerns often affect people experiencing homelessness and that will raise their risk of contracting the virus.

As we continue to examine the impact of the coronavirus, we must also look at this through a gendered lens. Inadequate housing includes women and children living in violent and abusive situations. Violence has escalated during the quarantine as women and children are isolated with their abusers and cut off from support systems. Resources, such as domestic violence shelters, must be recognized as essential and be made available during the pandemic.

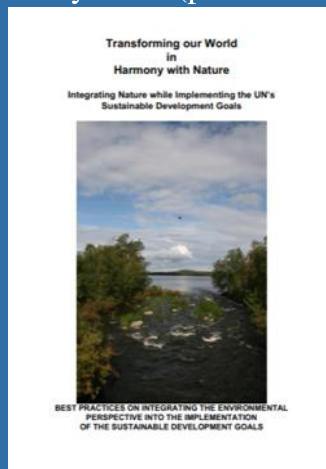
Leilani Farha, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, stated “housing has become the frontline of defense against the coronavirus. Home has rarely been more of a life or death situation.” In response to this crisis the WGEH calls for:

- A centralized and coordinated approach led by governments to ensure efficient and equitable deployment of all resources. This approach should include NGOs, faith communities, and other service providers as partners.
- Counts of people on the streets and in communal shelters to establish the appropriate number of isolation/quarantine spaces using creative methods such as hotel rooms, vacant housing, etc.
- As immediately as possible and focusing first on areas with high levels or “hot spots” of street homelessness and in slums, screening of people for COVID-19 symptoms and testing where possible, and movement of people off the streets and out of communal shelters into isolation/quarantine spaces. Ideally, these spaces are self-contained rooms with attached bathrooms.



“USEFUL RESOURCES

Transforming our World in Harmony with Nature: SDG 15 Terrestrial Ecosystems (p.103-117)



Faith, Life and Ministry Education (FLAME) Webinar for 2020



Video: UN-Habitat Executive Director, Maimunah Mohd Sharif on the COVID-19 Response Plan and Campaign



UPCOMING EVENTS AND INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 5 June World Environment Day
- 7 June World Food Safety Day
- 8 June World Oceans Day
- 12 June World Day Against Child Labour
- 15 June World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 17 June World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- 18 June Sustainable Gastronomy Day
- 19 June International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict
- 20 June World Refugee Day
- 21 June Solstice
- 23 June International Widows' Day
- 26 June International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- 26 June United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- 11 July World Population Day
- 18 July Nelson Mandela International Day
- 28 July World Hepatitis Day
- 30 July World Day against Trafficking in Persons

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

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