

## Some reflections on the *Call to Solidarity*, by S. Ann Scholz



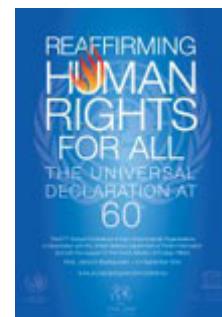
Circumstances of late have focused my thinking and prayer very clearly on our commitment to transformative education and caused me to ask repeatedly: What do we mean when we say, “. . . education is our response to the cries of Creation, the concrete expression of our solidarity with all”?

It is certainly not a new idea for us. Blessed Theresa, a woman grounded in her own historical reality, chose education as the vital gift her community would offer to God’s people for the transformation of her society 175 years ago. Can we do any less today?

Education is our contribution to the transformation of our 21st Century World. It is our part in the global effort to eradicate poverty and enable children to develop their full potential. Education is the way that we empower women and ensure the health and well-being of mothers and their children. It is how we fight disease and heal Earth. Education is how we build community across barriers and boundaries. It is how we struggle to establish peace with justice. Education is our gift to God’s world, our answer to the crises of our times, our response to the cries of creation, and our concrete expression of our solidarity with all.

## Reaffirming Human Rights for All

SSND delegates to the [61<sup>st</sup> Annual DPI/NGO Conference](#) Sisters Margrit Höpfler (Bavaria); Rachel Michalik (Poland); and Carol Jean Dust, Kate DuVal, and Irene Ksiazak (General Council) joined Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur Scholastica Anokwulu (Nigeria), Lucie Batuyanganese (Congo), and Marie Angele Kitewo (General Leadership Team) for a two-day pre-conference workshop that explored the mission and ministry of religious congregations affiliated with the UN. The workshop, led by NGO representatives Ann Scholz, SSND and Joan Burke, SND introduced participants to the intricacies of the UN and the daily work of congregations who seek to educate, advocate, and mobilize in order to establish more equitable and just societies.



They then joined more than 1,200 representatives of NGOs, governments, and the United Nations for the September 3-5 DPI/NGO Conference held at [UNESCO](#) Headquarters in Paris. Throughout the conference speakers repeatedly reminded those present of the key role that NGOs play in promoting and protecting human rights. At the opening session former French government minister, human rights advocate, and holocaust survivor Simone Veil said that it was the calling of NGOs to act when governments remained “impervious to the needs and sufferings of their populations.” That message was echoed at the closing ceremony, when Colombian-French politician and former political prisoner Ingrid Betancourt underscored via video conference the importance of NGOs in defending human rights: “Your voice is so important. I am here today because of your actions.”

## Called to Solidarity in a Globalizing World by Tim Dewane (ML)



Ghana, West Africa was the site of the 7<sup>th</sup> *Shalom* International Meeting of the School Sisters of Notre Dame from August 21-27, 2008. Every two years the *Shalom* international coordinator, the general council liaison, the five *Shalom* branch representatives, and the director of the UN/NGO office gather to dialogue, evaluate, and plan for the *Shalom* Network.

Sisters of the District of Africa welcomed everyone with Ghanaian hospitality. The three Ghanaian SSNDs creatively shared information about the host country. Visits to SSND ministries in Cape Coast and Nsawam deepened appreciation for the ongoing dedication of the sisters.



The theme of this year's gathering was "Called to Solidarity in a Globalizing World." Time spent at Kakum Rain Forest, the Cape Coast slave trade castle, and a centre for some of society's most marginalized certainly heightened awareness of the tremendous challenges caused by poverty, modern day slavery, and the devastation of Earth. The group discussed ways to foster *Shalom* as a way of life and to strengthen international networking through *Shalom* clubs.

After prayer, reflection, and dialogue, the group chose a common focus for the next 2-3 years: **Challenged by our global reality and the *Call to Solidarity*, the *Shalom* International Network commits to being an instrument of hope, formation, and action for the authentic living of solidarity, a *Shalom* way of life.**

Three action commitments were identified to carry out that focus: to promote solidarity with the global community through congregational participation in three international days (World Environment Day, International Day of Peace, and Human Rights Day); to commit to formation and action focused on "Education of All," with a particular emphasis on realization of the second and third Millennium Development Goals; and to deepen a spirituality of solidarity.

## JPIC Workshop Held in Poland by S. Adrianna Modelska and S. Chiara Burzyńska (PO)



Twenty-two SSNDs and 37 members of other religious congregations and their volunteers from Poland participated in a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) training workshop in Warsaw, Poland from June 23-27. The workshop invited religious and lay volunteers to consider the Social Teaching of the Church in light of the challenges of the present and to actively participate in the JPIC mission of their own congregations.

The workshop was organized by JPIC coordinators from Rome: Roxanne Schares SSND, Seamus Finn OMI, and Joseph Rozansky OFM. They worked closely with three coordinators in Poland: M. Leokadia Adamus SSND, Andrzej Jastrzebski OMI, and Samuel Ceglowski OFM and in collaboration with the Faculty of Missiology at Warsaw's University of Cardinal Stephan Wyszyński. Lectures and discussions included JPIC and present challenges, the social mission of the Church and spirituality of JPIC, moral challenges of globalization, the ecological crisis, and Poland in relation to the European Union.

The gathering gave participants the opportunity for mutual sharing, networking and collaboration among congregations in Poland in promoting JPIC values on national and international levels. The workshop fostered increased understanding of how deeply JPIC values are rooted in the Gospel and present in our everyday work according to the specific mission of each congregation. It also challenged members to be more open to the fast changing reality of the world, more in solidarity with those who are in need, and more willing to work together for a more just and peaceful world.

### **Solidarity Run** by S. Margrit Hopfler (BY)

The Dr. Johannes Decker-Gymnasium, a girls' school of the Diocese of Regensburg in Amberg, Bavaria, held a "Solidarity Run" on July 25. About 500 students from the ages of 11 to 17 participated and raised Euro 4,700. The funds will be given to young women in El Salvador, to parents of children with cancer, and to MISEREOR and Bread for the World, charities of the Catholic and Protestant churches.



A member of the *Shalom* club and a sports teacher organized the event and motivated the classes to participate. Students and teachers obtained sponsorships for their running. A minimum requirement of the "Solidarity Run" was three rounds of 1.2 km each. Many girls completed from 12 to 20 rounds. The event took place along a river with lawns, paths, and space for the monitoring groups, for refreshments, and for the girls to sit, relax, and talk between rounds.

At the end of the morning, the three classes with the highest number of rounds received prizes. This "Solidarity Run," like the one held two years before, was an enjoyable experience for all who participated, and that joy is now being shared around the world.

### **Shalom in the Latin American Branch** by S. Susana Tomatti (AR)



Sisters of *Shalom* Latin America Branch address many of the violations against justice, peace, and the integrity of creation through their ministries and other activities, campaigns, and marches. They noted the exploitation of women, trafficking, child prostitution, hunger, malnutrition and the high rate of infant mortality, deforestation in the Amazon and northern Argentina, and environmental degradation.

The Branch covers the South America Major Area (SAMA): the provinces of Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo in Brazil and Argentina, and the District of Latin America (Guatemala, Honduras, Puerto Rico, Peru, Chile, and Paraguay). The sisters committed themselves to raise awareness of the MDGs in order to implement concrete actions in accordance with the 2006-2008 Goal of the *Shalom* international network.

The Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida, Brazil in May 2007 inspired many. The bishops urged the contemplation of the faces of those who suffer, saying that globalization without solidarity adversely affects the poorest sectors. "We feel a strong call to promote a different globalization, marked by solidarity, justice, and respect for human rights, making Latin America and the Caribbean not only the continent of hope, but also the continent of love." (Aparecida 64)

The sisters declared themselves in solidarity with those who suffer most, creating consciousness of the need for the care of all Creation. Finally, they have committed themselves to the *Call to Solidarity*, welcoming a new moment in our history as an international congregation: “Called to solidarity with all of Creation, we are ready, personally and communally, to risk everything that we are and all that we have for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ.”

### **Invitation to Join SSND Delegations to the UN**



Did you ever consider how your life and ministry is related to the work of UN [ECOSOC](#) Commissions? Have you ever wanted to become more involved in SSND ministry at the UN? You can start by learning more about the issues before the Commissions and taking that agenda to prayer. If you have information or comments related to the Commissions’ agendas or would like to join a delegation, please contact Ann Scholz, SSND at [ssndunngo@earthlink.net](mailto:ssndunngo@earthlink.net).

#### [Commission for Social Development](#) (CSocD) February 4-13, 2009

The Commission’s work focuses on the implementation of the [Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action](#) and is primarily concerned with social justice and the promotion of people-centered development. [The 47<sup>th</sup> Session](#) of the Commission will focus on social integration.

#### [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) March 2-13, 2009

The CSW is dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women. The [53<sup>rd</sup> Session](#) of the CSW will focus on the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. This year the SSND delegation will include young women from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

#### [Commission on Sustainable Development](#) (CSD) May 4-15, 2009

CSD promotes dialogue, elaborates policy options, and builds partnerships for sustainable development. [CSD-17](#) will focus on policy development in the areas of [agriculture](#), [rural development](#), [land](#), [drought](#), [desertification](#), and [Africa](#).

#### [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) (PFII) May 18-29, 2009

The Permanent Forum is an advisory body to ECOSOC with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health, and human rights. Its [8<sup>th</sup> Session](#) will consider climate change, bio-cultural diversity, and livelihoods as well as the stewardship role of indigenous peoples.

### **Stand Up and Speak Out *against* Poverty and *for* the MDGs—October 17-19, 2008**

Join millions worldwide as they [Stand Up and Take Action against Poverty](#) and for the [Millennium Development Goals](#). Last year, hundreds of SSNDs were among the over 43 million people who stood up to demand that world leaders keep their promises to end poverty and inequality. This year, help send an even louder message to governments. Join the global movement of people who refuse to stay seated or silent in the face of poverty and broken promises. Information and materials are available in [English](#), [German](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Spanish](#).

