

Solidarity Reflections: Peace by S. Cynthia Brinkman, (SL)



It would seem that there are moments in life that carry a gentle invitation from a deep well within. One message for me repeats itself each time I pray the Agnus Dei at Eucharist. Tears and a tightening of my throat accompany “have mercy on us” . . . “grant us peace”.

Over many years I have attended to this presence and am learning step by step to follow the path toward peace.

At times I resist the call toward non-violence. What follows is an internal struggle to silence this grace and give myself permission to spew out negative energy, feeling justified in doing so. Being present with women and men who are more advanced than I in living non-violently, teaches me to be peace, to work for peace in our deeply troubled world.

Today, as I write this reflection, we remember the bombing of Hiroshima by the United States. Forty-five years ago as our Sister Joan Conrad was returning to her beloved Japan, she said something like: “I return to ask forgiveness through my living among the Japanese people.”

I join Joan and countless others in working for peace on our planet home. Our SSND call to solidarity with all Creation requires this. Thomas Berry echoes this as he “calls us from the period when humans were a disruptive force on the planet Earth to the period when humans become present to the planet in a manner that is mutually enhancing.”

S. Eileen Reilly to Assume Leadership of SSND UN Office



The General Council has appointed Sister Eileen Reilly (AM) to a six-year term as Director of the SSND UN-NGO Office. S. Eileen brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the position. She has been involved in various ministries for justice, peace, and integrity of creation for more than 30 years; first in parish and university settings and then as Director of the JPIC/*Shalom* office for the Atlantic-Midwest Province.

Sister Eileen already knows more than most about SSND ministry at the United Nations having attended numerous UN meetings both in New York and abroad. She has participated in many of the annual NGO-Department of Public Information Conferences and represented the congregation at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerances in Durban South Africa.

More recently S. Eileen has helped to organize SSND delegations to the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women. In that capacity she not only represented the Congregation, but also helped to orient other members of the SSND delegation and facilitate their participation.

“My biggest dream for our SSND ministry at the UN is that it will continue to extend to a wider and wider constituency, allowing more and more of our sisters, associates, colleagues and students the opportunity to participate,” she said, “As our congregation continues to challenge us to a deeper appreciation of our internationality and what it can mean for our

world and as we strive to ‘link our ministries across the world,’ I think our work at the UN can be a powerful part of this process.

Sister Eileen will work with the current director, S. Ann Scholz, from mid-August until she assumes the directorship on October 24, 2010.

Slovenia Kindergarten Founded on *Shalom* Values by S. Marjetka Jeralic (SI)

The Slovenian Province of the School Sisters of Notre Dame founded its first kindergarten on September 1, 2009 in Ilirska Bistrica. It is named “[Antonina](#),” after Blessed Sister Maria Antonina Kratochwil a Polish martyr of World War II and patron of the International *Shalom* Network. The kindergarten fosters Christian values and makes every effort to incorporate *Shalom* goals, values, and activities into the program.

The vision of the kindergarten is a world full of love, peace, justice, and solidarity. The children are provided a safe, warm, and homey environment where they feel accepted and loved. Education is based on values, such as gender equality, tolerance, respect, solidarity, responsibility, non-violence, and fairness. During the daily “morning circle”, everyone holds hands as a way of hugging the world and sings a song of peace, joy, and presence of God in and among us. The children express spontaneously their prayers and wishes for peace, a nice day, and good community.

The children are of diverse nationalities. Each day is an occasion for everyone to learn in a practical way to accept a different culture, language, religion, and way of thinking. Some children are from migrant families. Through talks, workshops, celebrations, and personal contact, these families are assisted with integration into the local culture. Teachers who are especially sensitive to children experiencing difficulty in their family setting enlist the local social services for assistance.



Kindergarten activities are published in local papers and professional journals, thus the educational methods, values, the life and ministry of School Sisters are presented to a wider public. On International Day of Peace, September 21, 2009, the children celebrated with songs of peace, learned about countries where there is war, and made peace doves with a prayer of peace to take home. Encouraged by Caritas Slovenia, the kindergarten joined a project for Earth Day, April 22, in which they learned ways to have a healthy environment.

Antonina kindergarten is a challenge for the sisters of the [Slovenian Province](#) who for many years were not able to establish this kind of institution.

A Little Closer to Ending World Hunger by Ms Amanda Suchara and Mr. Pat McCoy, Coordinators of All Saints *Shalom* Club

We live in a world that is *one-third rich* and *two-thirds poor*, a world where, as Mohandas Gandhi said, “There are people so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.” To respond to the cries of Earth’s hungriest people, the *Shalom* Clubs of [All Saints Elementary School](#) and [St. Dominic High School](#) in Missouri, USA came together for the fifth year to participate in the global “End Hunger: Walk the World” event on June 6, 2010.

More than 60 guests circled a designated course to raise awareness, to learn about global hunger, and to be in solidarity with those who are starving. Many also made contributions to the UN [World Food Programme](#) (WFP). The *Shalom* Clubs collected over \$260 for the [WFP Red Cup Project](#), which will provide more than 1,000 meals for hungry children.

Shalom students revealed world hunger statistics with hand-made posters placed throughout the course, talked with each other about ways to end hunger, and learned about Earth's resources and upcoming meetings on the UN Millennium Development Goals. They handed out pictures of people suffering starvation so participants, as they walked, could hold faces in their hands, look into human eyes, and connect with a life beyond statistics. These *Shalom* students proclaimed, "we are all a part of ending hunger."



It is an inimitable hope to see students collaborating, *co-laboring* to bring others into solidarity with those trying to survive on a cup of corn, rice, beans or less a day.-We hold in prayer those hoping we will continue to push past challenges and find ways to end hunger once and for all.

Choosing Solidarity with All Creation by S. Roxanne Schares



Celebrating the gift and diversity of creation, School Sisters of Notre Dame marked [World Environment Day 2010](#) in varied ways. In several countries, sisters gathered in prayer and reflection, many using the June International Solidarity Reflection or specially prepared prayer services on the theme.

In Japan, a community of sisters used the Solidarity Reflection for one week; on the evening of June 5 they discussed practical ways to respect creation and care for Earth. Sisters at the Generalate in Rome participated in extended prayer, "Living As One," following three movements: celebrating creation, lamenting its destruction, and discerning response. They proposed actions which they could take to live more sustainably.

In the Gambia, the *Shalom* Club of Fatima Senior Secondary School in Bwiam organized a cleaning of the school grounds in partnership with the school's Red Cross group. With the agriculture teacher, they labeled all the newly planted trees with their botanical names.

In Slovenia, sisters also joined in personal and community prayer for healing and responsible and wise action for Earth. Ecological concerns particular to Slovenia were researched and shared with the communities. In religion classes catechists discussed Earth issues with children, youth, and parish groups. Some sisters gave more time to gardening that day, enjoying nature and praising God.

At [SUNSEED Eco-Education Center](#) in Mount Calvary, Wisconsin, USA, SSND organized and hosted two prayer services for the public. Participants also had the opportunity to learn more about the work of the Center and tour the gardens and greenhouse, the labyrinth and bluebird trail, pig and chicken havens, and the orchard and prairie.



On June 5 at the SSND Maria Center in St. Louis, Missouri, "Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream" symposium brought together 70 participants to explore three facets of a new dream for humanity and planet Earth: environmental sustainability, social justice, and spiritual fulfillment. The event, co-sponsored by La Vista Ecological Learning Center, Rockhaven Ecozoic Center, St. Joseph Woods, and SSND, emphasized the role everyone has to make a difference for the future.

Join SSND Delegations to the UN Commission Meetings, by S. Ann Scholz
Association with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) gives Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), like the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the opportunity to share their experience and expertise with ECOSOC and its Commissions. Please consider joining the SSND delegation to one of these Commissions. Contact S. Eileen Reilly for details.

The [Commission for Social Development](#) (CSocD) February 2-11, 2011—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 [49th Session of the Commission](#) will focus on poverty eradication.

The [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) February 22- March 4, 2011—The CSW is dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women and girls. The [55th Session](#) of the CSW will focus its deliberations on access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science, and technology and review progress on ending discrimination against the girl child.



The [Commission on Sustainable Development](#) (CSD) May 2-13, 2011—CSD promotes dialogue, elaborates policy options, and builds partnerships for sustainable development. [CSD-19](#) will focus on following thematic issues: [Transport](#), [Chemicals](#), Waste Management ([Hazardous & Solid](#)) [Mining](#), and the [10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns](#).

The [Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) (PFII) May 16-27, 2011—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. The provisional agenda for the Forum’s Tenth Session calls for a discussion on the theme “indigenous peoples and forests” and will include a half-day discussion on Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Coming Events



September 17-19 people around the world will [Stand Up and Take Action](#) ([Český](#), [Deutsch](#), [English](#), [Español](#), [Italiano](#), [Polski](#), [Português](#)) reminding heads of state of their promise to end poverty and accomplish the UN [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs) by 2015. School Sisters of Notre Dame will add their voices to those of millions demanding that world leaders gathered at the UN for the MDG Review Summit ([English](#), [Español](#)), September 20-22, deliver breakthrough plans to accelerate progress. Resources and suggestions for action are available at www.gerhardinger.org.



September 21 marks the [International Day of Peace](#). Established by the United Nations to “commemorate and strengthen the ideals of peace within and among all nations and people,” the day is a global call for ceasefire and non-violence. The theme this year is youth, peace, and development under the slogan *Peace = Future*. The international congregation joins millions around the world as they embrace peace and challenge world leaders to lay down their weapons. Resources and suggestions for commemorating the day are available at www.gerhardinger.org and www.un.org/events/peaceday/.