

All Are Called by S. Roxanne Schares



It is fitting that 2008 is the International Year of Planet Earth. Our relationship with Earth and the environment are fundamental to life's reflections and decisions. This becomes more apparent with the numerous reports about frequent violent storms, floods, droughts and the global food crisis, which affect us all, but most seriously the poor. These reports give greater significance to the commemoration of World Environment Day on June 5.

Current ecological problems testify to the rupture of harmony with nature and thus with all in the web of life. "Today the dramatic threat of ecological breakdown is teaching us the extent which greed and selfishness—both individual and collective—are contrary to the order of creation, an order which is characterized by mutual interdependence." (Pope John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1990)

On September 2, 2007, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the urgency of confronting the present crisis. "Before it is too late, it is necessary to make courageous decisions that reflect knowing how to re-create a strong alliance between humanity and the earth."

Now is a kairos moment, a poignant time for us to re-establish and begin the healing of this relationship. Only humble recognition of our intimate bond with Earth and practical ways to nurture and protect it will suffice. It will require change, both personal and communal, of life style and of political and economic systems. Solidarity with all Creation demands authentic and far-reaching transformation.

United Nations Hosts Forum on Indigenous Issues by S. Justine Nutz (AM)



The opening of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was attended by Ann Scholz, Roxanne Schares, and Justine Nutz on April 21, 2008. Bolivian President Evo Morales, an indigenous Aymara Indian, delivered a stirring address containing 'ten commandments' that offer "an alternative to egoism, rationalism, and the pursuit of luxury." Morales implored us to consider Mother Earth as a wellspring of life, even as wealthy nations privatize her waters and pillage fossil fuels to power luxury vehicles. He spoke of the irony that millions are spent to combat obesity in one half of the globe while the other half is dying of hunger.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon applauded the choice of the theme of climate change for the conference and urged that ecological knowledge of indigenous peoples play a pivotal role in global response to environmental degradation. Indigenous people live close to the earth and need to have their voices heard, as they absorb the first impact of climate change. Seas encroach upon their island homes. Mountainous snowmelt floods their valleys, forcing them to become environmental refugees. Much of their land is lost to production of biofuels, and 30% of all species will be destroyed by 2100.

Four hundred million indigenous people living in 70 countries are among the most marginalized and forgotten on our planet. The *Call to Solidarity* urges us to open our hearts and listen to their wisdom.

Province Launches Green Habit Campaign by Tim Dewane, Shalom Contact, Milwaukee Province



Take a moment to reflect on your green habits, your actions which promote sustainable living in your life and ministry and show care for Earth and each other. Perhaps you do only full loads of laundry (often in cold water), rideshare whenever possible, or take reusable bags on your shopping trips. You recycle, reuse or whenever possible, purchase fair trade products.

If we identified, shared, and recognized these green habits, imagine what we could learn from each other, what a difference we could make together! That is the thinking behind the Green Habit Campaign, a new initiative launched in April in the Milwaukee Province to recognize and promote sustainable living practices in the lives, ministries, and institutions of the School Sisters of Notre Dame...and beyond.

Grounded firmly in *You Are Sent*, our *Calls to Transformation* and *Solidarity*, Catholic Social Teaching, and reflections on the *Earth Charter*, the Green Habit Campaign is designed to stimulate new and creative sustainable living practices among sisters, associates, employees, SSND affiliated institutions, and our publics. These practices will promote human dignity and ultimately result in a significant reduction in overall environmental and social footprint.

Individuals and groups join the Green Habit Campaign by taking the Green Habit Pledge:

I pledge to pursue sustainable living practices in my life and work, taking into account the environmental and social impacts of my actions. In addition, I will learn more about sustainable living practices, provide examples of what I am doing (the green habits) to the SSND Green Team, and invite others to join the campaign.

Participation in the campaign is open to all connected with SSND and to anyone else interested in joining this journey. The SSND Green Team, a steering committee made up of sisters, associates, employees, and representatives from affiliated institutions, oversees the campaign. Green Habit Campaign materials, including the logo, brochure, and PowerPoint presentation (for now only in English) are available and can easily be adapted for use by any unit. Contact the [SSND Green Team](#) for more information.

Zonta Recognizes SSND Student by S. Roxanne Schares



In April 2008, Zonta Club of Hoexter, Germany honored Nadine Binder with the Young Women in Public Affairs Award for her outstanding involvement in public affairs. A student at [Gymnasium Brede](#), a high school of the Archdiocese of Paderborn in Brakel (Westphalia), she has been involved in a variety of activities in her parish, school and has a special concern for disadvantaged girls and women.



Nadine participated in the 51st session of the UN [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW) in New York in February 2007. This experience heightened her awareness of the challenges faced by women and girls and moved her to establish a *Shalom* Club in her school to further the study and promotion of justice and peace. Nadine prepares to participate in the next level competition in Paris.

Gymnasium Brede received the Zonta Cup for supporting Nadine both in her attendance at the CSW and in her founding the *Shalom* Club. The Cup is meant to motivate others to become socially

involved and to raise awareness that it is not only knowledge that counts but also social action. The Brede *Shalom* Club members meet weekly and carry out activities in their school and community to promote the Millennium Development Goals, increase awareness on the issue of child soldiers, maintain the school shop that offers eco-friendly materials, and raise money to support the SSND kindergarten in Temesvar, Romania. Many club members also act as conflict-mediators.

[Zonta International](#) is a worldwide organization working together to advance the status of women in the areas of law, politics, economics and other professions. It exists in 70 countries, divided into 30 districts, with more than 34,000 members in over 1,200 clubs.



Millennium Development Goals: Mid-Term Call to Urgent Action, by S. Ann Scholz

At a [special session held April 1-4, 2008](#) in New York City, the United Nations General Assembly called for decisive action to accelerate lagging progress in achieving the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#) by 2015.



“Failure is not an option,” General Assembly President Srgjan Kerim said. “It is clear from our debate that we have the solutions. The key issue is that we all have to deliver on our commitments, scale up our efforts and accelerate progress.”

Mutual accountability is the only way forward, Mr. Kerim said. “Leaders across every level of the development system now need to hold themselves to account. “

Although significant progress has been made in fighting poverty and hunger, in reducing infant mortality, and in increasing school enrollment, the MDGs will not be met if current trends continue. One in six people globally—almost 1 billion—will still live on less than one dollar a day in 2015.

Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Permanent Observer for the [Holy See](#), said greater international solidarity was needed to narrow the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor countries and between individuals within countries. He lauded the progress made toward achieving the millennium target of universal access to primary education. However, the Archbishop also noted that without stepped-up efforts, 58 countries might not achieve that Goal by 2015. Education underpins all the MDGs and is the most effective tool to empower people to achieve greater social, economic, and political freedoms.

Conference Explores Future of Catholic Peacebuilding by S. Roxanne Schares



The Catholic community plays a crucial role in peacebuilding. Church leaders, laity, and religious are involved in activities from educating for peace and promoting reconciliation to facilitating negotiations between governments and rebels. To further the understanding and strengthen the practice of Catholic peacebuilding, the Fifth Annual International Conference of the [Catholic Peacebuilding Network](#), entitled “The Future of Catholic Peacebuilding,” was held at the University of Notre Dame April 13-15.

The conference contributed to the reflection on the spiritual, theological, and ethical dimensions of peacebuilding and the practice of this essential part of the Church’s mission. SSNDs, Johanna Mignogno (AM) and Roxanne Schares, were among more than 275 participants from 28 countries at the conference. Participants included an inter-disciplinary group of scholars, Church leaders, and peacebuilding specialists and practitioners from Church institutions and Catholic lay organizations. Many came from countries devastated by conflict.

Sessions focused on issues such as human rights; development and peacebuilding; inter-religious dialogue; the role of bishops in peacebuilding; and education, spiritual, and sacramental sources for peacebuilding. Key papers presented at the conference will be published in a major volume on Catholic peacebuilding, to be available in 2009. The conference program, list of participants, select texts, video of the plenary sessions, and audio of the breakout sessions are available at <http://cpn.nd.edu>.

Help Keep Promises to End Discrimination and Violence against Girls



The [Working Group on Girls](#) (WGG), of which SSND is a member, has undertaken a project to see that the promises made at last year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) are kept. The [51st session of the CSW](#) made landmark recommendations designed to put an end to discrimination and violence against the girl child.

The WGG has developed a user-friendly tool kit to raise awareness about the promises made to girls and to motivate girls and their advocates to become catalysts for change at the local and national levels. The tool kit outlines twelve of the promises made by governments. Each "promise" is accompanied by questions that can help identify the progress needed to make these promises reality. The results will form the basis for a WGG report to be made at the 2010 session of the CSW. If you are interested in receiving the tool kit (currently available in English and Spanish), please contact S. Ann Scholz at ssndunngo@earthlink.net.

Announcements

Theological Reflection on Solidarity

The NAMA Leadership Conference recently published a theological reflection on the meaning of solidarity, the first NAMA-wide response to the *Call to Solidarity*. Prepared by members of the Shalom North America Coordinating Committee, "God's Desire: A World of Solidarity" takes the participants through a three-part group reflection on the meaning of solidarity: Persons of Solidarity, Community: New Depth of Solidarity through Familiar Paths, and Graced Sign of Our Times. Reflection materials are available through the [NAMA Website](#).

International Shalom Meeting Will Be Held in Ghana

The Seventh International *Shalom* Meeting will take place in Cape Coast, Ghana, August 21 – 27, 2008. The theme, "Called to Solidarity in a Globalizing World," will give focus to the reflection, dialogue, and planning. Participants include the representatives of each of the five *Shalom* branches, the general council liaison, the director of the UN/NGO office, and the international *Shalom* coordinator.



Plan Now to Celebrate International Peace Day September 21

September 21 is the day designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the [International Day of Peace](#) (UN languages), an annual observance of global non-violence and ceasefire. Join people around the world as they [prepare to celebrate](#) ([Spanish](#)) peace on September 21, 2008. Additional information will be available at www.gerhardinger.org.