

## Participation-September 2016

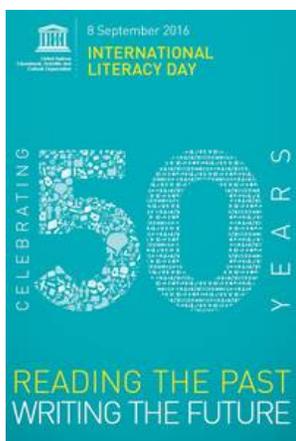


S. Raimunda and her students in Santarem, Brazil, planting and nurturing new plants.

### September 1—World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

Pope Francis has designated September 1, 2016 as World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and has asked that this day be celebrated each year on this date. It will also be added to the official Church calendar. Pope Francis said he was instituting the prayer day for Catholics because he shares the concern of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who initiated a similar prayer day for the Orthodox Church in 1989. The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Pope Francis said, will be a time for individuals and communities to "reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live."

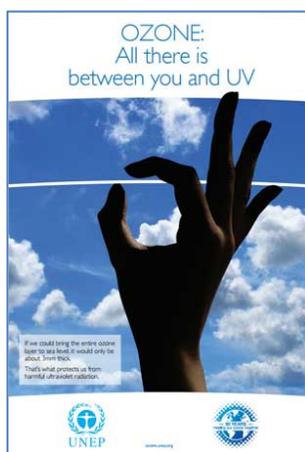
*Let us pray for all of us who share Earth as our common home. May we treasure the diversity of creation, grow in our appreciation of the divine presence revealed in and through creation, and strengthen our commitment to care for Earth and for one another.*



### September 8—International Literacy Day

UNESCO first celebrated International Literacy Day on September 8, 1966. This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary's theme is: Reading the Past; Writing the Future. Some 775 million adults lack minimum literacy skills; one in five adults is still not literate and two-thirds of them are women; 60.7 million children are out-of-school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. On this day we honor the efforts made over these past 50 years to increase literacy rates around the world and encourage innovative solutions to further increase literacy rates in the future. This is the first year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context the vision of literacy is aligned with lifelong learning opportunities with special focus on youth and adults. Literacy is a part of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The target is that by 2030 all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy (SDG Target 4.6).

*Let us pray for children and adults around the world who have yet to gain full access to the tools for shaping their own future that literacy provides. May we commit ourselves to lifelong learning so that we can grow in our awareness of the struggles of the world's poor and offer what we can toward building the future we desire.*



### September 16—International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer was designated for this day in commemoration of the date, in 1987, on which nations signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The ozone layer helps shield the earth from the harmful portion of the solar rays, thus protecting life on earth. Gradually increasing awareness of and phasing out of chemicals that damage the ozone layer of our atmosphere have already resulted in improvement in the ozone layer and have helped slow down climate change. This year marks the **30th anniversary of the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer**, an important milestone in the protection of the ozone layer. The theme for this celebration is: "30 years of healing the ozone together." The theme is supported by the slogan, "Ozone: All there is between you and UV."

If we could bring the entire ozone layer to sea level, it would only be about 3mm thick. That's what protects us from harmful UV radiation.

*Let us pray that all of us will continue to treasure Earth and care for the ozone layer which protects us from the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun and makes life on this planet possible. May we continue to be vigilant and ensure that harmful chemicals continue to be banned from use so that the ozone layer will be protected and restored.*



## September 18—World Water Monitoring Day

The primary goal of World Water Monitoring Day is to educate and engage citizens in the protection of water resources around the world. Many communities around the world are unaware of the condition of their water quality and the impact of their behaviors on the quality of their water resources. Conducting simple monitoring tests teaches participants about some of the most common indicators of water health and encourages further participation in more formal citizen monitoring efforts. This is an important global effort to protect this most precious of our natural resources—water.

*Let us thank God for the gift of Sister Water, on whom all life depends. May we use this gift wisely, and may we continue to protect water from contamination and pollution for ourselves and future generations.*

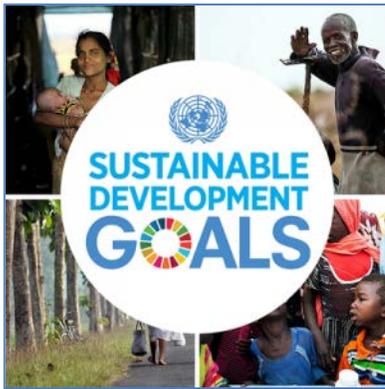
Protecting and monitoring our fresh water supplies is essential if we are to maintain safe sources of drinking water for ourselves and future generations.



## September 21—International Day of Peace

Recalling that the promotion of peace is one of the main purposes of the United Nations, the UN, in 1981, set aside September 21 as the International Day of Peace as a day **“commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.”** It is a day dedicated to building a culture of peace through dialogue, understanding, empathy, respect for human dignity and justice for all. This year’s theme is: Sustainable Development Goals—Building Blocks For Peace. The Secretary General of the UN will begin the day by ringing the Japanese Peace Bell in the Peace Garden of the UN Headquarters. Women Nobel Peace Prize laureates and the United Nations Messengers of Peace will be invited to participate in the ceremony. True and lasting peace can only come about when all people have access to and participate meaningfully in sustainable development.

*Let us pray that as we work toward realizing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we may all open our hearts toward all people as our brothers and sisters. May we respect and cherish one another, building bridges of understanding, respect and justice as lasting foundations for peace.*



## September 25—Anniversary of the United Nations Adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals adopted on September 25, 2015 at a special meeting of the 193 member states:

1. An end to severe poverty in all its forms, everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Good health and well-being—ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages
4. Quality education—ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Clean water and sanitation—ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Decent work and economic growth—promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure—build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequalities within and among countries
11. Sustainable cities and communities—make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Responsible production and consumption—ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns
13. Climate action—take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Life below water—conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Life on land—protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions—promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions as all levels
17. Partnerships for the goals—strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development