

## Participation-June 2017

### June 5—World Environment Day



On June 5<sup>th</sup>, people across the world will be celebrating World Environment Day, mobilizing to protect the global environment that sustains life on our fragile planet. The day calls on all of us to take responsibility to act in ways large and small to protect our environment. This year's theme is "Connecting People With Nature". Let us each spend some time in nature, enjoying the warmth of the sun, the rain, all creatures great and small who share this planet with us, soil and water, wind and clouds.

*Holy One, we praise you for the wonder of your being, revealed to us every day in nature. We thank you for this precious planet where we live and for all the creatures who share it with us. Help us to protect Earth our common home and to live each day with gratitude.*

### June 8—World Oceans Day



This day honors the world's oceans and their life-sustaining role. The theme, "Ours Oceans, Our Future" reflects the crucial role that oceans play in our lives. The day provides an opportunity to get directly involved in protecting our future, through a new mindset and personal and community action and involvement – beach cleanups, educational programs, art contests, film festivals, sustainable seafood events, and other planned activities. Not only do oceans provide us with food, oxygen and medicine, the ocean currents, greatly affected by ocean temperatures, regulate earth's seasons and weather patterns. A Dutch project recently raised \$21.7 million to help develop and test cleanup

technology to rid the oceans of plastic pollution. This is one of many efforts to protect our oceans.

*Creator of life, we thank you for the seas that team with life, determine our weather and usher in our seasons. Help us to use the gifts of the sea with respect for sustainability. Help us to grow in awareness of how our daily choices can affect the oceans and change our hearts so that we can change our lives.*

### June 12—World Day Against Child Labor



This day is dedicated to the prevention of using children for military service or economic labor. Childhood is a sacred time of life for acquiring knowledge, learning skills and growing physically, unencumbered by adult responsibilities. Child labor refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. The unacceptable reality is that millions of children around the world, some as young as five, are still working for their survival and for that of their

families. There is an obvious link between child labor and lack of education and poverty. In order to end extreme poverty (one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals), children must be free to learn, play, grow and develop their gifts and talents to the fullest extent possible.

*God, we ask your blessing and protection for children throughout the world. Keep them safe, help them to know that they are loved, and support them with food, shelter, and all they need to develop to their fullest potential. Make us aware of how some children are exploited and give us the courage to act against it whenever we encounter it.*

## June 17—World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought



This day calls our attention to the rapidly expanding areas of drought across our planet due to climate change. Desertification is not only a consequence of the loss of surface water, but the depletion of underground aquifers leading to further losses of fresh water sources. In December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 17 the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. The assembly acknowledged that desertification and drought were global problems because they affected all regions of the world. The assembly also realized that joint action by the international community was needed to combat desertification and drought, particularly in Africa.

*God, we thank you for Earth, our Mother, who sustains us. Help us to make changes in our lives in order to preserve water and protect it from pollution. We commit ourselves to make whatever changes are needed to stabilize our climate and reduce global warming which is leading to desertification and drought.*

## June 20—World Refugee Day



With millions of people displaced around the world due to famine, climate change, war and terrorism, the global refugee situation is worse than at any time since World War II. World Refugee Day is dedicated to raising awareness about the needs of refugees around the world. Many fled their homes with only the clothes on their backs and cannot return without facing almost certain death. Many live in refugee camps near borders they cannot cross. This day is a time to pause and consider how each of us can reach out to refugees in our midst and how we can

pressure our governments to open our countries to receive those desperate for safety and a new beginning. In 2016, the UN estimated that over 60 million refugees have fled their home countries.

*God, we pray for the safety of refugees throughout the world. Protect them from harm and open our hearts so that we actively welcome those in need into our own countries and homes. Help us to reach out in love and respect, realizing that we have much to learn from those who come to our shores.*

## June 26—International Day In Support Of Victims Of Torture



June 26<sup>th</sup> has been set aside by the UN to remind us all that torture is not only immoral it is a crime. It gives us all the opportunity to raise our voices in solidarity to declare that torture is not acceptable, no matter who may try to justify its use. We, the citizens of the world, reject torture, declaring that there is **no justification** for its use and must be declared universally illegal. Torture denies the inherent dignity of every human person and violates international law. We call on all governments to abide by this law and to bring to justice those who engage in torture.

In his address to mark the 2011 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon summed up the continuing struggle:

*"Torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment and punishment, wherever they occur and whatever the circumstances, can never be justified. States must take*

effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under their jurisdiction."

*Holy One, you have made every person with an inherent dignity and sacredness. Teach us to treat each other with empathy, respect and compassion. Whenever we know of torture, disrespectful or inhumane treatment of others, may we raise our voices in protest and take action to stop it. Let us never condone torture by our silence. Give us the courage we need to stand up against torture and to demand an end to its use.*