

Participation-July 2017

July 11—World Population Day



June 11th, World Population Day, seeks to raise awareness of issues around world population. As the world's population increases, it is urgently important that all people use global resources wisely and responsibly. By the end of April 2017, the world was home to over 7.5 billion people. Food and fresh water resources are presently adequate to care for the needs of all of us, but distribution and use of resources is uneven and unjust. All of us working together can ensure that our planet continues to flourish if we learn to live in harmony, peace and respect for all creation.

God, we thank you for the gift of life on this wonderful planet Earth. We recognize that human life is only one element of creation, and that we are a part of the intricate web of life that reveals your divine presence. Help us to tread lightly on this earth, respecting one another, caring for all creatures great and small, and praising you night and day!

July 18—Birthday of Nelson Mandela



Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1928 in Mvezo, to the Thembu royal family. Educated as a lawyer, Mandela joined the struggle against apartheid in 1943. He was arrested and sentenced to life in prison in 1962 for conspiring to overthrow the state. He served 27 years in prison, eventually being released in 1990. In 1994, he was elected as the first black head of state in the first fully participative democratic election held in S Africa. His government focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid by tackling institutionalized racism and fostering racial reconciliation. His dedication to non-violent resistance to injustice has become a world-wide inspiration to many still struggling for human rights and freedom.

Let us pray for courage as we face the injustices of our day. May we learn from the non-violent resistance of Nelson Mandela that we can transform society without armed revolution. Like Jesus, may we overcome hatred with love, evil with goodness and despair with hope.

July 30—International Day of Friendship



The International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities. The resolution (A/RES/65/275) places particular emphasis on involving young people, as future leaders, in community activities that include different cultures and promote international understanding and respect for diversity.

When greed supersedes concerns about the health of our planet or its inhabitants, when fanatic attachment to ideology is pursued at all costs, and when people suffer human rights violations because they are considered somehow less than equal, the heritage of humanity is betrayed and our future wellbeing is placed in peril [...]

On this International Day of Friendship, let us resolve to cherish and cultivate as many warm relationships as possible, enriching our own lives and enhancing the future.

— UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

God, we thank you for bringing us together across the world, joined in friendship, solidarity and hope, to create a future of peace for all. Help us to reach out to one another across religious, ethnic, racial and cultural differences so that we may realize our shared hopes, dreams and aspirations. May we always recognize each other as brothers and sisters to one another.

July 30—World Day Against Trafficking in Persons



On July 30th every year, the United Nations (UN) promotes World Day Against Trafficking Persons. The UN estimates that at least 2.5 million people are victims of this form of modern day slavery. Almost a third of human trafficking victims worldwide are children. According to a 2016 UN report, women and girls tend to be trafficked for marriages and sexual slavery, while men and boys are typically exploited for forced labor in the mining sector, as porters, and as soldiers. It also states that refugees from war and persecution are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking. This form of human rights violation is found

in every country. Growth in awareness and reporting of suspicions are needed in order to put an end to this scourge.

We pray for all those affected by human trafficking. May victims be comforted and restored to full freedom. May those who exploit others by force have their hearts opened and changed. May those who “benefit” from the suffering of others be overcome with remorse and regret, free those in bondage and help those in desperation. May all of us keep alert to signs of human trafficking and have the courage to report our concerns.