

## International Solidarity Days-October 2019

### October 1—International Day of Older Persons



International Day of Older Persons is celebrated on October 01, 2019. This day was initiated by the United Nations in 1990 to honor the efforts of the elderly and the value they bring to society. Today, 900 million people are over 60 years old. By 2050, it is estimated that 2 billion people (about 22% of the world's population) will be over 60. Between 1950 and 2010, the average life expectancy rose from 46-68. People over 60 serve society as leaders of countries, businesses, educational efforts, and spiritual growth. They often care for and educate young children in the home, care for sick family members and mentor young adults. But many face challenges with health that limit their activities and sometimes their cognition. These elders need access to medical care, food, decent housing that meets their physical limitations, transportation and social activities that keep them engaged in life. Listening to the lived experiences of elders, showing them love, supporting their needs, and gleaning their wisdom enrich all of us. This is a day to celebrate those among us who have lived a long life and whose lives have been spent nurturing, caring, learning and loving. It is a day for honoring, respecting, listening to and providing for the elderly in our midst.

*Holy One, bless those in our midst who are elderly. Protect them and bless them with love, safety, security and peace. Surround them with loving family, friends, and neighbors who are willing to listen to their stories, treasure their wisdom and pass on their legacy. For those elderly who are alone, neglected, abandoned or ill, grant them the gift of at least one person who is willing to reach out to them in love.*

### October 2—International Day of Non-Violence



**International Day of Nonviolence**

OCTOBER 2ND

This date, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, was chosen as the international day of non-violence by the United Nations on June 15, 2007. Active nonviolence has the ability to change the world. Studies have shown that armed, violent efforts to change unjust systems of oppression have rarely resulted in success. It is an illusion to believe that violence can bring peace. Violence only begets more violence. Gandhi believed that “just means lead to just ends.” There are three elements to Gandhi’s concept of non-violence as a force for social change:

- Non-cooperation
- Resistance such as sit-ins and blockades
- Nonviolent action such as protests, marches and vigils

As Gandhi said: “There are many causes I would die for. There is not a single cause I would kill for.” “Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of [hu]mankind. It is mightier than the

mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.” “An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind.”

*God, we pray for peace and nonviolence in our hearts and in the world. We commit ourselves to nonviolence in thought, word and deed. Help us day to day as we struggle to live nonviolent lives of compassion and peace. Give us courage to stand up and speak out when faced with injustice. Help us to always be a presence of love in the world.*

## October 4—Feast of St. Francis of Assisi



St. Francis of Assisi was born around 1181 and died on October 3, 1226. He was a man of peace and non-violence, compassion, joy and love. He saw how wealth set people apart from one another. His commitment to poverty was a radical response to the Gospel call to be one with every person and one with all of creation. Through nonviolence and compassion he reached out to those in need. He discarded the sword of his early youth and replaced his shining armor and rich clothing with a simple tunic of sack cloth. He went about the countryside tending to the lepers, sharing his food with the poor, rejoicing in nature’s beauty, diversity and might, and thanking God with joyful song. Francis is now honored as the patron saint of nonviolence and peace-making, as well as the patron saint of those who work for ecology. His life embodied the message of *Laudato Si* over 800 years before it was written— “The care of the poor and the care of earth are one”. How appropriate that Pope Francis’ concept of “integral ecology” articulated in *Laudato Si* was inspired by the saint whose name he chose for himself.

*Holy One, we praise you for the wondrous gift of creation and thank you for Saint Francis’ canticle of creation that proclaims all of creation as brothers and sisters. We also praise and thank you for the diversity of the human family. Every person is a unique revelation of your creative love. Help us to recognize the divine in each and every person and creature. When we encounter brokenness and evil, inspire us to respond with compassion. When we experience wonder, beauty, grandeur and peace, may we respond with joy and gratitude.*

## October 10—World Day Against the Death Penalty



This year marks the 17<sup>th</sup> World Day Against the Death Penalty. State sanctioned execution is most often justified by the myth that it will deter crime. Yet, study after study has shown that the death penalty does not deter crime. It is also well known that poor people are sentenced to death and executed at disproportionately high rates. Most of all, it is clear that capital punishment is final, making it no longer possible for a person to seek forgiveness, experience a conversion of

heart, or seek exoneration if wrongfully convicted. Most importantly, capital punishment is a violation of the sanctity of life. It fails to recognize the intrinsic value of every human life and our responsibility to protect and honor this most basic human right — to live. As Pope Francis put it: *Therefore, all Christians and people of good will are called today to fight not only for the abolition of the death penalty, whether*

*legal or illegal, and in all its forms, but also in order to improve the prison conditions, in respect of the human dignity of the persons deprived of freedom.*

*God, we pray that nations throughout the world will continue to work for the abolition of the death penalty. We commit ourselves to respect the dignity of every person, because we know that all human beings were created in your image and have the divine spark of life within them, no matter what evil deeds they may have committed. As followers of the Gospel, we commit ourselves to promoting compassionate alternatives to the death penalty, including restorative justice and funding for victims' services. Help us to reject revenge as we continue to work for justice.*

### **October 13—International Day of Disaster Reduction**



**Homes in Malawi destroyed by floods**

The International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) is significant because it is a platform to spread awareness about Natural Disaster, their different categories, consequences and the methods to curb natural disasters. It is a day when individuals and governments evaluate how each can reduce the risk of natural disasters and address response preparedness. Each local area faces different threats of natural disasters, and responses must be tailored to the specific locale. Infrastructure projects to lessen the damages from earthquakes, tornados, tropical storms, and tsunamis continue to be needed in many parts of the world. With sea level rise and increases in coastal flooding around the world, innovative solutions to protect coast lines, as well as moving

people away from flood-prone areas is essential. The ability to better predict earthquakes and volcanic eruptions will also lead to less loss of life and quicker responses to these events. Although natural disasters cannot be totally prevented, this day reminds us that there is much we can do to lessen their impacts and to protect lives.

*Holy one, how wonderful are your works of nature! We know that we are called to live in harmony with nature and to recognize our place within the web of life. May we always put life and protection of nature ahead of economic and commercial concerns as we seek to prevent, mitigate and respond to natural disasters. May we come together with generosity and solidarity to help those who suffer from natural disasters, helping them and all of us to live life filled with hope and love.*

### **October 15—International Day of Rural Women**



Rural women over the world often live and toil in obscurity. This day is dedicated to honoring them for their lives of dedication to family, community, and care for earth, our common home. Unfortunately, rural women still face many stigmas and myths that restrict their participation in decision-making, both within civil society and even

within their own homes. Girls and women in rural communities often lack access to education, sanitation,

healthcare, legal and inheritance rights and critical public services that can greatly enhance their quality of life. In order for communities to flourish in these rural areas, it is essential for women to have all the resources needed to live up to their fullest potential. These women are responsible for agricultural production in many of the world's poorest areas, as well as bearing the responsibility for raising children and caring for animals that sustain their lives. In order to lift families and communities out of poverty, rural women must be given full and equal status with men in making decisions that affect them and their families and communities.

*God, we thank you for the many gifts that rural women bring to our world. Their knowledge of earth and how to live in harmony with nature can teach us many lessons about our place within the web of life. Their strength and determination inspire us to action. May we continue to work for justice for rural women so that every woman can contribute fully to her family, community and the world.*

### **October 17—International Day for the Eradication of Poverty**



The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals call for an end to extreme poverty globally by the year 2030. In order to accomplish this goal, dialogue with those living in poverty is needed in order to address needs effectively. The World Bank and other international bodies have agreed that eradication of extreme poverty is possible, but that stabilization of global populations displaced by climate change and violence is an essential element of such efforts. Protecting farmers on their ancestral lands, stopping armed conflict that makes farming and food distribution impossible, and providing access to safe water supplies will allow communities to grow and prosper. Next, access to education and health care and adequate housing will help stabilize communities, bringing hope for the future. Developed nations are called

upon to help developing nations move forward in a sustainable way, protecting the environment for future generations.

*Holy One, we pray for the 1 billion people living in extreme poverty throughout the world and the over 800 million people who endure hunger and malnutrition. Thank you for inspiring us to re-evaluate our lives, making the changes we need to make in order to live more simply so that all people have what is needed to live. Give us willing hearts and open hands, to do what we can to build a world free of extreme poverty in a sustainable and responsible way.*

### **October 24-30—United Nations Disarmament Week**



The annual observance of Disarmament Week, which kicks off on the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations (24 October), was first called for in the Final Document of the General Assembly's 1978 special session on disarmament. The document called for abandoning the use of force in international relations and seeking security in disarmament.

The UN document "Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament" outlined 4 sections: Disarmament to save humanity, disarmament that saves lives, disarmament for future generations, and strengthening partnerships for disarmament. Global goals for disarmament are vital for achieving the Sustainable Development

Goals in 2030. Weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, threaten the very life of the planet and therefore demands their elimination. Although disarmament alone will not bring world peace, elimination of weapons of mass destruction, illicit arms trafficking, and burgeoning weapons stockpiles would advance both peace and development goals. Over the last century, wars and preparations for war have consumed the resources of our earth and cost the lives of millions of civilians. This kind of wasted resources, paid for in human suffering, is no longer tenable. All nations recognize the global dangers posed by such weapons, yet the dangers cannot be eliminated by the actions of any one country. The UN is leading the effort toward step-by-step disarmament for the good of all.

**For more information go to <https://www.un.org/disarmament/sg-agenda/en/>**

*God, we long for peace, yet too often we bow in worship to the idols of weapons to “keep us safe”. Help us to realize that our safety is never guaranteed, but our hope must always be in your love and care for us. Change our hearts so that we forever forsake war as a way to solve differences among individuals and nations. Let us turn toward one another with respect, listening to each other’s concerns and seeking solutions that serve the common good.*