

## International Solidarity Days-October 2020

### October 1—International Day of Older Persons



S Seigfrieda shows S Beaher Miffy creations that she shares with children around the world.

International Day of Older Persons is celebrated on October 1<sup>st</sup>. This day was initiated by the United Nations in 1990 to honor the efforts of the elderly and the value they bring to society. They are the caretakers and custodians of

societal traditions. Although often no longer able to contribute in certain ways due to physical limitations, they often play an essential role in sharing the wisdom of their lived experience, providing a listening ear to younger generations, and speaking truth as they see it. They often assist with child rearing and

education. Many elderly people around the world are honored for their past and present contributions to their families and communities. Unfortunately, some elderly persons face life with very little access to the basic necessities—shelter, food, clothing, companionship and healthcare. On this day we are called to engage with elderly persons, listening to their life stories, learning from their experiences, gleaning their wisdom, nurturing their wellbeing, assisting them in any way we can, and walking with them in this phase of their life's journey.

*Holy One, bless those in our midst who are elderly. Help us all to treasure each person's contributions to the building up of peace and love in our world. Help us to learn the lessons that life presents and to share these stories with one another. 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. For the elderly who continue to gift us with their creativity, listening ear, sound advice and wise council, fill them with joy, love and peace.*

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



This date, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, was chosen as the International Day of Non-violence by the United Nations on June 15, 2007. When one examines the history of revolutionary change, non-violent efforts have been successful in establishing significant and lasting social change far more often than violent revolution. Violence does not bring peace. Violence most often results in retribution and more violence, making lasting peace elusive.

Gandhi's non-violence was active. 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

Love and compassion are at the center of non-violent action. Peace builders committed to non-violence require courage and strength. Today we are aware of the many peacemakers who have gone before us and who continue to inspire us. This is also a day for honoring all those committed to a life on non-violence and for placing this way of life at the center of how we want to live. Let each of us become blessed peacemakers so that our world can be transformed into a world of peace, reconciliation and justice.

*God, we pray for peace and nonviolence in our hearts and in the world. Give us courage to stand up and speak out when faced with injustice. Give us compassionate hearts based in love and respect for every person, so that non-violence and blessing become a way of life for each of us. When faced with violence or personal threat, give us the courage to stand in love and to reach out in compassion. When we stumble on the road of peacemaking, lift us up, inspire us anew and give us courage to begin again.*

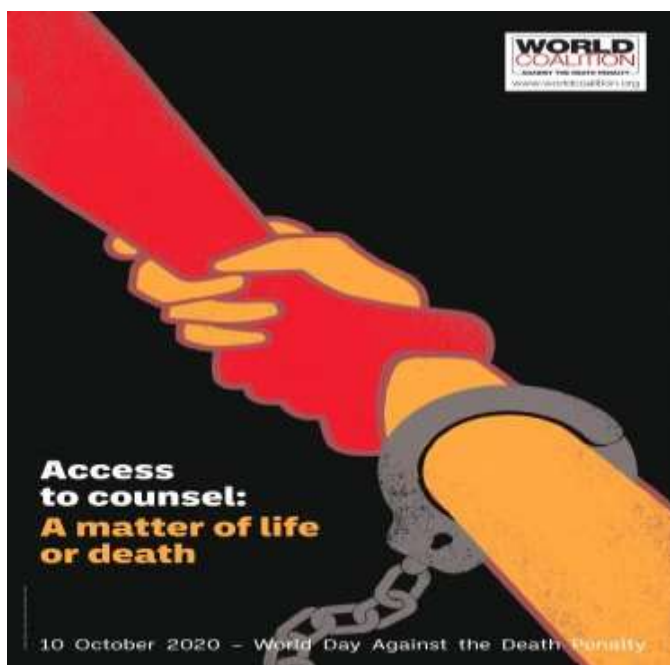
#### October 4—Feast of St. Francis of Assisi



It seems fitting that the feast of St. Francis of Assisi is celebrated just 2 days after the International Day of Non-violence. He was a man of peace and non-violence, compassion, joy and love. Although early in his life he dreamt of knighthood and valor in battle, he soon learned first-hand the brutality of war and the suffering inflicted by violence. As his journey of conversion unfolded, he came to realize the oneness of each person with one another and with all of creation. He also came to understand that all creation is a revelation of the divine. 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 who inspires us each day to live as peacemakers and lovers of creation. Help us to see each other and creation itself as revelations of your grandeur, beauty and presence. Make us bearers of peace in our world and move our hearts with compassion, understanding, respect and love.*

#### October 10—World Day Against the Death Penalty



This year marks the 18<sup>th</sup> World Day Against the Death Penalty. The theme for 2020 is “Access to counsel - A matter of life or death”. In capital cases, most countries recognize the right of the accused to legal representation from the time of arrest through the process of trial and appeals. Unfortunately, the lack of adequate representation has been documented to result in more death penalty sentences and executions. While working towards the total and complete abolition of the death penalty worldwide for all crimes, it is crucial to alert civil society and the international community to the necessity that, at all stages of the legal proceedings, those facing the cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment of execution should at least have access to effective legal representation. Such legal aid can provide the basic protection of either avoiding the sentence and/or appealing the verdict.

State sanctioned execution is unjustifiable and immoral. Studies have repeatedly shown that capital punishment does not deter crime. In addition, it is disproportionately applied to poor defendants, racial, ethnic or religious minorities and against some who are innocent of the crime for which they were convicted. In taking life, the state uses the violence of execution to bring about a less violent society—this makes no sense. Catholic social teaching upholds the sacredness of all human life. No person loses the right to life, no matter what horrendous crime he/she may have committed. As Pope Francis put it: *...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 ... 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. Help us to reject revenge as we continue to work for justice. Bless us as we seek the good in each person and strive to bring about reconciliation.*

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



The International Day for Disaster Risk 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. Today, many natural disasters are increasing in severity due to the effects of climate change on weather. Hurricanes have grown in intensity due to ocean warming, resulting in greater wind speeds, worsening storm surges and massive amounts of rainfall. In other areas of the world, drought has increased crop failures, leading to famine, increased catastrophic wildfires, and water scarcity. While there are some things that can be done to better predict and protect against natural disasters, the most urgently needed action is to mitigate climate change, protect and restore wetlands and coastal biomes that can offer some protection against storm surge, restrict human habitation from areas prone to wildfires, and protect fresh water sources from overuse and pollution.

*Holy One, thank you for the gift of creation that we share. Help us to live in harmony with one another and with Earth herself. Grant us great respect for nature as we experience her many manifestations of power and renewal. May we recognize our place in this vast cosmos. May we do what we can to prevent disasters and help one another when disaster strikes.*

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



On this day the United Nations recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.” This day invites us to call for action to better support rural women and girls through greater access to healthcare and education, financing of micro businesses to supplement their family and community incomes, and the establishment of inheritance and legal rights in areas where these do not exist. 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, their families and their communities.

*God, we thank you for the many gifts that rural women bring to our world. Help us to learn from them how to live in harmony with nature. As they continue to inspire us with their determination to better their own lives and the lives of their families and communities, may we work together with them for a more just and sustainable way of life.*

### **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. To accomplish this, the UN recognizes that stabilizing populations is essential. An end to violent conflicts, drought and extreme flooding due to climate change, and protection of ancestral lands are essential so that farming, food distribution and commerce can grow and develop in a sustainable way. Education of all children will ensure that future generations can develop to their fullest potential. Access to healthcare, safe and affordable housing, and clean water can create hope and allow people to creatively face challenges with determination. It is also up to “developed nations” to assist developing nations to move forward in a sustainable way, in harmony with creation. Learning from one another, we can all

contribute to eradicating poverty around the world. We only need the political will to do it!

*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. Strengthen our worldwide resolve to do whatever is necessary to end extreme poverty by 2030. May wars and conflicts cease so that people can live in safety. Help each of us to make decisions in our own lives that will allow the fruits of the earth to be enjoyed by all her people. Help us to live in solidarity so that no one walks alone.*

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



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. Disarmament alone will not bring the world peace. However, it is an essential step in the process. The stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical, and biological, has consumed the worlds resources. While nations have poured their wealth into weapons of war and intimidation, people have suffered

daily without adequate food, shelter, water, healthcare, housing or hope. Millions have died in armed conflicts and earth herself has become contaminated by nuclear testing, nuclear waste and landmines yet to be removed. This madness of death must stop before our massive weapons destroy all of us, as well as Earth our common home.

*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 of solving 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.*