

## International Solidarity Days – April 2021

### April 4—International Day of Landmine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action



This day is a special day to raise awareness of the dangers posed by landmines and other unexploded munitions. This is also a day to call on all nations to eliminate the use of landmines. It is estimated that 15,000-20,000 people are injured or killed each year in areas where war and armed conflict has officially ceased, but where landmines remain an unseen daily danger. These explosives endanger the lives of farmers planting fields, women walking to fetch water or firewood, and even children at play. Landmines also make the delivery of humanitarian aid to entire populations nearly impossible, sometimes delaying critically needed medical supplies and food for months, while landmines are found and removed. The United Nations (UN) has repeatedly called on world leaders to ban the use of landmines, which threaten innocent civilians and continue to maim and kill

people for many years into the future. The UN has also urged countries to join in the international efforts to locate and eliminate landmines. Unfortunately, the process is fraught with danger, since exact locations of planted landmines are often not known. It will take many decades to rid the world of this scourge.

*God of peace, open our hearts to one another so that dialogue and mutual understanding can replace armed conflict as a way to resolve our differences. Help us to seek out and destroy landmines throughout the world that continue to inflict injury and death on so many innocent people, and that violate the sanctity of Mother Earth. Teach us to treat all of your creation with respect so that everyone can live in peace and safety.*

### April 7—World Health Day



April 7, 2021 marks the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO). Over the past year, we have become acutely aware of the inequities experienced by so many people around the world that affect their underlying health: poor housing and education; little access to jobs that can earn a living wage; gender inequality; little access to safe environments such as clean water, adequate sanitation and clean air; food insecurity; and little or no access to healthcare. These social inequities have made many of the world's poor extremely vulnerable to the global COVID 19 pandemic and more likely to die as a result. This year, World Health Day is focused on calling for all nations to address these social barriers to healthful living. Additionally, the WHO is also committed to ensuring that even the poorest people around the world have access to the corona virus vaccines. World health can only be achieved when affected communities and individuals work together, when we are able to reliably collect and analyse timely health data, when

governments and communities address the root causes of inequities, and when we work across borders for the common good of all. In January 2021, the WHO issued a call to all countries to work together in solidarity, and in each of their best interests, to ensure that within the first 100 days of the year, vaccination of health workers and older people was underway in all countries. Today marks that 100<sup>th</sup> day!

*Holy One, we pray for all those who are sick throughout the world, especially those suffering from the COVID 19 pandemic. We pray for those who suffer daily from malnutrition, water-borne diseases, and air pollution, and who often have no access to the healthcare they need. We pray for those who care for the sick and who are working tirelessly to get vaccines and treatments to poor populations everywhere.*

## April 12—International Day for Street Children



Street children are those who live on the streets, often sleeping in parks, doorways, or bus shelters. During the day they can be found seeking shelter in public buildings, shops, or open churches. Some street children may have homes to return to at night but rely on the streets for survival and sustenance. Almost universally, street

children are looked down upon as beggars, juvenile delinquents, or thieves. With little or no access to education, basic healthcare or personal security, these children face a bleak future. During the global pandemic, many of the places where they sought refuge have been closed, making survival even more difficult. These children often seem “invisible to the conscience of the world” (Sir John Major) and this reality is indefensible. This day calls all of us to advocate for the needs of street children and to work with governments and individuals to reach out to street children, listen to their stories and address their needs. All children deserve love, care, protection, food, basic healthcare and education. This is crucial to reaching the Sustainable Development Goal of ending extreme poverty worldwide by 2030.

*Loving God, protect all street children as they struggle to survive with little or no adult protection and care. Protect them from the COVID-19 pandemic. Help us as we advocate with local officials to provide access so that all street children can receive the corona virus vaccine, basic medical care and food. Open our hearts and our hands to assist projects and programs that help these children so that they can grow strong and reach their full potential.*

## April 22—Earth Day



April 22 marks the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. This year’s theme is: “Restore Our Earth.” After withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement under the prior US president, the current President, Joseph Biden, has already rejoined the world community’s climate agreement and is hosting a climate summit on Earth Day 2021. Since the USA is one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, the world community is encouraged that with this recommitment, the global efforts to save our planet can be successful. The goal of Earth Day is to empower and expand the environmental movement by motivating individuals and governments to make the urgently needed changes to stabilize the climate and to preserve Earth’s biodiversity. It will take all efforts, large and small, to address the changes that need to be made. Together, we can save Earth, our common home.

*Creator God, we thank you for the gift of Earth, our common home. Strengthen our resolve and inspire our action as together we address climate change which threatens the biodiversity of our planet. We praise you for the beauty and marvels of Mother Earth. This day, we recommit ourselves to caring for creation.*