

International Solidarity Days – April 2022

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 and to take action to eliminate their use. The 2022 theme for this special day is “Together for Mine Action: Give Life Back.” Each year thousands of civilians are killed or maimed by land mine explosions, often in areas of the world where armed conflict has ceased. These unexploded munitions can endanger people as they plant crops in their fields, travel along roadsides to fetch food or water, travel to and from school or while gathering fruit from trees. Landmines also pose a threat to healthcare and other aid workers trying to bring humanitarian assistance to poor areas of the world. They are

often unaware of the buried landmines that could be scattered over apparently empty terrain near poor villages. The presence of landmines hinders economic development, healthcare delivery, educational efforts, and advancements for civil society. This year’s theme emphasizes the need to locate and remove landmines in order to not only save lives and prevent injury, but to “give life back” to local communities which have been held back from advancement by the presence of landmines. Let us all support ongoing UN efforts to work with national and international partners to educate populations about the hazards landmines pose, the urgent need to clear them from civilian areas, and the worldwide effort to ban their future use.

God of peace, as we gradually work to rid the world of landmines, open our hearts to the dialogue and sharing that is necessary to build a peaceful and just future for all. Help us to reject violence in all its forms so that we can respond in love to each other’s needs. Bless those who are actively removing landmines that threaten the lives of so many innocent civilians, even years after armed conflicts have ended.

April 7—World Health Day



April 7, 2022 marks the 74th anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO). World Health Day was founded to focus attention on public health issues that affect the global community. This year we honor nurses and midwives whose roles have dramatically changed the way healthcare is delivered worldwide. This is a day for thanking nursing professionals for continuing to expand access to healthcare. Their dedication and willingness to reach out to those in need in the poorest of circumstance have enabled the delivery of health education, vaccination programs, diagnostic services, medications and support services, along with their physician partners and other professionals.

Especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic, nurses and midwives have often been the first point of contact with the healthcare system for sick persons seeking help. Sadly, they have often been the last to be with and comfort the dying as well, when family and friends were unable to be present. We owe a debt of gratitude to these dedicated caregivers who continue to give so generously of themselves, often at great personal cost.

Holy One, we pray for all those who are sick and in need of healing, support, and comfort. On this world health day, bless all those who tirelessly give of themselves to alleviate suffering and to bring healing. We especially ask your blessing on nurses and midwives as they continue to serve those in need of health, healing, and hope.

April 12—International Day for Street Children



“Street children” are children who depend on the streets for their survival – whether they live on the street, work on the street, have support networks on the street, or a combination of the three. Many factors may contribute to a child depending on the streets for survival. Poverty plays a major role often confounded by natural disasters or conflicts, family breakdown or violence, parental deaths, child abuse or neglect, lack of legal status, or racial or ethnic discrimination. The plight of these children is often invisible within societies and therefore their needs go unrecognized

and unaddressed. Street children are extremely vulnerable to abuse and often form “gangs” for protection, with gangs serving as surrogate families. 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 them, listen to their stories and address their needs. All children deserve love, stability, nurturing care, protection, food, basic health care and education. Children are the world’s most precious resource. The future is in their hands. Let us give all children what they need to develop their gifts to the fullest.

Loving God, protect all street children as they struggle to survive with little or no adult protection and care. Protect them from danger and bless them with food and shelter. Surround them with whatever they need to survive and flourish. Grant every child peace, hope, love, and self-confidence as they take their places as leaders of the future. May society prioritize the welfare of its children, realizing that they are precious gifts to be cherished.

April 22—Earth Day



April 22 marks the 52nd anniversary of Earth Day. This year’s theme is: “Invest in Our Planet.” In order for biodiversity and human life to survive, scientists say that we must make every effort to keep global temperature increases to less than 1.5 degrees centigrade. We are quickly approaching this threshold. This year, individuals, businesses, and governments are asked to focus on accelerating solutions to address climate change before it is too late. Everyone can do something, and we all must do whatever we can to cut carbon emissions, to live as simply as possible to preserve Earth’s resources, and to restore and protect the biodiversity on which we all depend. This requires a significant investment in a rapid transition to an

equitable, prosperous green economy. We no longer have time to debate and plan. The time for action is now if we are to save our planet. After the COP26 meeting in Glasgow it became apparent that world governments are politically incapable of making the hard decisions that are needed. It is up to citizens of the world to lead the way, putting pressure on businesses and governments to take significant actions. More and more business interests are beginning to see the urgency of the situation and are making changes in response to the demands of the public. Through the recently announced *Laudato Si Action Platform*, Pope Francis has called on all segments of the Catholic Church to begin a 7-year journey towards living sustainably. If everyone does their part, the 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide can make a difference and can inspire others to action NOW!

Creator God, we thank you for the gift of Earth, our common home. We know that we are part of the great web of life and that our choices affect all life on the planet. Inspire us to find creative ways to care for this wonderful home that we all share. Help us to make choices in our lives that lessen our carbon footprint, decrease waste and create a flourishing future.