

MAY, 2019

COMBONI JPIC NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Justice and peace-related news, actions, and resources from the
Comboni Missionaries, North American Province

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SELECTED GLOBAL TOPICS



COMBONI MISSIONARIES WORKING IN JPIC IN AFRICA

The leaders of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) sector of the Comboni circumscriptions of English-speaking Africa (APDESAM) and French-speaking Africa (ASCAF) met in an assembly from April 1 to 7, 2019, at the Good Shepherd Centre for Peace, southeast of Juba, South Sudan, to reflect on the “Catholic response to Justice and Peace issues in an ever-changing Africa.

Ten of the 13 circumscriptions had sent their representatives. The Central African Republic, Eritrea, and Mozambique were justifiably absent. Fr. Arlindo Pinto had come from Rome to represent the General Secretariat of the Mission.

The moderator was Aloys Ojore, professor at the Tangaza University in Nairobi (Kenya).

At the end of the assembly, organised by Fr. Louis Okot, provincial superior of South Sudan and head of the APDESAM JPIC sector, in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Mission, the

missionaries wrote a message addressed to all the confreres working in Africa. The message concludes with 12 proposals for possible steps to be taken, as Comboni Missionaries, for an effective reconciliation and peace and for a greater social and environmental justice on the African continent.

Read the full text of the proposals [here](#).



IN WAKE OF SRI LANKAN ATTACKS, CATHOLICS RETURN TO MASS

April 21 marked a series of coordinated terror attacks on Catholics in Sri Lanka. Hotels were also targeted in blasts that killed nearly 300, including children making their First Communion on that Easter Sunday.

Despite the closure of churches throughout the nation, parishioners at St. Joseph parish in Thannamunai (about 150 miles from the capital of Colombo) gathered for Mass and a postponed priestly ordination.

Originally, planners expected more than 3,000 attendees and 200 priests to attend the service. Those numbers were down significantly, but the celebration was still a victory for this community struggling to recover from the attacks. Prior permission was required for the ordination to proceed, and the service was guarded by dozens of heavily armed troops.

Several Sri Lankan mosques offered to host Mass in defiance of the attacks and some Muslim groups held prayer services near the targeted sites, in a show of solidarity with their Christian neighbors.

Religious services across the country, for all faiths, remain restricted due to security concerns. [More](#).



MOZAMBIQUE'S CHILDREN CRITICAL AFTER SECOND STORM STRIKES



In late April, Save the Children warned that the number of children in Mozambique who are acutely malnourished could double, from just under 60,000 to 115,000. The destruction of cyclone Idai was compounded by the landfall of tropical storm Kenneth on April 27.

Crops and infrastructure were swept away by the storms. Those who farmed for subsistence have found themselves without crops, livestock, seed, and even in some cases land with which to rebuild. Untold businesses and houses were also destroyed by the storms, leaving workers jobless and homeless.

Save the Children reports that the malnutrition is severe. At one of their clinics a woman brought her 19-month-old son to be seen by doctors. He had recently contracted malaria and his weight was just 13 pounds.

For more on aid efforts, please read [this](#).

FELICIAN SISTERS OFFER TIPS TO CARE FOR CREATION



Sister Mary Jean Sliwinski, CSSF, provincial sustainability coordinator for the Felician Sisters, makes a strong case for the connection between faith and environmental stewardship. Here are her top tips for making a concrete difference:

1. Start your own garden, or create a community garden in your neighborhood where you can grow your own fresh fruit and vegetables.
2. Stop buying bottled water and fill your own containers with tap water. Install a faucet filter or use a water pitcher with a filter; this, along with a reusable water bottle, will help eliminate plastic waste.

3. Spend more time walking outside and biking, which is not only good exercise, but keeps you more connected to your community and the environment. Leave the electronics at home to continue filtering out the noise and distractions.
4. Pick up litter when you see it.
5. Take an online carbon footprint test. There's plenty available with a Google search.
6. Reduce, refuse, reuse, and recycle.
7. Pray for those working hard for the environment, and contact your elected officials to advocate for creation.
8. Read the pope's encyclical, **available for free online on the Vatican's website.**

For more on the Felician Sisters' work, visit their site.

U.N. INTERNATIONAL DAYS

May 3

World Press Freedom Day

World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference. Since then, May 3, the anniversary of the **Declaration of Windhoek**, is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day. **More.**

May 15

International Day of Families

Although families all over the world have transformed greatly over the past decades in terms of their structure and as a result of global trends and demographic changes, the United Nations still recognizes the family as the basic unit of society. The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them. It has inspired a series of awareness-raising events, including national family days. In many countries, this day is an opportunity to highlight different areas of interest and importance to families. **More.**

May 20

World Bee Day

Bees and other pollinators, such as butterflies, bats and hummingbirds, are increasingly under threat from human activities. Pollinators allow many plants, including many food crops, to reproduce. Not only do pollinators contribute directly to food security, but they are key to conserving biodiversity - a cornerstone of the Sustainable Development Goals. They also serve as sentinels for emergent environmental risks, signaling the health of local ecosystems.

Invasive insects, pesticides, land-use change and monocropping practices may reduce available nutrients and pose threats to bee colonies. To raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development, the UN designated May 20 as World Bee Day. **More.**

May 21

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Cultural diversity is a driving force of development, not only with respect to economic

growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life. This is captured in the [seven culture conventions](#), which provide a solid basis for the promotion of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is thus an asset that is indispensable for poverty reduction and the achievement of sustainable development. At the same time, acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity -- in particular through innovative use of media and Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) – are conducive to dialogue among civilizations and cultures, respect and mutual understanding. In 2001, UNESCO adopted the [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity](#) and in December 2002, the UN General Assembly declared May 21 to be the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development. [More.](#)

May 22

International Day for Biological Diversity

While there is a growing recognition that biological diversity is a global asset of tremendous value to present and future generations, the number of species is being significantly reduced by certain human activities.

The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) is the international legal instrument for "the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources" that has been ratified by 196 nations.

Given the importance of public education and awareness for the implementation of the Convention, the General Assembly proclaimed May 22, the date of the adoption of its text, as the International Day for Biological Diversity. [More.](#)

May 29

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

The theme for the 2018 International Day of UN Peacekeepers was "70 Years of Service and Sacrifice." The observance on May 29 offers a chance to pay tribute to the contributions of uniformed and civilian personnel to the work of the Organization and to honor more than 3,700 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including [129 who died in 2017](#). [More.](#)



Comboni JPIC Network

513-474-4997

www.ComboniMissionaries.org

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