

JUNE, 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



Ugandan sisters act against trafficking

"We are tired," "This is too much," "I am angry": These were some of the comments sisters in Uganda made, after study and reflection on how the social teachings of the Catholic Church parallel to social issues affecting Uganda.

The Catholic sisters — under the umbrella of the 6,000-member organization of the Association of Religious in Uganda — had resolved to advocate against trafficking in persons. This collaboration proved itself useful when the sisters critically analyzed their society, which is being robbed of its basic humane values and the moral fiber that helps people attain their highest potential and human dignity.

The sisters' motivation came from several sources: the principles of the Scriptures, the lives of the saints, African proverbs, and Bible stories like Genesis 18:16-32 (Abraham pleads for Sodom and Gomorrah), Esther 5-7 (Esther takes risks for her people), Luke 11:5-8 (an importunate friend pleads for one in need), John 10:10 (Jesus gives the fullness of life), and Luke 4:18 (The manifesto of Jesus, who comes to bring liberty to the oppressed).

I think it was St. Catherine of Siena who urged us to cry out, saying it is "silence that kills the world." And church leaders have assured us that acting on behalf of justice is part of living the Gospel. As Brazilian Archbishop Dom Hélder Câmara once said, "When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist."

Nelson Mandela insisted that "overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice." Some of our activists have said that justice is an integral part of our mission as religious, and that we stand on two feet of Christian love: charity and justice.

In a workshop that was organized and facilitated by Africa Faith and Justice Network of Washington, the participants began to understand various underlying issues that put Africa in a global context, and assessed challenges facing the continent. We discussed how 150 years of slave trade had had adverse consequences, and how there are signs that it is still not healed.

Read the full story [here](#).



Think Globally, Act Locally

A meeting of the Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) ANTENA KENYA, took place at the premises of the RSCK (Men Religious Conference of Kenya).

After seeing some questions of interest about the World today, Europe's relationship to Africa, the coming European Elections, some Social Movements, and the way to organize the participation in the next Meeting with a representative of the AEFJN at Brussels, (may be asking from them economical support), in Uganda; on the motto "think globally, act locally"; some reflections were then done regarding the Kenya Situation.

The urgency of not only to meet but to act was felt by all participants. An interesting proposal was to ask the Episcopal Conference to raise its voice about salaries for the workers (decreasing) and good allowances for parliamentarians (increasing).

The importance of higher Education for Religious, both men and women, was a relevant point.

That was the time to introduce properly the "INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL MINISTRY IN MISSION" (ISMM) of THE "CATHOLIC TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE" (TUC). THE TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE is jointly owned by members of Religious Congregations. Currently the College offers certificate, diploma, undergraduate and master's degrees in its Institutes.

Read more about the ISMM and its mission [here](#).



Peacemaking and Peace Agreements in South Sudan

In 2011, South Sudan seceded from Sudan following a landmark referendum on self-determination. Yet fewer than three years after the historic vote for independence, the world's newest country descended into a civil war that, since December 2013, has brought killing and bloodshed. In attempts to resolve the conflict and bring the civil war to an end, the warring factions have signed peace agreement after peace agreement. In September 2018, Salva Kiir, the president of South Sudan, and his major adversary, the former vice-president and rebel leader Riek Machar, signed yet another peace agreement in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital. This is the 12th agreement between them. Most of these agreements have suffered from a fraught mediation context (at times, being very coercive), deficits in preparedness (with inadequate time to fully implement the agreements), consent, impartiality, inclusivity (given the proliferation of armed and unarmed oppositions) and lack of a broad political strategy to anchor the agreed-upon peace deal. How did this young country that attained her independence in 2011 amidst massive international fanfare degenerate into chaos so quickly? And why have the attempts to resolve the conflict faced such difficulties?

The Zambakari Advisory is pleased to publish its first Special Issue on the subject: "South Sudan Peace Agreement and Peacemaking." We asked scholars, activists, students, former government officials and leading intellectuals to think about the theme for this issue and offer insights into it. We hope these analyses will provide new insights to both reflect on, and inform the work of stakeholders engaged in brokering peace and/or the pending National Dialogue.

This collection features 15 articles. [Read them here.](#)



South Sudan: The Kingdom of God Grows Like a Tree, Slowly but Steadily

Pope Francis endeavored to make great gestures at the peace meeting for South Sudan in the Vatican. But the two counterparts Salva Kiir and Riek Machar have little control of the struggles in the country, knows Comboni Missionary Gregor Schmidt.

Interview with the internet-portal of the German Bishop's Conference

Question: Fr. Schmidt, Pope Francis has invited the two arch rivals, South Sudan's President Salva Kiir and opposition leader Riek Machar, for a spiritual retreat to the Vatican and asked for their commitment to peace. How do you rate the meeting?

Father Gregor Schmidt: The meeting is based on an initiative of the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. The president is Catholic, his rival Protestant. In this deadlocked situation, it is good to remind politicians that they are held accountable by God, and to pray for genuine repentance of the adversaries. I am pleased that the meeting took place in the Vatican, because it underlines how much the Catholic Church cares about a just peace.

Read the rest of the interview [here](#).

**GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**



Goal 14: Life Below Water

The world's oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. How we manage this vital resource is essential for humanity as a whole, and to counterbalance the effects of climate change.

More than three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, today we are seeing 30 percent of the world's fish stocks over-exploited, reaching below the level at which they can produce sustainable yields.

Oceans also absorb about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, and we are seeing a 26 percent rise in ocean acidification since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Marine pollution, an overwhelming majority of which comes from land-based sources, is reaching alarming levels, with an average of 13,000 pieces of plastic litter to be found on every square kilometer of ocean.

The SDGs aim to sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution, as well as address the impacts of ocean acidification. Enhancing conservation and the sustainable use of ocean-based resources through international law will also help mitigate some of the challenges facing our oceans. [Learn more about Life Below Water here.](#)

On June 8 we celebrate World Ocean Day to remind everyone of the major role oceans have in everyday life. [Learn more about World Ocean Day here.](#)

U.N. INTERNATIONAL DAYS

June 4

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression

It is a sad reality that in situations where armed conflict breaks out, it is the most vulnerable members of societies – namely children, who are most affected by the consequences of war. The six most common violations are recruitment and use of children in war, killing, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access. [More](#).

June 5

World Environment Day

The United Nations, aware that the protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue, which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world, designated June 5 as World Environment Day. The celebration of this day provides us with an opportunity to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. Since it began in 1974, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries. [More](#).

June 7

World Food Safety Day

Food safety has a critical role in assuring that food stays safe at every stage of the food chain - from production to harvest, processing, storage, distribution, all the way to preparation and consumption. With an estimated 600 million cases of foodborne illnesses annually, unsafe food is a threat to human health and economies, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and marginalized people, especially women and children, populations affected by conflict, and migrants. [More](#).

June 8

World Ocean Day

We celebrate World Oceans Day to remind everyone of the major role the oceans have in everyday life. They are the lungs of our planet, providing most of the oxygen we breathe. The purpose of the Day is to inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean, develop a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean, and mobilize and unite the world's population on a project for the sustainable management of the world's oceans. They are a major source of food and medicines and a critical part of the biosphere. In the end, it is a day to celebrate together the beauty, the wealth and the promise of the ocean. [More](#).

June 12

World Day Against Child Labor

The International Labor Organization (ILO) launched the World Day Against Child Labor in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labor and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. Each year on June 12, the World Day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child laborers and what can be done to help them. [More](#).

June 13

International Albinism Awareness Day

People with albinism face multiple forms of discrimination worldwide. Albinism is still profoundly misunderstood, socially and medically. The physical appearance of persons with albinism is often the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which foster their marginalization and social exclusion. This leads to various forms of stigma and discrimination. [More](#).

June 15

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Virtually all countries are expected to see substantial growth in the number of older persons between 2015 and 2030, and that growth will be faster in developing regions. Because the numbers of older persons are growing, the amount of elder abuse can be expected to grow with it. While the taboo topic of elder abuse has started to gain visibility across the world, it remains one of the least investigated types of violence in national surveys, and one of the least addressed in national action plans. [More](#).

June 20

World Refugee Day

In a world where violence forces thousands of families to flee for their lives each day, the time is now to show that the global public stands with refugees. To do this, the UN Refugee Agency launched the [#WithRefugees petition](#) in June 2016 to send a message to governments that they must work together and do their fair share for refugees. On World Refugee Day, held every year on June 20th, we commemorate the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees. This year, World Refugee Day also marks a key moment for the public to show support for families forced to flee. [More](#).



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