



What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? Now!

By Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia, SSND UN-NGO Representative

On September 17, about 75,000 people participated in the *March to End Fossil Fuels* in New York City. This was an intergenerational, interfaith, multicultural march in which voices united to demand a ban on the use of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas which provide 80% of the world's energy.



“What do we want? Climate justice! When do we want it? Now!” was the chant that young people chanted throughout the march. It stuck in my mind.

On the way home, I tried to imagine a world without fossil fuels and using clean energy. I also asked myself, what is going to happen to all the workers and their families whose livelihood depends on the fossil fuel industry? What would substitute for all the products made with fossil fuel derivatives? What are the alternatives?

At a [press conference on June 15](#), António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, in some way responded to my questions. He stated that the problem was not only fossil fuel emissions, but also fossil fuels. He also said: “The solution is clear: The world must phase out fossil fuels in a just and equitable way – moving to leave oil, coal and gas in the ground.”

What do you think about Mr. Guterres' response? What do you want to propose?

On the journey of personal Ecological Conversion Advocating for Mother Earth

By Sister Jean Greenwald, SSND, Central Pacific Province

In a conference I attended many years ago, I heard the question, “When you throw something away, where is *away*?” The question startled me and brought tears. I imagined our Earth choking and coughing while saying, “*I can't breathe!*” This disturbed me in another image I had of our beautiful home: huge bouquets composed of varieties of lifeforms, stemming from Earth, filling spaces across the planet ... ALL GIFT from our loving God. They are dying; the bouquets are shrinking! What can I do about this?



Where is *away*? This question has guided me to be more proactive in my purchasing, recycling, and *trashing* practices. My ministry at the Generalate in Rome is general service. One of my responsibilities is to purchase products for personal and household needs, as well as to dispose of items after they no longer serve their purpose. I try to avoid buying plastic or limit the amount purchased. If it is necessary, I buy larger-sized products made from recycled materials, which can serve more than one purpose after they are used. They refill smaller containers purchased earlier. Rome has a disposal system for many recyclable products. I educate others and myself about what *to do/not do* when disposing of items so that we are as successful as possible in placing small amounts of trash in the ‘container’ *Earth*.



Mother Earth is our advocate in life. I must reciprocate in advocacy for her. As she dies, we die, too. *Laudato Si'* is good for me. “There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions [...] when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.” ([LS 211](#)) It resonates much in me!

Integral Ecology Project

Sr. Susana Tomatti, SSND and Diego Garcia, School Pastoral Ministry, Province of Latin America and the Caribbean

Enlightened by the *Laudato Si'* Encyclical from Pope Francis, Colégio Nossa Senhora da Glória, in Francisco Beltrão, Brazil, created an Integral Ecology Project, which aims to develop teaching and learning processes grounded in the concept of integral education.



As a School Sister of Notre Dame School, which has Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation rooted in our charism and taking as reference the pillars of integral ecology in the *Laudato Si'* Goals, we sought to deepen and understand the role of each individual in improving relations between all creatures on the planet.

We engaged in the *Laudato Si'* Week by screening the film [The Letter](#) with the students. We promoted dialogues and activities on the themes raised in the film. Culminating this activity was a final assignment in which the 7th grade wrote a letter to Pope Francis expressing their concerns with the current climate crisis and giving recommendations to take better care of our Mother Earth.



Also noteworthy among the Integral Ecology Project's activities was the creation of a Peace Mantle, made from patches painted by all the students, which became a symbol that Peace is built together in the search for unity among our diversity. Connected with the Season of Creation theme: *May Justice and Peace Flow Like a Mighty River*, the 72-m² mantle was unveiled on the school's façade for the entire community, celebrating the International Day of Peace on September 21. Committed to the *Shalom* Network, we took on the responsibility of caring for each other and our planet through actions that mobilized students, educators, families, and society in general.

See more at [Gloria for a Culture of Peace](#) (Choose to see this video in your language. When you begin the video,  click on the 'gear,' then click on subtitles, and after that click on automatic translation; select your language.)

International Day of the Girl (IDG) – October 11

By Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia, SSND UN-NGO Representative



The Working Group on Girls invited girls from around the world to express their thoughts through art on the IDG theme: *Invest in Girls' Rights: Our Leadership and Wellbeing*.

Representatives from Canada, Peru, Türkiye, UNICEF, and UN Women praised girls for their leadership and encouraged them to continue speaking up about their hopes, challenges, and concerns.

The IDG Summit was a combination of in-person and virtual participation. Our students from Notre Dame

High School in St. Louis, Missouri, USA attended the event online. Additionally, the UN-NGO Office was one of the sponsors of the IDG Summit.

Although the IDG Summit has ended, the discussion is ongoing. You and your friends may want to reflect on the following: How can the world prioritize girls' rights? What steps are necessary to guarantee the well-being and rights of girls?

78th Annual Session of the United Nations General Assembly

By Sister Beatriz Martinez-Garcia, SSND UN-NGO Representative

The General Assembly is the main forum for all 193 members of the United Nations to discuss international issues in conformity with the UN Charter. This year's theme is "Rebuilding Trust and Reinvigorating Global Solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals for peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all." This theme is a plea to all Member States to renew their commitment to leave no one behind. It calls for stronger global multilateralism and for innovative strategies to bring the Sustainable Development Goals back on track.



Member States endorsed declarations to address the needs of vulnerable people: a) [Fight against Tuberculosis](#), b) [Universal Health Coverage](#), c) [Coordination to prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics](#), and d) [SDG Summit Declaration](#), which reaffirms the commitment to accelerate the achievement of the 17 goals, of which only 15 percent are currently met.

Despite the world's experiencing of a multifaceted global crisis, I ponder: How do these goals inspire and invigorate communities? How do the SDGs offer hope to the impoverished and the planet? The UN Secretary-General stated, "The SDGs aren't just a list of goals. They carry the hopes, dreams, rights, and expectations of people everywhere."

Sustainable Actions in São José Hospital

By Sister Isolene Lofi, SSND, Province of Latin America and the Caribbean

São José Hospital in Criciúma, Brazil, has been concerned with the integral care of the environment and is committed to involving collaborators in the vital care of people and the environment in our journey to build a culture of integral sustainability. We share the belief of Pope Francis that “*Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.*” ([LS 13](#))



We offer ongoing training for awareness and evaluation, monitoring, and audits to verify the effectiveness of our actions toward sustainability. Our Health Service Waste Management Program Committee monitors waste from its generation until its final disposal to mitigate environmental impact. Non-contaminated items such as paper, glass, cardboard, plastic, electronics, LED lamps, and iron are recycled. We collect used cooking oil in partnership with Bio Ole. We use sustainable green internet and electrical cabling, which is fully recyclable and made of resin from sugar cane, reducing CO² emissions. It is also flame-retardant and halogen-free. We consume hydrocarbon gas, which promotes clean burning, avoids greenhouse gas emissions, and supplies steam to the laundry, heating water for showers and cooking. Our electricity is from renewable sources and purchased directly from local production.



We have witnessed that when a person becomes aware of how interconnected she is to all creation and feels loved, respected, and cared for, she is likely to transfer all these into her relationships to

caring for our common home. There is a painful cry from all creation, echoing in every corner of the universe. We know that continuing to take responsible actions in the present will make a difference for a sustainable future for the next generations.



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“I hope the UDHR75 [75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights] initiative... will allow us to rekindle the spirit, the impulse, the energy and the vitality that led to the Declaration 75 years ago. The language and the spirit of the Human Rights Declaration have the potential to overcome divisions and polarizations. It can make peace with nature, our planet, with each other and point the way to sustainable development for future generations. The light of the Declaration can shine in the daily lives of individuals and communities all over the world, in their neighborhoods, in schools, offices and on the streets. But this requires our generation, including young people, to give the Declaration new life, to take ownership of it and to repurpose it to meet the needs of our times and the challenges of our future. In 2023, I invite everyone all over the world to take up the torch of human rights and use these rights to forge a common future of dignity, freedom and justice for all.”

Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([video](#))

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via della Stazione Aurelia 95, 00165 Roma · tel. +39.06.6652.01 fax: +39.06.6652.0234.