

# Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

## Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours

### Migration



December, 2018

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*In order to find peace,  
migrants are willing to risk their lives on a journey  
that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering,  
and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal.*

Pope Francis

The quote above proclaimed on the first day of 2018 by Pope Francis in his World Day of Peace Message is appropriate as we end a calendar year when migration was prominently featured in global news headlines. As we begin the Advent Season, commemorate International Migrants' Day and celebrate Christmas the quote is also a stark reminder to us that the Holy Family were migrants. Specifically they were asylum seekers, who left Bethlehem and sought safety in Egypt under threat of death to their newborn son, Jesus. There are many "holy families" on the move throughout the world today. This issue of JPIC News, with a focus on migrants, invites us to journey with them through the Advent season, to hold them in our hearts and most of all to welcome them into our countries by advocating for immigration policies that reflect the compassionate, healing and liberating charism of Bon Secours.

December  
JPIC Days of Remembrance

December 1  
World AIDs Day

December 2  
Anniversary of the Deaths of  
Maura Clark, Ita Ford, Dorothy  
Kazel and Jean Donovan

International Day  
for the Abolition of Slavery

December 10  
Human Rights Day

December 18  
International Migrants' Day



December 20  
International Human Solidarity  
Day

#### Global Migration

There are approximately 244 million international migrants globally -- 3.3% of the world's population. 57% of refugees come from just three countries: Syria (6.3 million) Afghanistan (2.4 million) and South Sudan (2.3 million). (UN)

#### Advent – Week 1:

**Be watchful! Be alert! Be aware!**

Turkey currently hosts more than 3.5 million Syrians – the highest number of refugees in the world – and has long boasted of an "open-door policy" towards Syrians. Now, as Russian and Syrian government forces close in on Idlib province people trying to escape what is expected to be a bloodbath, have found the doors to Turkey closing. Turkish police have stepped up checkpoints and raids, arresting Syrians without documents or permits to travel outside the cities where they registered. Provincial authorities have effectively halted registrations for new arrivals, leaving them unable to work legally or even visit a hospital, and vulnerable to arrest. The Turkish authorities' own 2017 figures say that more than 50,000 Syrians were apprehended as 'illegal migrants'.

Source: The Guardian



**BE WATCHFUL** of news stories about migrants during this Advent Season. **BE ALERT** to how these immigrants are depicted in the news. Do the media show their faces so we can relate to their suffering or are they pictured as a mass of anonymous people? **BE AWARE** of opportunities to speak on behalf of immigrants and ways to be a welcoming presence to them.

*Sisters of Bon Secours... Women of healing... defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)*

Migrant Caravan from Honduras



### Advent – Week 2: Prepare the way of the Lord... Repent

A caravan of thousands of migrants fleeing Honduras, half of whom are girls and women, is making its way to the United States to seek asylum. Gangs, poverty, and threats of violence and death are the impetus for this dangerous migration. All over the globe migration is occurring for similar reasons.

*“The way we treat immigrants and refugees is the way we treat Jesus himself. There may be political, economic, and personal reasons for an unwillingness to love immigrants, but according to Jesus, there are no spiritual ones.” (Stephen Matts, Sojourners Magazine)*

For what do we need to **REPENT** this Advent?

What attitudes and policies in our own countries prevent us from welcoming immigrants?  
How can our charism of compassion help bring healing to the divisive rhetoric on the issue of immigration?

### Advent – Week 3:

The spirit of GOD is upon me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor.

The total number of South Sudanese refugees has now passed 2 million. It is the largest refugee crisis in Africa. Sadly, 65 percent of South Sudanese refugees are under the age of 18. A majority of South Sudanese refugees are finding refuge in neighboring Uganda. Currently, Uganda is hosting more than 1 million refugees - 82 percent are women and children. More than two million additional people have been forced to flee their homes but still remain inside the country.

Source: UN Refugee Agency

One way the Church is “bringing glad tidings” to the poor people of South Sudan is through **Solidarity with South Sudan**. Sisters, priests and brothers from a variety of congregations and countries are working together with lay personnel to help the South Sudanese become teachers, registered nurses, midwives, sustainable farmers and pastoral agents. **Friends in Solidarity** supports the capacity building work of **Solidarity with South Sudan** and is committed to raising awareness of the situation in South Sudan and raising funds to promote the vision of a just and peaceful society in Africa. The Congregation of Bon Secours is a member organization of **Friends in Solidarity**. To learn more about the good work these organizations are doing in South Sudan go to [www.solidarityfriends.org](http://www.solidarityfriends.org) and <http://www.solidarityssudan.org/>. If you are interested in making a Christmas donation, both organizations have a link on their website to do so.

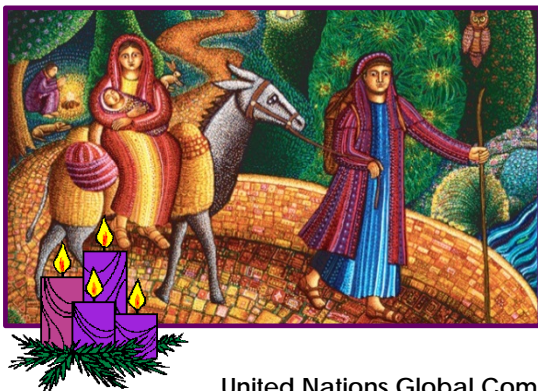
South Sudanese Refugees



*“When immigrants are the victims of xenophobia, racism & political rhetoric, it’s up to followers of Jesus to be their most fervent defenders and to love them as Jesus did and does.”*

(Stephen Matts, Sojourners Magazine)

### Advent – Week 4: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.



During this last short week of Advent let us pray for all migrants in the name of the Holy Family who shared a migrant’s journey so many years ago.

#### Prayer to Jesus, the Immigrant

Jesus, as an infant you fled to Egypt with your mother Mary and Joseph.  
You were a vulnerable family in a foreign land,  
looking for shelter and sustenance.

Help us to welcome those like you who cross our borders today.

Give us hearts of compassion, a humane response,  
and laws that respect the dignity of all immigrants. Amen.

Adapted from Education for Justice

#### United Nations Global Compact on Migration

The global compact for migration is the first, inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. In September 2016 the General Assembly decided to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. In July 2018 UN Member States finalized the text for the Global Compact and the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will be held on 10 – 11 December in Marrakech, Morocco.

Read about the Global Compact on Migration here:

English: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

French: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/fr/pacte-mondial-pour-les-migrations>

Spanish: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/es/pacto-sobre-migraci%C3%B3n>

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**An Ecological Our Father:** At the recent ECT meeting, Sr. Nora Jimenez shared a beautiful version of the Our Father that reflects our care for Earth. The prayer is included with this JPIC Newsletter.



## ECOLÓGICAL OUR FATHER



### **Our Father**

Who art in the forest, in the sea, in the desert and in the city,  
hallowed be your creation filled with development, strength and life.

May your wisdom come to us to protect and to develop the beauty which you have given us  
that is in the buds and in the rainbow, in the water, and in the fertile Mother Earth,  
in the warm breath of the sun and in the fresh darkness of our rest.

Your will be done so we may be human persons  
who will take up the challenge to protect the vital process of your creation.

Give us today the greenery of each day in the prairies and in the mountains,  
in the garden and in the dying Earth.

Forgive our irresponsibility for not taking care of what you have given us.  
Forgive us for polluting our earth.

We challenge each other to urgently abandon our work of destruction.

And lead us not into desertification that takes us to death,  
which denies your work and destroys lives.

Free us from conformism so that our lives be transformed  
into dynamic strength which reproduces life.

Amen.

(Sister Sr. Nora Jimenez used this Ecological Our Father for morning prayer during the ECT meeting on October 23.)