



JUST Love

FEBRUARY 2017



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

Happy Birthday to *JustLove* which began publication in February 2013! Let's celebrate some of the ways in which Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Seton Associates, and our collaborators and friends, have engaged in reflection, action, and advocacy for peace, justice and ecological integrity in the past year:



- We have responded to over 50 action alerts on such issues as protection of child immigrants and legal representation for them, health care access, human trafficking in labor supply chains, vulnerable peoples in the fishing industry, deportation of Central American refugees, day of prayer for children in Syria, the Paris Climate Accord, the International Day of Peace, protected status for Haitian immigrants, defense of the Affordable Care Act, the Gun Violence Sabbath, and a variety of environmental issues.
- We have collected thousands of dollars for anti-trafficking causes including \$800 for the St. Josephine Bakhita Scholarship Fund for educational opportunities for formerly trafficked women. We are in collaboration with the Sisters of Charity of New York and Halifax to offer a retreat for trafficked women in 2017.
- We have provided housing for women seeking asylum in several SC communities and have collaborated with RAMP Refugee Assistance Morris Partners in welcoming and settling a Syrian refugee family.
- Through *Las Samaritanas* ministry, we sponsored 4 retreat days in which hundreds of immigrant Hispanic women have participated and

conducted 4 monthly support groups for immigrant women.

- Celebrated Earth Week as a collaborative effort by the three institutions on our campus – the motherhouse, the Academy of Saint Elizabeth and the College of Saint Elizabeth including a workshop on water issues, a “Jar the Earth” planting activity at the college, and a prayer service and tree planting on Earth Day.
- Engaged in interfaith anti-racism activities with the churches of Madison, NJ including a Martin Luther King Day prayer service in Holy Family Chapel.
- We have met monthly in two Ecospirituality Groups at the motherhouse and the Villa and have reflected on *Laudato Si'*, the new cosmology, climate change, water issues, ecology and the vows.
- We have sponsored advocacy events in the motherhouse dining room for sisters and co-workers: Bread for the World Offering of Letters, Diapers in Detention.
- Presented the 2016 Mother Xavier Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity Award to Sister Barbara Aires, SC.
- We have collaborated with a host of JPIC organizations such as-NETWORK, Justice Conference of Women Religious, US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, ROAR: Religious Organizations Along the River, ROW: Religious on Water, First Friends, RAMP, NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

Take a few minutes for a prayer of gratitude for the many ways our sisters and associates worked, prayed, and advocated in 2016 for a more just, peaceful, and verdant world. Listen for what the Spirit might be calling you to do in 2017. You might conclude your reflection time with this prayer of Vincent de Paul:

Jesus, our Savior, during your life on earth you practiced charity and the support of others incomparably more than anyone else. You met all the affronts of life without resentment.

Hear our prayer and bestow on us the same spirit of charity with which your heart was ablaze. Give us the spirit of openness and welcome that you showed even to enemies.

May God's dream be realized in us. By following in your path may God be glorified and may our example draw others to God's service. We join prayers with those of Mary your mother and of the whole Company of Charity either alive on earth or living forever in your heart.

Amen.

(adapted from a prayer of St. Vincent de Paul - For the Spirit of Charitable Support of Others)

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH



In New York's Central Park stands this monument to James Marion Sims (1813 -1883) who is celebrated as the father of modern gynecology. His most significant work was to develop a surgical technique for the repair of vaginal fistulas, a severe complication of obstructed childbirth. What the monument doesn't mention is that Sims experimented on enslaved African American women, without their consent, and without the use of anesthesia. His monument is a reminder how racism underlies so much of American culture. Commit yourself to some anti-racism work this month. Here are some resources:

-Read 2016 National Book Award Winner *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram Kendi. Book may be borrowed from the PJIE Office pjei@scnj.org.

-30 Resources to Help White Americans Learn About Race and Racism <http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/07/white-americans-learn-race/>

-Anti-Racism Resources for Teachers <http://raceinstitute.org/anti-racism-resources-for-teachers-2/>



DATES IN FEBRUARY

2 World Wetlands Day <http://www.worldwetlandsday.org/>

4 Birthday (1913) of Rosa Parks "The only tired I was, was tired of giving in."

6 International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation <http://www.un.org/en/events/femalegenitalmutilationday/>

8 Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, patron of Anti-Trafficking. At this link find a prayer service for her feast <http://www.unanima-international.org/wp-content/uploads/BakhitaPrayerService.pdf>

14 Send a valentine to your favorite peace, justice, ecology advocate.

24 International Stand Up to Bullying Day <http://standforthesilent.org/?gclid=CMvUkrv9qNECFZqKswodBmYIVw>