



JUST Love

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

Peace House of Hospitality- Sisters of Charity Collaborate in Welcoming the Stranger

The Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity Priority Issues of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth state: "In faithfulness to our long tradition of welcoming the stranger, we advocate for the undocumented, immigrants and peoples on the move and address policies that compel them to leave their homelands." The Sisters of Charity embrace this mandate in a variety of ways. We advocate against the restrictive and punitive immigration and refugee policies of the Trump administration. We work with RAMP (Refugee Assistance Morris Partners) and have helped in welcoming three refugee families to our area. Some of our convents have welcomed refugees on a temporary basis; an asylum seeker from Sudan has lived in one SC community for several years. Sister Elise Gittrich, completing her service as member of the SC General Council, is beginning a new effort to welcome refugees in collaboration with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace. Sister Elise shares her feelings below on starting this exciting new endeavor.

I am inspired and energized by our 2015 Direction Statement which states: *We, The Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth ... seek healing for our world through the transforming love of God. Impelled by boundless Charity we strive to collaborate with others to promote right relationships and the common good of all people and creation...*" I answered a call to collaborate with the CSJP's to open the Peace House of



Sister Elise (fifth from the left) joins in prayer with members of her new community and of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace Leadership Team.

Hospitality at 78 Grand Street, Jersey City, NJ. The house will welcome women seeking asylum and young women who want to experience their relationship to God's people more seriously. In 2003 I visited the displaced peoples' camps in Monrovia, Liberia where I witnessed unbelievable conditions. Men, women and children were living in mud huts, bathing in filthy streams and barely existing. My heart was torn apart as the mothers begged me to take their children back to America. I was changed, and I was never the same. A passion grew in me once again as I shared life with asylum seekers in El Paso, Texas for 7 years.

I feel that same passion and desire to become a part of this new ministry as God returns me to the poor who have more to offer me than I can imagine. Vincent asked, "What more can be done?" I hope to be a part of this MORE.



The Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity Priority Issues of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth state: "Through education and advocacy we promote the full flourishing women's lives in church and society."

One way in which this is done is through Las Samaritanas (The Samaritan Women) ministry. Las Samaritanas offers days of reflection and monthly support groups for immigrant Hispanic women. Recently 70 women gathered for a day of reflection led by Sister Veronica Mendez, RDC. The women acted out with great creativity the story of the women at the well in John 4, reflected on their own capacity to be proclaimers of the gospel, and enjoyed laughter, music, and a delicious lunch.



The Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity Priority Issues of the Sisters of Charity state: “We strive to live in harmony with Earth and to foster policies of ecological sustainability especially regarding climate change.” Read below how the students and staff of Mother Seton Regional High School in Clark, NJ are greening their school.

Mother Seton Regional High School Cares for the Environment

Isabella Felix '19

When faced with the question of how to protect and preserve an entire planet, what can a single student do? At Mother Seton, students take the challenge head on. This January, seniors Claudia Abrantes, Isabella Felix, and Jaismeen Kaur created a video showcasing the many projects and programs that utilize the environment and the people it is a home to in order to create solutions to the problems that harm it. One thing we did not include in the video (which had a time restriction) was the fact that we have had solar panels on our roof since 2010. From them we are able to supply much energy from the sun and save thousands of dollars each year in energy costs.

One of the most effective actions that students at Mother Seton perform is the simple task of recycling. The recycling club collects bins from each classroom on a weekly basis and properly disposes of recyclable materials. In addition to bottles and papers, we also send dried out markers to Crayola Color Cycle where they can be reused.

When we don't dispose of recyclable materials, students reuse them in other ways. Members of the Eco Arts Club use their creativity to make useful items such as ornaments, jewelry, and even tables. Other materials are utilized by students in our Engineering Design class. Rather than focusing only on the present, these girls plan for a greener future by creating models for sustainable housing.

On top of the various methods of recycling that we practice, many students also care for the environment in a more hands-on approach. A generous grant has allowed us to build a garden to grow fresh produce that is both used by our own cooking classes and donated to those who are in need. Another group of students who get to know the environment better is the environmental science class. This group performs various experiments such as testing pH in

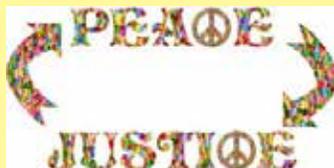
stream water. By learning about the earth, they are more equipped to save it.

Those who do not participate in the clubs and classes mentioned are definitely not excluded from our school's eco-friendly efforts. A recent addition to our school facilities allows everyone to take part: new and improved water fountains. Since the last filter change, we have saved more than 25,000 bottles. In the hallways, many girls carry thermoses and reusable bottles which they can easily refill at our fountains.



At Mother Seton, we teach our students the skills they need to succeed in the world. But for them to have a clean and healthy planet to succeed in, they have to know how to protect it starting as soon as possible. Every day is another step towards a better planet.

Check out this video on Mother Seton's Green Efforts by students Claudia Abrantes '19, Isabella Felix '19, and Jaismeen Kaur '19. <http://motherseton.org/2019/04/05/mother-seton-environmentally-conscious/>



Justice, Peace, and Ecology Dates to Remember in May

1-International Workers Day/St. Joseph the Worker

7-Anniversary (1968) of the Catonsville 9, Catholic activists who burned draft records in protest of the war in Vietnam.

9-Birthdays of Peter Maurin, founder of the Catholic Worker (1877), of Daniel Berrigan, SJ, war

resister(1921), of Sophie Scholl, resister to the Nazi regime (1921).

24-Pope Francis (2015) issues landmark encyclical Laudato Si' Check out our Six Weeks with Laudato Si' Calendar https://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/SIX_WEEKS_WITH_LAUDATO_SI_2.pdf