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Editorial

« The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.... »

Pope Francis Laudato-Si', 13

The Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary are part of this movement to protect our planet and to «take care of life in all its forms». Our 2022 General Chapter Orientation reinforced the Congregation's 2021 Declaration of Integral Ecology.

In each of our apostolic Regions, the Sisters and their collaborators in the mission are committed to living an ecological conversion. This conversion involves identifying the means and implementing the objectives that will help preserve the environment, revisit our relationship with God and with one another, and improve the living conditions of vulnerable people.

This new bulletin, produced by the members of the Congregation's International Committee for Integral Ecology, presents various activities carried out in our mission countries. Yes, let's dare to change! Every gesture counts.

Together, let's commit ourselves to caring for our common home!

Paule-Marie Ndjom, SSCM
General Secretary

May Justice and Peace Spread

In union with all our SSCM sisters around the world, we celebrate in the chapel of Montgeron, France, the birth of our Founder on October 4, 2023, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the opening of the Synod on Synodality and finally the Season of Creation.

Particular emphasis is placed on the Season of Creation. Our décor reflects the proposed logo, and special



attention is paid to the penitential prayer.

A Sister from each community lays down a stone because justice requires living in peace, without conflict with others, and building good relationships with the whole of creation.

The Psalm of Creation reminds us to give thanks to God for the beauty of His Creation. John's Gospel invites us to delve deeper into thirst and the rivers of living water. The sermon given by Father Spiritan emphasizes certain points taken up from the message of His Holiness Pope Francis, which I quote: "As we celebrate this Season of Creation, let us linger over these heartbeats: ours, those of our mothers and grandmothers, the heartbeats of creation and God's heart. Today, they are not in harmony, they do not beat together in justice and peace. Too many people are prevented from drinking from this mighty river... The outer deserts are multiplying in our world... We can, we must prevent the worst consequences from happening. There is so much we can do, if like so many streams and torrents, we join together in one mighty river to irrigate the life of our wonderful planet and our human family for generations to come."

Sister Anne continued her sermon by talking about our Good Father, whose life was not a long, tranquil river. His testament reminds us of his call to simplicity, his concern for fraternal life and simple living. Laudato Si' invites us, as did our Founder, to let the Word of God transform our hearts.

On June 11, 1906, he wrote: "Progress, more or less slow or rapid, will be obtained by humble self-defiance, by the spirit of prayer and the fidelity of love in small and great things. Your soul will then be like the tree planted by the waters; it will always be full of life, sap, and fruitfulness; Plunge your roots into Jesus, through union with Him; draw, and pump His divine sap by your ardent desires for His love and glory; and let yourself be guided and led by Him, following His good inspirations" (Testament of a Father. P. 245).

The universal prayer takes up some essential points: "God alone can create, but it is up to us to enhance what He creates. God alone can give peace, but it is up to us to unite. God alone can give strength, but it is up to you to support. God alone can give hope, but it's up to you to restore confidence.

The offertory enlarges our setting with a loaf of bread "homemade" by our Sister Ghislaine, bunches of grapes



from Sister Martine's family garden, and finally a basket with a symbol of the commitment of each of our communities: "To care for the vulnerable; to care for one another," our commitments symbolized by the names of the children and people we care for. The hymn "God alone" brings our celebration of this Season of Creation to a close. I thank all my sisters in the France region for their commitment and sensitivity to Creation in all its forms.

Anne Dhios, SSCM -France

Dare to Make a Difference!

Ecology has become the most important focus if we are to save our planet. It has become an uphill effort because of the descent of many who believe our planet is not in danger. It is easier to claim misinformation than to stop small issues like throwing garbage wherever may land, or putting bottles, cardboard and aluminum in marked containers for recycling.

The Pope's *Laudato Si'*, is one of the best articles out there calling for every, man, woman and child to do their part. In the film "The Letter" the Pope spoke with five people from Senegal, the Amazon, India and Hawaii, each of his guests spoke of the conditions in their respective countries; the essence of their conversations was the need to work together to make the changes needed to save our world.

The focus of Sr. Carol's visit with each community was how we felt about the movie and what we learned about conditions worldwide. It was moving to hear those present with the Pope speak of their countries and their desire to work together. They each learned something from each other and acknowledged the similarities in their stories. They saw that we need to see that we can do more together than as individuals.

Following the viewing of the Letter, Sr. Carol encouraged each community member to create a picture of what most touched us and what we see as immediate changes we each can make, steps we can take as individuals and as a Congregation. These posters were shared at our Province Days in August, with each one sharing their reactions. It was a very moving exercise and one we could use to build our goals for the next year.

The Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary, Holy Family Province, are focusing on what we as a congregation can do to make a difference in each of our houses. We have challenged ourselves to **make a difference**. We can begin by being more conscious of ways



to recycle, one step is to separate our garbage and take what can be recycled to recycling centers or put recyclables in recycling containers for pick up.



We can take items like clothing, electronics, glass, old appliances, furniture and so much more to designated organizations that accept these items. They secure it into one-ton parcels which get picked up by another company that pays them so much a ton. The funds they get are used to purchase food items people can purchase.

In the past year trees, in Kankakee, have needed to be taken down due to rotting, we have replaced them with other trees, three of which are fruit trees that we're sure the deer will enjoy. One of the trees was more than 350 years old and fell one day during a really bad storm. Sr. Carol and the council discussed what could be done with the trunk that was left there, it was approximately eight feet tall. We thought it might be possible to have it made into something in keeping with our charism. It was decided to see if it could be carved into a Walking Madonna. Sr. Carol consulted with a couple of wood carvers and was pleased to be told there appeared to be enough good wood there for carving.



Last year Mercy Community downsized into a smaller house. We acknowledged that three sisters living in a 12-bedroom house was not in keeping with our desire to live out our vow of poverty; as well as it being much too big to

care for. Our long-time home was sold to an organization that helps homeless women and victims of domestic violence, which is in keeping with our Charism.

Another step taken to promote care for our use of energy was to install solar panels on our new home. Twenty-one panels have been mounted on our roof and we look forward to seeing how they provide savings for our community.

We have begun planting shrubs, flowers and trees to add beauty to the property as well as providing cleansing of our air. This is a project we will continue in the coming year to give us and those around us something to look at, as well as in keeping with the care our neighbours have taken in their yards.



**Karen Carlson, SSCM
United States**

The Season of Creation

This year, in the province of Saint Joseph, the Environment and Social Justice Team prepared documents inspired by the activities proposed by the Laudato Si' movement and sent them to all the houses in the province with a letter. In every community, we marked Creation Month with a

decoration, a prayer, a rosary, a nature walk, a reflection on the theme of Pope Francis' message, and a celebration of the Word.

At the Provincial house and in several Jardins d'Évangéline communities, as well as in small houses across the province, we experienced a celebration of the Word with a gesture of commitment to Creation. Here are a few photos of the event:





Waterville Picture

Some groups celebrated the plants they care for. The sisters took advantage of this beautiful month to go for a walk in nature. What a wonderful opportunity to praise the Creator for so much beauty!



Here are a few photos from Les Jardins d'Évangéline:

Everywhere, we took time to marvel at and bless the loving God who fills us with his gifts. We took advantage of this month to pray for all living beings, especially those affected by climate change.



We also became aware of our lack of respect for the planet. I'm amazed at the extent to which, everywhere, we've put our efforts into taking better care of Creation, the gift of our God.

We want to continue these gestures and prayers throughout the year, as we recognize our responsibility towards biodiversity.

With Amos, we rejoice that justice and peace are spreading like a mighty river.



Gisèle Pouliot, SSCM-Quebec

Young and old alike see life through green-coloured glasses



Youth education



An educational activity with children from the Marie Moisan daycare center, where they discovered the parts of a plant and how to care for them.





Children at the Marie Moisan workshops reuse colored sheets to create Origami figures.



Manual work with children from the Santa Cruz del Norte catechesis, reusing leaves and materials.



Samples of some of the toys made by the sisters for the children at the Marie Moisan daycare and for the workshops, using empty deodorant and other containers.



Landscaping for a community garden.



The community garden, whose produce will be eaten and shared with people in need,



Make ornaments to sell for Mother's Day using reused materials: cans, paper, cardboard and plastic.

Reuse of used cards



Virgen Argelia Donatien, SSCM

Jean Tabi College Celebrates the Season of Creation 2023

The first school with an ecological option in Cameroon, Jean Tabi College, under the management of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary, has been committed to environmental protection since 2011. To achieve this, a committee has been set up by the school administration to work daily to meet the objectives of this commitment, through a wide range of activities including waste collection and sorting, training in the recovery and recycling of materials, the development of green spaces, particular attention to the use of water and electricity, the cultivation of community gardens and the sharing of harvested produce, the raising of chickens, and the raising of student awareness through the Friends of Nature Club (environment club).

At the start of this new 2023-2024 school year, officially launched on September 5, 2023, the activities of the Jean Tabi College environment committee in collaboration with the pastoral care department were essentially devoted to "The Season of Creation".



Every year, from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for this international celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. Our Green School wanted to highlight this time as a community of co-creatures, and members of all that God has created.

Under the guidance of Sister Hortense Victorine Nyamouth, Servant of the Holy Heart of Mary, Principal of Jean Tabi College, a series of activities is carefully selected from the "Guide for the Celebration" published by members of the ecumenical leadership of the Season of Creation.

Outdoor Worship

The ball starts rolling with a liturgical celebration. On September 28, 2023, at noon, an open-air mass is held on the college campus. The celebrant, Father Jean Augustin, a Spiritan and chaplain at the college, will lead students, staff and all those present in meditation to fully celebrate God's creation, emphasize the importance of nature, confess ecological sins, and commit to healing and restoration measures.



Contemplative Outdoor Walk

The following day, September 29, at noon, the contemplative walk consists of a mini-pilgrimage around the college grounds, with stops at symbolic sites: the fountain and the garden under the blanket of Brother Sun. Through the recitation of the Laudato Si' rosary, participants meditate on God's gift of creation and our response to it, to be in deeper communion with all life. The walk ends with a prayer for the Season of Creation.

Cleaning and Redesigning the Ecological Path

Since 2021, during the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of Jean Tabi College as a school with an ecological option, the Jeantabienne community has undertaken to restore this corner of the school campus, which bore witness to ecological injustice (a rugged site conducive to the deposit of all kinds of waste).



The ecological path was thus created. As part of the Season of Creation celebrations, the last activity scheduled by the school management was the restoration and clean up of the site by eco-responsible people, students and staff. On the morning of Saturday, September 30, 2023, all those involved in the manual work were delighted to be able to make the long corridor of almost 250 m, with steps made from recycled materials (used vehicle tires and bottles...), once again passable, along the rugged site bordering the college. Given the enthusiasm generated by these atypical celebrations, we can be sure that participants will pass the flame of protecting the common home around them to guarantee the planet's sustainability.



Vincent Omog VI, SSCM Affiliate, Cameroon

Notre-Dame-des-Victoires College in Mvog-Ada, a friend of creation

Over the past year, the Collège Notre-Dame des- Victoires has joined the list of Friends of Nature with the creation of the Laudato Si' club, to commit to protecting our environment. The club brings together students accompanied by lay educators and nuns.

Meetings are held every Wednesday after classes to discuss the cries of the earth and the actions to be taken in the educational environment so that we can all live the ecological spirituality and embark hand in hand in the beautiful ecological boat for a healthy environment. To achieve these objectives, several initiatives have been taken, including raising awareness, screening the film "La Lettre", sorting waste, recovering plastic bottles to make brooms, and organizing a day without modern ringtones to draw attention to the use of electricity (back to basics with the sound of the tam-tam), and putting up a plaque with the message "La Terre pleure" (The Earth cries) to awaken people's consciences.



Celebration of Season of Creation 2023, CNDV is very involved!

Scheduled to run from September 1 to October 04, 2023, the Collège Notre-Dame des Victoires took advantage of this time of grace to commune deeply with our sister Earth, carrying out several activities with the collaboration of members of the Laudato Si' movement, Yaoundé circle. Saturday, September 02, 2023 (the day of the traditional solemn entry of parents, students and staff) was an opportunity for us to experience the opening of the Season of Creation through ecumenical prayer inspired by the "Guide".



After the prayer, Sister Aline Rosette Marie Amogo, Principal of the school, spoke to the audience about the cries of our earth and the need for everyone to take concrete action to protect our environment.

Ecological Pilgrimage

On September 23, 2023, in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, a few members of the Laudato Si' Movement and staff from the college initiated a pilgrimage to Mvolyé,



starting at the Place de la Miséricorde and ending at the Cenacle, with the following activities: recitation of the rosary along the way, ecumenical prayer and exchanges on the activities to be carried out during the time for creation.

Sweeping the Central Street of the Mvog-Ada District

Again thanks to the synergy between members of the Laudato Si' Movement and the staff of the Collège Notre-Dame-des Victoires, the central street in the Mvog-Ada



District received a good clean sweep under the curious gaze of passers-by, who thought that a new hygiene and sanitation company had sprung up to compete with the existing one; but no! Creation weeps, and with this gesture we wanted to make our brothers and sisters aware that we are all called to take action to care for our common home.

Closing of the Season of Creation

October 4 in the French-speaking parish of Saint Joseph, in communion with the whole Church, we brought to a close this time of grace that has truly immersed us in a profound communion with our earth. Hoping against hope, the activities carried out at the Notre-Dame-des-Victoires College in Mvog-Ada in connection with environmental protection are bearing fruit; just take a look around and you'll see how clean our spaces are, how the college is embellished with plants and the upkeep of the ecological garden that welcomes students, parents, staff and visitors at the entrance to the college. Together, let's be nature lovers and protect our environment.



Aline Rosette Marie AMOGO, SSCM, Cameroon-DRC

Celebrating in Nature



As the Novitiate courtyard is vast, several groups of families and students from the "San José Obrero" school have asked to spend a day in contact with nature.



The community shares this asset as a way of valuing and caring for creation and nature. By enjoying the trees and greenery in general, they also become aware of the need to take care of them. We see how much human beings need these natural spaces to praise their Creator and share fraternal moments.

Sorting Waste



At the Resistencia affiliates' meeting in September, Pope Francis' message this year on caring for the planet was reflected. We shared about small actions that are done daily, such as sorting waste. One of the families suggested bringing their containers for shopping, rather than receiving plastic bags, which dirty the city and the planet. In addition, we pray for the Pope's intention and pledge to spread any message that leads to a greater awareness of justice in caring for the planet.



The Villa Elba Novitiate community has been sorting its garbage since the beginning of the year. Cardboard, plastic bottles and cans are collected and handed over to a secondary school teacher who, with her pupils, donates them to the municipality of Resistencia, in exchange for points towards prizes for the school. Sister Maria Beatriz Gómez is in charge of sorting and delivering everything collected throughout the month in the community. She usually fills the whole car.

Giving New Life

Another initiative born in the region, Sister Juana Gómez makes handicrafts from recycled objects; the photo is of the frames she paints. She also makes bags from plastic containers. The aim is to give a second use to what we often throw away.



Margarita Batalla, SSCM, Resistencia, Argentina

*"We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all."
Pope Francis, Laudato Si', 14*



Commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of Jean Tabi College as a school with an ecological option

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