



ECO-NEWS SSCM

General Administration, 2029, Holy Cross, Montréal (Québec) Canada H4E 2A4

Springtime 2024

Number 3



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Pre-novitate- Mbalmayo-Cameroon

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Editorial

On March 22 and April 22, we celebrated with the world community, the World Water and Earth Days. From 19 to 26 May 2024, we join with all Catholic Christians around the world in celebrating the 9th edition of the Laudato Si' Week, whose theme is "**Seeds of Hope**". We give thanks to the Lord for the progress made since the publication of the Encyclical Laudato Si' in 2015.

An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits. L.S. 209, Yes, we can plant positive actions on the soil of our planet every day through our small gestures which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, treat other living beings with care and kindness, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, reuse and don't throw away too quickly...L.S. 211.

One of the major ecological challenges of the coming years is to reduce the use of plastic with the final goal of eradicating it. Omnipresent in everything from food to clothing to cleaning products, it is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. In addition to its worrying effects on human, animal and wildlife health, plastic takes several hundred years to decompose. We can take action by avoiding single-use plastic products as much as possible, and by buying products with less packaging.

In this third edition of our green newsletter, we share with you the acts of love and seeds of hope that have been sown in our regions in recent months.

Paule-Marie Ndjom, SSCM
General Secretary

Environmental Care

With winter winding down, the ground has been watered with the melting of the snow and allowed to recover from all that it was used for last year. It is time to begin the planning for our gardens and what trees, shrubs and plants we will plant to beautify God's creation.



Our new home in Urbana has many areas to plant perennials and shrubs. Our new deck provides a perfect landscaping area for dwarf shrubs and colorful flower beds. We will plant a vegetable garden again this year, hopefully the wildlife will refrain from eating the plants before the fruits can grow.

In Batavia the area near the maintenance man's garage/office will once again be planted with many different vegetation. The above ground planters and fenced in areas provide space to accommodate several types of vegetables that allow them to share the produce. Many new trees have been planted over the last couple of years due to the loss of some of their more mature trees that were either deceased or damaged by storms.

In Kankakee, we lost several trees last year, including one that was 350 years old. All of them will be replaced with a variety of trees, some fruit trees have already been planted near the hermitages that we hope will bring the deer around more often. Sr. Carol Karnitsky has already shared news of the Walking Madonna that was carved from the stump of the 350-year-old tree. Hopefully we will not lose any more trees during some storms.

Our Lady of Peace also has a vegetable garden near the house where the sisters can go out to the porch to enjoy the fresh air and watch the gardens grow. The farmland across the street also provides beauty as the corn and beans grow throughout the summer. The deer seem to enjoy visiting the corn fields as much as the sisters enjoy watching them flourish.

In addition to the vegetation on our properties that provide food for the sisters, many organizations invite people to take part in community gardens. Some of the participants live in apartments, which prohibits their ability to have gardens. Taking part in the community gardens also creates the opportunity to meet people, one of the projects Faith in Action sponsors provides outreach to individuals in independent living facilities and nursing homes where the residents use above ground planters to plant anything they wish. It was at one of these gardens that some residents met their neighbors for the first time, having lived next door to one another for a couple of years.



Taking care of the gifts that God has given us has many ways of giving back to those who participate, as well as to those who can only watch and enjoy the beauty of each plant and the friendships that are formed.

**Karen Carlson, SSCM
United States**

The Environment and Justice Team of the Province of Saint-Joseph

Our concern is to give our sisters the means to better know, love and commit to Creation. **God has loved the world so much...** we too must love it as He does.

We take advantage of world days to communicate information documents, celebrations, slide shows, etc. to our sisters.

On Water Day, March 22, we sent suggestions to all our houses to express our thanksgiving and wonder to God for the beautiful, pure and life-giving water He freely gives us.

At the Provincial House, we took advantage of this celebration to commit ourselves to protecting drinking water, so that everyone has the right to it.



A gesture of commitment on World Water Day. It's our contribution to "taking care" of water, the source of life.

Then, on Earth Day, April 22, we sent a slide show on "Plastic Pollution" to all our communities.

How Can We Combat Plastic Pollution?



Don't Lose Hope

- Progress is being made and momentum is building.
- It's important for everyone to take action against plastic pollution.



We want to show solidarity with all humans and living beings on our planet earth. We're looking for ways to take care of it, especially at a time when climate change is disrupting and even destroying it.

We are proud of all the communities that are committed to living in harmony with the Creator and all creation. We support them on their journey and inform them wherever possible. Soon, we'll be taking further steps in favor of biodiversity and during Laudato Si' week. Let's continue to develop our love for the environment, following in the footsteps of our good Pope Francis, who encourages us to live as committed and responsible citizens.

**Gisèle Pouliot, SSCM
Quebec**

Here are some of the composting and reuse projects carried out by our Sisters:



What does that mean?

All the onion, banana and vegetable peelings, even egg shells, corn cobs, apple cores, coffee grounds, almost everything... we put them every day in our little garbage can, which we received free of charge from the City of Quebec, on our doorstep at the beginning of the year, along with purple bags.

Why purple bags?

So that they are recognized in the waste bin and transformed into organic matter... it's our small part in helping the planet.

Hélène Maguire, SSCM and Noëlline Turgeon, SSCM

Francine, as she sews, sews, darns, recovers a garment with holes, etc., so that she can refurbish the garment to enable it to be worn again.

For her, it's a way of extending the life of the clothes and working for Creation and the economy.

"I'm happy to share with you My Mission, which I strive to live to the best of my ability. Thank you...I thank the Lord for this gift." Francine Morin, SSCM



Congratulations on your interest in and love of Mother Earth!

Gisèle Pouliot, SSCM
Quebec



Taking Care of the Plants

In the face of climate change, nature is suffering. These changes prevent us from contemplating the beauty of nature through plants, flowers and trees. Given the drought that is burning our plants, we have repeatedly sought out black earth from our neighbors to nourish our plants and flowers and bring them back to life. We also used the dead flowers on our mango trees to put on the plants to prevent the sun from scorching the roots and keep them moist.

Prodencia Ngwekah, SSCM
Cuba

2024 Annual Retreat for SSCM Affiliates Cameroon/DR-Congo

"Jesus' View of Creation"



On the occasion of their traditional annual retreat, the Affiliates of the Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Heart of Mary met on March 22, 23 and 24, 2024 at the Casa Claret of the Claretian Missionaries on Nkolbisson Hill in Yaoundé. Three days of exchange, meditation and prayer on the thorny issue of environmental protection, a major concern for our Church. To better grasp the issue and bring the reflections to a successful conclusion, the Affiliates committee chose to focus on **"Jesus' view of creation"**, the main theme of the retreat.

Starting with the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, the speaker of the day, Father Melvin NGWAKONGNWI NEBA, CMF, points out that, after creating heaven and earth and all living creatures, God saw that it was very good (Genesis 1:31). This is why Jesus' view of creation is one of love, goodness, harmony, coherence, order... Jesus looks upon a Creation, which thirsts to be restored to its original beauty, harmony and dignity. The Son of God came to save not only Man but also the beasts, the plants, the waters, the hills, the winds, the soil... The relationship of Man (who has received all powers from God) with Creation must change today by improving itself in order to recover the original harmony. Father Melvin urges each participant to have a "christified" view of Creation, that is, a view full of love and goodness, seeking harmony with our neighbor and other creatures, recognizing and respecting their dignity. Each and every one of us should therefore make a deep individual commitment, for it is from the sum of individual changes that the whole will emerge.



By a happy coincidence, on Saturday, March 23, 2024, the Casa Claret Fathers' community invited the Affiliates group to join them in living out the broad "Earth Hour" movement. Awareness has been raised in all communities, associations and people of good will around the world, so that from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm local time, all lights are switched off.

The aim is to collectively reduce energy consumption by one hour, and thus have a positive impact on our environment. Affiliates were delighted to join in this moment of communion and take part in this concrete action to safeguard Creation.



The Affiliates' 2024 annual retreat comes to a close on Palm and Passion Sunday, March 24. During the celebration, Sister Anastasie BEKONO, Regional Superior of SSCM Cameroon-Congo receives the commitment of new Affiliates and the renewal of commitment of several old ones.

**Vincent OMOG, SSCM Affiliate
Cameroon**

An Ecological Friday at the Collège Notre-Dame des Victoires in Mvog-Ada

Two events in one to highlight our devotion to ecological spirituality.

Friday, March 22, 2024, was an ecological day for the educational community of the Collège Notre Dame des Victoires de Mvog-Ada.

At dawn on Friday, March 22, 2024, as we have done since the beginning of the Lenten season, staff, students and some parents prayed the texts of the ecological Way of the Cross to accompany Jesus in his various stations, praying for the cries of our earth, for those who bear the burden and for those who are forced to bear the burden of environmental disasters caused by our unbridled development.

The ecological Way of the Cross will be followed by an awareness-raising event on the water to mark World Water Day, focusing on the theme "**Water for Peace**". The aim was to raise awareness of the importance of water as an essential resource and its role in conflict prevention.



Given everyone's participation and attention, we can be sure that the message we wanted to convey by praying the ecological Way of the Cross and raising awareness of our sister water, the burning desire to take care of our common home, is being felt more deeply in the hearts of all Victorians, staff and parents alike.

**Aline Rosette Marie Amogo, SSCM
Cameroon**



The Sisters of the General House discover the powerful message of the documentary:



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