



NEW FRONTIERS

Combined newsletter of JPIC Office, Rome / UN-NGO, New York

Society of the Sacred Heart
JPIC Office, Rome / UN-NGO, New York



Welcome to *New Frontiers*. In this issue we highlight ways in which *Being Artisans of Hope in our Blessed and Broken World* has been received in our provinces. A few months ago, Yolanda Jiménez from the JPIC office in Rome, visited Montse Prats RSCJ (ESP) in her inter-congregational community in Morocco. Yolanda shares an account of her experience with Sub-Saharan migrants in this ministry. Solome Najjuka RSCJ (UGK) reflects on her experience of visiting Fukushima, Japan in 2018. She relates this to the

proposed nuclear power developments in her country of Uganda. Two important events through the UN-NGO in New York have focused on imperatives from the JPIC document. Lolín Menéndez RSCJ (ANT) addressed the issue of ‘People on the Move’ in her presentation to the UN-NGO committee on migration. With regard to ‘Caring for our Common Home’, Socorro Martinez RSCJ (MEX) shares her experience of the Synod on the Amazon.

BEING ARTISANS OF HOPE IN OUR BLESSED AND BROKEN WORLD



The diagram above summarises the four imperatives of the JPIC document. Since its introduction to the Society, many provinces have responded creatively and thoughtfully to *Being Artisans of Hope in our Blessed and Broken World*. See, for example, this marker which was designed in Chile. Others have used the document as a framework for evaluation of their ministry. Many are reflecting on the questions in the document in community groups and with

the Family of the Sacred Heart. Some are using the document to raise awareness by means of a calendar or an agenda. Each time we see a new initiative we are inspired to deepen our understanding of this Society-wide discussion which resulted in the JPIC document.



TREK OF HOPE

By Yolanda Jiménez

In Italy, as a cultural mediator, I had given assistance to many migrants that had crossed the Mediterranean sea by boat. I cared for them and tried to do my best to ease their arrival and stay in Europe. Now, I was about to meet them before their crossing.

I had met Montse Prats RSCJ at the JPIC International Meeting in Tagatay in the Philippines in November 2018 and felt passionate about the mission she was carrying with migrants in Tetouan (dioceses of Tanger, Morocco). It was July and it was time for me to go and pay her a visit in her African milieu.

I spent four days with Montse RSCJ, Rosa (Jesus Maria) and Ana (Teresians) in their Martil inter-congregational community in northern Morocco. Daily, we took buses or public-shared taxis and travelled back and forwards to open the doors of the **Trek Amal** project. The project is hosted in the premises of the Tetouan church, the only church in Morocco that can still ring its bells.

Trek Amal (“trek of hope” in Arabic) cares about migrants and their human dignity. Each morning at Trek Amal, the sisters invite migrants to help themselves for coffee and biscuits while listening to their needs. The most requested needs are to do with accommodation, health matters, immigration issues and children-related concerns. The atmosphere, in the WiFi-connected common room, is safe and chatty while delicate and private matters can be talked about quietly in the project office. Hygiene is also an important element of Trek Amal as migrants can have a weekly shower and look for some second-hand clothes. Trek Amal is a pause in the demands of migrants’ daily life. It is a moment where they feel homey and the activities that are proposed to them distract them from their



A Trek Amal migrant's painting

challenging situation. At Trek Amal, migrants can get involved in ping pong tournaments, Spanish lessons, and handcraft activities. Solidarity markets are organised to sell the migrants’ handcrafts and paintings. Migrant mothers receive special attention when attending the weekly mother-child workshops. Thursdays are reserved for group food shopping and cooking to share a “family” lunch. These activities make migrants feel like any other human being having a common life.

I met Jonson, Entekele, Sandrine and Alain (not real names), all from Cameroun, and listened to their European dream. What I listened to was little to do with “fortress” Europe where governments shut doors to migrants. Their dream is full of hope and we need to let it live; dreams cannot be shattered. I thank Montse, Rosa and Ana for being “artisans of hope” for the migrants’ European dream, and for acting as a welcoming Europe in Africa. Keep spreading hope in the African continent!



Trek Amal office

LESSONS FROM FUKUSHIMA: the advocacy against nuclear power in our country is now

By Solome Najjuka, RSCJ

In my immersion experience in Fukushima in November 2018, I saw that we have no lessons ready from this Japanese catastrophe after the nuclear power plant accident left the country with a nuclear contagion in the atmosphere, in the soils, and in their waters, as much as in their collective psyche - all in the quest for energy for development. Evidently, behind each nation's social and economic development looms an insatiable quest for energy. To realize our human needs for health, education, for spiritual growth, cultural advancement, and leisure and all our **"wants"** we require energy to run machinery, to support our journeys, and to carry out a plethora of human activities. Governments across the continent of Africa are devising development policies to become middle-income countries within the medium term. Uganda is a case in point. This phenomenal desire for economic development and its concomitant search for energy, led Japan into a cul-de-sac.

In the 1950s, it was the United States that put forth the proposal to build nuclear plants in Japan, a country in which Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still reeling from nuclear bombing. Having been convinced by the rhetoric of the "peaceful use of nuclear power" Japan resolutely began to build nuclear power plants in areas like Futaba County on the coast of Fukushima prefecture. Voices of protest were soon raised, but were quelled by the reassurance that nuclear energy was "safe and clean". In the second half of the 1960s, a movement developed in Fukushima to strongly oppose the construction of more reactors.

These movements were ferociously fought, while staunch members were given cash to keep mum! In the background, severe pollution problems at the operative Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant were evident. Hiding under slogans, the government of Japan, TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Company) and the mass media, were at this point singing praises of the importance and safety of the nuclear power plants. Lectures, induction courses, plant facilities visits, pamphlets, and school visits made the local people believe the **unbelievable!**

The truth and magnitude of the dangers of nuclear plants only came out after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster that happened soon after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami on 11 March 2011. At this time the people of Japan did not have even the basic knowledge regarding nuclear power and radioactivity. The country now is facing continuous challenges with recovering from the nuclear plant accident that included high-energy radiation that is bound to produce harmful biological effects in living organisms. Intense exposure to radiation can cause

radiation sickness, which is fatal although it may take some years for **some** effects to show. It is recorded that even moderate exposure to radiation can lead to the disruption of the basic cellular-level functions, triggering tumour growths and cancer. This radiation may continue to cause genetic damage to the DNA in individuals' cell nuclei causing the birth of children with severe deformities.

Some key lessons that we learn from Fukushima are firstly, that we should disregard the nuclear energy **"safety myth"**. Nuclear energy production in the reactors and nuclear plants continue to be a lethal venture. Since 2011, Japan faces grave problems of decontamination and disposal of waste. Compensation costs for the evacuated population and for the contaminated individuals are astronomical. While the Japanese taxpayer struggles to pay for the incredible cleaning up exercise, issues of stolen livelihoods, broken communities, lost neighbourhoods and hometowns, cultures and nature are catastrophic. The mental anguish caused by the disaster is as iniquitous as the difficulties in compensation. Due to the spread of radioactive materials that went beyond 20 kilometers, afield, agriculture and food exportation in Fukushima were grounded.

Our developing countries must learn from the experience of Japan. Nuclear energy is NOT a solution to global warming and energy for development. On the contrary, it is the worst choice for Earth's life environment. A third of the almost 30 countries currently considering nuclear power are in Africa. Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan have already engaged with the IAEA to assess their readiness to embark on a nuclear programme. Algeria, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia are also mulling the possibility of nuclear power. The time to educate the populace and to make our voices heard in opposition of nuclear power in Uganda is now!! Let us abort the **"safe nuclear power"** myth in good time. Nuclear power generation is the worst possible choice for life and we know that our bad choices are like chickens, they come home to roost!!

(Adapted from an article written for the *Daily Monitor*, Uganda)



Contaminated soil being collected in black bags from previously fertile land. Photo by Anne Corry

BRINGING OUR EXPERIENCE FROM THE GRASSROOTS

RSCJ at the UN-NGO

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

On October 10, 2019, Lolin Menéndez, RSCJ (ANT) brought her wisdom and experience to New York when she presented to the UN-NGO Committee on Migration. The presentation was based on her extensive research of the Society's work on the ground with people on the move, especially those who have been forced to move due to conflict or climate. Lolin presented some of the "best practices" in the local realities where the Society is present with migrants. Some of the best practices that she elaborated are:

- > Teacher formation
- > Thinking outside the box
- > Caring for the whole person
- > Focus on who is the person in front of me
- > Women with and for women
- > "I am never too old."
- > To be for and among others
- > Collaboration, not competition
- > Moving beyond our own horizons
- > Allow experience to teach us, and interiorize our learnings

Please, watch her presentation on the UN-NGO Facebook page. Follow the link to Facebook Live video:
<https://www.facebook.com/sacredheartattheun/videos/2148073718625989/>

For the full text of Lolin's talk please email Sheila Smith
RSCJ_un-ngo@rscj.org

CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

In March 2019, Pope Francis affirmed the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the way forward to caring for our common home. The Pope reminds us in *Laudato Si'* that the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, approved by more than 190 nations in September 2015, were a great step forward for global dialogue, marking a vitally "new and universal solidarity"... All those involved in dialogue on this complex issue are invited in some way to go beyond their areas of specialization to find a shared response to the cry of the earth and of the poor. Those of us who are religious need to open up the treasures of our best traditions in order to engage in a true and respectful dialogue on how to build the future of our planet. (*Laudato Si'*, 14, 70).

In October 2019, Socorro Martinez, RSCJ (MEX) was present in Rome during the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon. Topics included climate change, women, and Indigenous leadership in mitigating the climate crisis. In a collaboration between the Philippine Duchesne Region Continental Popular Education Network, the Stuart Center in Washington, D.C., and the UN-NGO Office, Socorro shares her experience in English and Spanish via Zoom Webinar.

Webinar links:

English:

<https://zoom.us/recording/play/QQFnb6LaAuh4pJl6qQ1uFmuqWs4dOljSeBPY16URMgWU3Oe-4-QpG5DfQZ3cxON3>

Spanish:

<https://zoom.us/recording/share/3GVdqYUAzFK8jrb5L1MZ4jgpnNFtoAJt9J6xfzlcNviwlumekTziMw?startTime=1573239628000>



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WHO ARE WE?

Society of the Sacred Heart at the UN



Sheila Smith, RSCJ
UN-NGO Representative



Lisabeth Kelly, Volunteer
Gender Equity and Education Associate



Rita Pinto (IND)
Visiting RSCJ



Matías Benítez, Volunteer
Communications Intern



WHO ARE WE? JPIC International Office in Rome



Cuca Maset
Executive Secretary

Anne Corry, RSCJ
JPIC International Coordinator



Yolanda Jiménez
JPIC assistant

SPECIAL DAYS AND UPCOMING EVENTS JANUARY-APRIL 2020

Month	Day	Event
January	1	World Day of Prayer for Peace
January	18-25	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/settimana-di-preghiera-per-l-unita/archivio/en.html
January	25	Chinese New Year
February	8	Feast of St Josephine Bhakita (Patron Saint of victims of human trafficking)
February	10-19	58 th Commission on Social Development. The priority theme is: Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness.
February	25	Shrove Tuesday
February	26	Ash Wednesday
March	8	International Women's Day
March	9-20	Commission on the Status of Women / Beijing +25. The main focus of the session will be on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.
March	22	World Water Day
April	5	Palm Sunday
April	10	Good Friday
April	12	Easter Sunday
April	22	World Earth Day
April	23	Ramadan begins