Toward a Sustainable Community of Life

Proclaiming the reign of God, we strive in union with our associates, friends and co-workers and with all who acclaim the sacredness of nature and the dignity of human life, to bring about a world of truth and goodness, of justice, love and peace as proclaimed by Jesus. Our Way of Life, page v.

Union of Sisters of the Presentation
2016
About this booklet: We, the Congregational Coordinating Team for (Doing Justice), offer this booklet as a resource for reflection, to be used at your own pace, in community and with associated groups. Each reflection includes wisdom from various sources –

- Congregational and IPA vision and directions
- Pope’s Encyclical, *Laudato Si*
- Paintings of Mary Southard
- Resource material, including SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- An infographic illustrating PBVM Justice Network, offered by the Newfoundland Sisters.

As you reflect on each of these resources, we invite you to share your insights with your Unit Justice Contacts at any time.

Purpose of this booklet

🎉 to create space for conversations that enhance our collective consciousness
🎉 to deepen the ‘Spirituality of Being in Communion’ and honour the sacredness of the whole community of life
🎉 to gather the wisdom from local communities who are the heart of the Congregation
🎉 to be enthused and engage in actions flowing from a contemplative stance - being a prophetic presence and voice - locally, nationally and internationally
🎉 to work in partnership with others as Presentation Family.
Helpful guidelines

Format of booklet: The ten reflections are titled with a phrase from the various documents mentioned above. Each reflection is of two pages which include the following:

☆ Short reflective readings
☆ Call for stillness time for five to ten minutes
☆ Suggested questions for conversation
☆ Space for main points from your conversations

Resources: In the last few pages, you will find

- the link to resource material on Union website
- the link to educational material on IPA website
- other links where resources can be accessed
- the list of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Recording the main points from your conversations: It will be helpful to write in the space provided, stating the essence of the conversations after each reflection.

Facilitator(s) in communities: These reflections are offered only as suggestions. We invite you to feel free to be creative in preparing to facilitate the reflection. We encourage you to use them at your convenience during the year in Presentation communities, Presentation Lay Movement and in wider communities.

‘My food is to do the will of God who sent me and to accomplish God’s work.’ Jn. 4:34

We wish you every blessing as you create space for conversations and remain open to endless possibilities.

Antony Tompkin, Lynette Rodrigues, Mary Ivers, Maureen O’Connell
Congregational Coordinating Team for Doing Justice
Reflection 1: Prophetic Presence and Voice…

Inspired by Nano’s example we become, as she was, a prophetic presence and voice in the service of people made poor. We work to ensure that the dignity of persons is respected and their rights upheld, by engaging in compassionate service, especially through various forms of education. As an international Congregation our vision, like Nano’s, reaches beyond our local situations and has a global consciousness and outreach. Our Way of Life C7

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of God’s creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth…The earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. Laudato Si (#92, #93)

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- What is your understanding of the following statement - *We become as Nano was, a prophetic presence and voice in the service of people made poor*?
- How does your communal contemplative stance influence your collective prophetic presence and voice?
- How have you responded to the following call? *Our vision, like Nano’s, reaches beyond our local situations and has a global consciousness.*
- In your opinion, what are the reasons ‘Laudato Si’ has been widely embraced?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 2: Immersed in the lives of the Poor and Marginalised…

The Congregational Gathering 2012 calls us to be immersed in the lives of the poor and marginalised people, who open us to the Mystery of Love, and to be prophetic voices with them for the transformation of unjust systems, locally and globally.

“When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected.” Laudato Si (#117)

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- Share stories of your community in solidarity with people living in poverty
- Identify the different forms of poverty in your area. Name some of the government’s interventions (and others) to overcome them.
- Your government has promised to prepare a National Plan to implement the SDGs and has made a commitment to present a yearly report at the UN on the process and progress of the implementation. Can you make contact with someone in -
  a) your local authority -
  b) member of parliament -
  c) faith-based/non-governmental organisations -

for information and an update on your country’s National Plan for the SDGs?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 3: Personal and systemic transformation…

As Presentation people impelled by the radical gospel of Jesus and on fire with the spirit of Nano, we consciously choose to be drawn more deeply into the mystery of God, the mystery of Oneness and the reality of people and Earth made poor. Energized by this evolving consciousness, we engage in expansive partnerships that move us to personal and systemic transformation. IPA Direction Statement

We are called to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale. It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet. Laudato Si (#9)

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- Share what resonates with you from the above excerpts
- Share stories on what moved you to personal and/or systemic transformation.
- How is the church engaged in conversation and action on Laudato Si in your Parish/Diocese?
- Taking a glance at the SDGs (see pages 24-25), which of them do you think are most urgent …
  - globally?
  - for your country / local region?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 4: ‘Doing Justice’…

At the heart of the International Presentation Lay Movement for Mission lies

**a partnership with the Divine** (attending to God each day and our actions are informed by that commitment);

**a passion for the poorest** (standing with the poorest in society);

**a covenant with creation** (honouring all of creation, living and promoting sustainable lives).

See also - Our Way of Life C9 and D21

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” … “We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.” Laudato Si (#160)

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- What is at the heart of the above readings and what images come to you as you pondered?
- What kind of world do you want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?
- What is the one step forward that can be done by you as a person, as Presentation community, and by the wider community?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 5: In Partnership with others…

We add our voices to those who work for healthier ecosystems and a healthier planet, knowing that where Earth is most exploited, those made poor suffer most. Our Way of Life C8

We use our resources wisely and share them for the good of all. We live in solidarity with those made poor and participate actively in their struggle for transformation. Our Way of Life C21

“Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan. Yet the same ingenuity, which has brought about enormous technological progress, has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries.” Laudato Si (#164)

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- World leaders have determined to take the bold and transformative steps to shift the world on to a more sustainable path. As an international Congregation, what are some of the opportunities that you are availing of, to add your voices to those who also work for human rights and a healthier planet?

- What is your understanding of the structure and functions of IPA? Can you identify the connections between our various ministries on the ground and our presence at the UN? (See Chart on page 29, 30)
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 6: Positive use of Power…

Inspired by the life of Nano Nagle, we witness to the positive use of power towards the transformation of people, especially those made poor. Utilising global networks, we channel our resources towards the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We operate ethically in a spirit of generosity, accountability and transparency. We live simply. Our Way of Life C 64

“Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used.” Laudato Si (#104)

‘Power-with’ based on synergy, where two or more parties working together bring results that would not have occurred if they had worked alone. Because something new and different emerges out of the interaction, we can think of it as “1+1= 2 and a bit.” This is another way of saying “the whole is more than the sum of the parts.” Active Hope by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

What is your understanding of ‘power over’ and ‘power with’?

Who are the leaders - spiritual/political/other - who are role models of ‘power with’?

How are you, as Presentation Communities, witnessing to the positive use of power in promoting transformation of people, especially those made poor?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 7: **Collaboration and Sharing of Resources**

The **Union of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary** unites with the **Australian Society of Presentation Sisters** and the **Conference of Presentation Sisters of North America** in forming the **International Presentation Association (IPA)**. This bonding within the IPA enables collaboration and sharing of resources for the purposes of promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation, locally, nationally, and internationally. Each institute maintains its distinct nature and autonomy.  

Our Way of Life D21

Flowing from our identity as Presentation women, the mission of IPA is to channel our resources so that we can speak and act in partnership with others for global justice. **IPA Mission Statement**

“Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” *Laudato Si (#139)*

**Communal Stillness Time**

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- Share stories of your community/Unit, at your best, in collaborating and sharing resources (personnel, financial, resource material) for mission.
- What has been your experience of living the IPA mission statement?
- What thoughts are stirring within you as you listen to Pope Francis?
- What are your thoughts about networking between similar ministries at Unit/inter-Unit level? If you are interested in this initiative, please inform your Unit Justice Contact.
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 8: Live sustainably…

The Congregational Gathering 2012 calls us to live sustainably, and to use our resources creatively for the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Pope Francis calls us to a “global ecological conversion”: “We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair. Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems.” Laudato Si (#61)

For the first time, every country in the world has pledged to curb emissions, strengthen resilience and join in common cause to take climate action. What was once unthinkable has become unstoppable. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- What images and thoughts come to your mind as you listened to the three short readings?
- Share some stories of recent natural disasters as well as good practices in your local area and in your Presentation community on climate action and climate justice?
- What is the pledge your country has made to curb emissions?
- How are you as an individual and as a community collaborating with your government to contribute to the pledge?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 9: **Compassionate Heart**

It conveys our call to live in mutual love and unity; to listen together with compassionate hearts to the Spirit of God in the cry of Earth and of people made poor; to stand with people in their struggles; to speak and act for justice and healing in the Church and world. *Our Way of Life C10*

Every Unit Community shall have, in keeping with civil and legal requirements of the respective country, and with canonical and congregational requirements:

a. a policy for safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults,

b. guidelines and procedures for professional and ethical practices in all our ministries, guidelines for dealing with interpersonal boundary issues. *Our Way of Life D10*

“There is so much need of mercy today, and it is important that the lay faithful live it and bring it into different social environments. Go forth! We are living in the age of mercy - this is the age of mercy”. - Pope Francis

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- Name some of your Unit Statutes - policies, guidelines, procedures and practices
- During this Jubilee Year of Mercy, how have you been responding to the call of Pope Francis?
- Share stories of your community listening together with compassionate hearts; speaking and acting for justice
- List the names of the organisations in the area with whom your community has worked in partnership
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Reflection 10: We walk one... generating wholeness

Impelled by the Spiralling energy of God, we walk one across all boundaries inspiring hope and generating wholeness. Proclamation at Extended Leadership Teams Meeting (ELTM) 2015

The present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity. Laudato Si #119

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

The Golden Rule at the heart of all the 13 Faiths in this image

Communal Stillness Time

We invite you to reflect and share, using the following questions

- Share your insights on these two images
- Who are the people of other Faiths in your area and how do you engage with them in interfaith dialogue?
- What thoughts and insights come to your mind as you listen to the proclamation at the ELTM 2015?
- From your experience, what are two global concerns affecting people and planet earth that we as Presentation Family could focus on in partnership with others?
Main points from your conversations

You are invited to share any insights or questions with your Unit Justice Contact
Sustainable Development Goals
An introduction to the New Global Development Agenda

After years of conversations, the 193 Member States of the UN, including Pope Francis, declared in September 2015,

‘... We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental...’

Sustainable Development Goals

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
Links to the following resources – available on Union website [www.pbvm.org](http://www.pbvm.org)

See the tabs for Resources & Ministries on Union website


**IPA Justice Works:** September 3, 2015: Resources on Laudato Si - [Laudato Si Study and Action Guide](http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/un-connections/ipa-un-educational-material/) & Care of Creation

**PowerPoint** on SDGs created by IPA volunteer, Ana Ibarra.

**IPA Justice Works:** December 3, 2015: video explaining why sustainable development begins with education

**IPA Justice Works:** January 14, 2016:
- reflection on the Paris Climate Conference;
- comprehensive collections of interfaith curricula and educational resources

**IPA Justice Works:** January 21, 2016: New song "We Love the SDGs" [here](http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/un-connections/ipa-un-educational-material/) and music video “Getting Started with the Sustainable Development Goals” [here]; Another text resource. The lyrics and a "study guide" showing how the words to the song reflect the SDGs -- [here](http://internationalpresentationassociation.org/un-connections/ipa-un-educational-material/).

**IPA Justice Works:** March 3, 2016: Good analysis: Sustainability goals to get action going by Martin Khor.

Each reflection in this booklet is available (A4 size) on the Ministry tab of the Union website – to be used at your own discretion as community or with others.
For Communities to consider ... When you have completed the reflections it would be helpful to gather the communal wisdom from the main points of your conversations and summarise them in the next page. The following questions may be of help:

a) For us who hold the vision of Nano close to our heart, what do you think would be her response for today to these reflections?
b) What ministries - Education/Health/Social/others - are your local Community engaged in and from these how can you contribute to the relevant SDG?
c) If any sister/co-worker would like to network with those in similar ministries at Unit/inter-Unit level, list the specific ministry and the name/community/contact details of the particular sister.
d) Name any faith-based/non-governmental organisations (local/national) with which you are in contact and hope to collaborate on the SDGs.
e) If you have engaged with someone in your Local Authority/Member of Parliament about the National Plan on SDGs, can you share a summary of the outcome of those encounters?
f) Are there two major global concerns that you can identify for us to focus on as Presentation Sisters?

We will be glad to gather the communal wisdom so as to strengthen and further the Unit/Congregational prophetic presence and voice.

Sacred Activism is the fusion of the mystic’s passion for God with the Activist’s passion for justice, creating a third fire which is the burning sacred heart that longs to help, preserve and nurture every living thing

Andrew Harvey
Fruits of your reflections…

We encourage you now to share with your Unit Justice Contact the communal wisdom, insights and suggestions arising out of your reflections on the above questions.
An infographic illustrating PBVM Justice Network
**International Presentation Association (IPA)** is a networking of various Presentation Congregations. The three IPA Directors are - Maureen Watson, Australian Society; Patricia Anastasio, Conference of Presentation Sisters; Mary Deane - Union of Presentation Sisters. IPA incorporates Directors, Leaders, Networker (Elena Hoye, Dubuque Presentations), NGO Representative at the UN (Elsa Muttathu, Union of Presentation Sisters), Justice Contacts/Commission, Sisters and the Presentation Family at large. As IPA, we proclaim to live its Direction and Commitments. IPA Directors communicate with the IPA Leaders when required. IPA Networker and the NGO Representative communicate with the Justice Contacts/Commission and at times with the IPA Leaders. (See ‘Understanding IPA’)

We, the **Union of Presentation Sisters**, commit ourselves to ‘doing justice’ and being the prophetic presence and voice as Nano was, as stated in Our Way of Life and the Congregational Directions. We engage in this through various expressions for the transformation of the whole community of Life.

**The Union Justice Contacts/Commission** communicate with the Sisters, communities and the Presentation family at large.

**Congregational Coordinating Team for ‘Doing Justice’** endeavours to support and encourage Union Justice Contacts/Commissions/Desks, thus strengthening our collective prophetic voice at various levels and our role as IPA. The Unit leadership Justice Link is kept informed of such endeavours.

Through the Initiative **‘Inter-Unit Partnership for Sustainable Community of Life’**, the leaders play a lead role in their respective Units, in communicating with Justice Contacts/Commissions/Desks to facilitate processes that enable Presentation family in 'doing justice' and being the collective prophetic presence and voice at various levels.
A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey toward your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

-POPE FRANCIS, Laudato Si’

Prepared by the Congregational Coordinating Team for ‘Doing Justice’ 2016
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