Justice Contact Update
March 2021

Spirituality and Charism Reflection
She came, the woman from Samaria, she came to the well. She met him, she drank…Living Water.

Across the world millions of women walk miles to fetch water - God's gift - a birthright. Yet both this gift and the gift of womanhood is abused.

“Earth has rightly been called the water planet. We are created mostly of water - it’s essential for our vitality. Earth’s ocean is where all life began, eons ago. Water is life! Water is grace! Water is sacred!

Water is potent. Its presence can change all things forever. We carry its vitality and present day toxicity within us at this very moment.

All of us who share the great mystery of existence have a birthright to clean water. We have taken this sacred reality and secularized it…made it into a commodity - to be sold and swallowed up.

Water is sacramental. It carries the life-giving and loving presence of the Divine. When we thirst and quench our thirst with water we are receiving the gift of life and Divine love within it.

Water is a sacred reality coursing through our beings and is not to be taken for granted. It becomes our songs, our dance, our poetry and our love. It becomes our sorrow and struggle, our prayer and worship.

Water cannot be taken for granted. We must drink it to quench our unending thirst. Let us be thankful for it and thus become springs of living water for ourselves and for our Earth… springs to which others can come and quench their unending thirst.”

John Surette, SJ

Take some time to ponder the story of the Woman at the Well (John 4:4–42) and/or the facts listed above. If you able sit by a waterside place, if not call to mind an image of water.

Consider the water that flows within you. In what ways are you aware of its life-giving presence? Where do you touch and know the love of the Divine coursing through your being?

Consider the plight of those who do not have clean water…those who must walk miles to fetch and carry it. In what ways does this impact on you? What does this ask of you?
Consider your own appreciation of the gift of water…your use and care of it…perhaps your neglect and abuse of it. Where is the challenge for you? What actions might you take?

As you reflect- In what ways are you a spring of living water…for others?
For Earth?

Journal / share with a friend.

“A thirsty man is crying for cool water…water too is crying for his thirsty lips.” Rumi

Spirituality and Charism Committee
Presentation Sisters, Terry Abraham, Maria Lazzaro, & Dorothy Scesny

Click here for a PDF of this month’s reflection

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Programme Action Leader Update

“I’m inviting you to step forward, to be seen, and to ask yourself…If not me, who? If not now, when?” ~ Emma Watson

International Women’s Day is celebrated on the 8th of March and is the day the world celebrates all that women have accomplished in the past,
often, women go unnoticed and are not recognized for the small and large actions they take on a daily basis.

I can think of many Presentation Sisters and Presentation People, who have made a significant impact on my life. Some have made huge achievements in society and others have made an impact by their presence and prayers. All women deserve to be recognized and honoured.

How can you honour women this month? I invite each of you to reflect on women who were advocates for justice and/or who inspired you to be the person you are today. I also invite you to reach out to a girl/young woman, let them know you see them and support them.

International Women’s Day is also a reminder of the work we still need to do for gender equality and to end gender based violence. There are many events happening locally and internationally to celebrate this day.

We look forward to hearing how you celebrated International Women’s Day! Please send in your photos, videos, or a short summary of your participation.

Despoina Afrodit Milaki, our IPA-NGO Representative, invites you to participate in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (15-26 March) and describes how to engage in the events happening virtually in her report below, especially the IPA sponsored event on 16th March “Transforming Gender Stereotypes: Making the uncomfortable conversation comfortable”.

In peace and gratitude,

Mary Therese Krueger, PBVM
IPA Programme Action Leader

Click here for a PDF of this report
Dear friends,

The International Women's Day is celebrated each year on March 8th. International Women's Day is celebrated in many developed and developing countries alike, around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It was officially recognized by the United Nations in 1977.

And in case you were wondering, why 8 March? The date is linked to protests in Russia in 1917, when women were granted the right to vote. Protests began 23 February on the Julian calendar, which Russia followed then and corresponded to 8 March on the Gregorian calendar, largely used around the world today. The theme for this year’s UN International Women's Day (IWD 2021) is “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”. The theme celebrates the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also aligned with the priority theme of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, “Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”. The sixty-fifth session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65) will take place from 15 to 26 March 2021. The UN Commission on the Status of Women is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation, and taking into account the latest guidance from the United Nations Secretary-General and the World Health Organization (WHO), CSW65 will take place in a hybrid format with mostly virtual meetings.
For more information about the CSW65 and the latest programme with the official meetings, please visit here. You can watch LIVE the CSW65 through UN WebTV at http://webtv.un.org in all six United Nations’ official languages.

The International Presentation Association is organizing and hosting a webinar (March 16th, 2021, 1:30-3:00 pm EST) on the elimination of violence against women and gender stereotypes, aiming to make the uncomfortable conversation comfortable in the context of working for justice in the face of injustice. The theme of the webinar is “Transforming gender stereotypes: Making the uncomfortable conversation comfortable.” The panelists in this webinar will discuss the pathways of changing gender norms and for bringing about transformative change. This parallel event will bring together UN and government officials from Tanzania, Thailand and the Philippines, as well as activists from India, US and UK. I am also pleased to announce that among our co-sponsors is the Republic of the Philippines, as well as that the Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN will be among the speakers/panelists. An activist with a lived experience of domestic violence will be also joining the panel. The IPA NGO Representative will moderate this discussion. Find here the updated version of the webinar's concept note, as of February 27, 2021. The final flyer will be distributed to you soon.

As I have already shared with you through email, the event will be hosted on the NGO CSW65 Virtual Platform. The NGO Committee on the Status of Women (NGOCSW) organizes the civil society side of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The NGO CSW Forum runs parallel to the events occurring within the UNHQ. This provides civil society the opportunity to engage in the processes and events of CSW, informing and inspiring grassroots efforts and advocacy needed to empower women and girls. All NGO parallel events will take place virtually on an online civil society networking platform managed by the
1. First, you must have a profile on the NGOCSW65 Virtual Platform to register for the event: For security purposes, everyone is required to sign up for a login to the NGOCSW65 virtual event platform. Anyone is able to view the event and the platform, however, they must be registered with a profile on the NGO CSW65 Forum platform (be an Advocate) to join an event. Registering for the platform is completely free and open to all. Attendees can sign up for a platform’s account in this link: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ngo-csw65-forum-advocate-registration-tickets-137312871495?aff=odeimcmailchimp&mc_cid=6f18119189&mc_eid=e8358789b3.

2. Second, you must also register for the event itself: After you register as an advocate, then you can use the search engine on the upper right corner to find our event (either searching it by the name of the organization or by the title of the event), or you can find the event under the agenda/schedule tab by clicking the date. **Once you have found the event, simply click the “+” green sign and then automatically you are registered and reserve a spot for our webinar.** Please note that simply registering for an NGOCSW65 profile, does not mean that you have registered for our event. You must also follow this step (#2), otherwise you won’t be registered to our webinar.

3. Through this same way (#2 step), you can also register for any other event you might be interested in, after exploring the whole agenda of the 650 events or even network with other advocates in the NGOCSW virtual platform. This is an exciting opportunity for everyone to be part of the NGOCSW activities.

All parallel events will be hosted via Zoom licenses allocated by Pathable (the NGOCSW65 Forum virtual platform company). No parallel events will be hosted via their own Zoom accounts or other virtual meeting technology. In simple words, this means that you will access the event through your profile on the NGOCSW65 platform (Pathable) but this access link will then re-direct you in Zoom app. Therefore, during the webinar you will have access to all of the usual features of Zoom (e.g. chat). You won’t be able to see the other attendees in your screen, except the speakers, since this is the mode of webinar we have signed up for, a less interactive and more informational and presentational format. For better quality, I would encourage you to have the Zoom application already downloaded on your device.

For your own convenience, I highly recommend reviewing the following resources shared with me by the NGOCSW virtual platform team in
Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, queries or concerns. It would be greatly appreciated if you share this info with your networks in order to invite others to join our webinar.

Stay safe everyone!!

Respectfully,

Dr. Despoina Afrodit Milaki
IPA NGO Representative at the UN

Click here for a PDF of this report

Grassroots Updates

Commission on Social Development (CSocD)
Reflection

Joan Kennedy, PBVM, Justice Contact from Victoria, Society of Presentations

Despoina Afrodit Milaki, our IPA NGO Representative invited each of the Justice Contacts to register for the Civil Society Forum during CSocD, February 8-17. I was impressed with the continuing strong commitment, energy, advocacy and cooperation between the NGOs, UN Organisations and the Missions. Each member of the Forum panel highlighted so well an aspect of the CSocD theme “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.”
how the use of technology or the inability to access technology affects vulnerable women. The points for advocacy work were excellent. My learnings from the Forum will enrich my work with a number of Melbourne based Justice groups. The Forum was particularly relevant for my work with Australian Catholic Religious against Human Trafficking (ACRATH).

IPA Executive Director Ann Marie Quinn, IPA NGO Representative Dr. Despoina Afrodit Milaki, and other IPA members attended the Commission for Social Development NGO Briefings throughout CSocD.

Commission for Social Development (CSocD) Reflection

Dorothy Scesny, PBVM, Justice Contact from New Windsor,
Conference of Presentations

In February, I had the opportunity to participate in a webinar, “Serving Across the Digital Divide: Catholic Religious Witness to the Role of Digital Technology in Social Inequalities” organised by the Justice Collation of Religious (JCoR), during the United Nations Commission on Social Development. I always try to take advantage of these webinars as my schedule permits. There were over 200 participants attending on this global webinar!
Religious Sisters from Africa, Philippines, and Latin America shared their lived experience of how women (and their children) are affected by their inability to connect through technology. During this time, especially with the worldwide pandemic, women are desperate to be connected to find ways to care for their families. Each experience was brought to life for the viewers not by words only, but each presentation was enhanced with photos, videos, and interviews with the women seeking food, shelter, and education for their families. It was quite evident that before technology can be had, water and electricity, indeed, an entire network of energy is needed.

I feel that my participation in these events gives life to my ministry as Justice Contact and as a Presentation Sister, desiring to be part of the living legacy of NANO NAGLE.

As Justice Contact for my New Windsor, New York, Congregation I feel that it is my privilege and responsibility to participate in United Nations levels programs sponsored by our own IPA NGO Representative, Despoina Afroditi Milaki.

Personally, I want to support and learn from our IPA NGO Representative, Despoina. She is a very gifted and committed woman of faith. I am grateful to have her represent IPA at the UN level as our IPA NGO Representative. She shares her abundance of knowledge, skills, and leadership among the NGO’s of the various religious affiliations. I am proud to have her ministering with us!

Click here for the YouTube playlist of IPA videos submitted from around the world for the 59th Commission on Social Development (CSocD)

Aberdeen Presentations Wear Orange
On the 25th of each month this year, the Aberdeen Presentation Sisters wear orange to bring awareness to the issue of violence against women in our world. They join with the International Presentation Association to work toward the goal of eliminating violence against women and children, supporting the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

One way that women experience violence is through human trafficking. Trafficking of women and girls is one of the largest commercial enterprises in the world. Trafficking and slavery are linked to other crimes – drug trafficking, human smuggling, rape, torture and money laundering. The FBI reports that, in the USA alone, trafficking and slavery generate $9.5 billion a year.

Join them in raising awareness for this important human rights issue, wear orange on the 25th of every month, share the reason why, and share pictures of you wearing orange with Aberdeen Presentation Sisters on Facebook. #OrangeTheWorld
Read an “Open Letter to Corporate America to Cease Political Spending Now” which was signed by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes

Defining Nonviolence Video
“A Laudato Si’ Focus on Environmental Justice” Presentation and Powerpoint by Catholic Climate Covenant

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**Upcoming Webinars**

**1 March** - Launch of the NGO Grassroots Task Force report "Towards 2030: Grassroots experiences with inequalities"

**3 March** - *Laudato Si’* Community Contemplation (GCCM) - 12pm New York time - [Register here](https://example.com/register)

**5 March** - Monthly *Laudato Si’* Prayer Service (GCCM) - [Register here](https://example.com/register)

**8 March** - “Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world on the way to the Generation Equality Forum” (UN Women) - 10am-12:30pm New York time - [Register here](https://example.com/register)
16 March - “Transforming Gender Stereotypes: Making the Uncomfortable Conversation Comfortable” Webinar (IPA) - Flyer, Concept Note, see IPA NGO Representatives Report to register

17 March - *Laudato Si’* Community Contemplation (GCCM) - 12pm New York time - Register here

24 March - *Laudato Si’* Community Contemplation (GCCM) - 12pm New York time - Register here

9 April - Monthly *Laudato Si’* Prayer Service (GCCM) - Register here

7 May - Monthly *Laudato Si’* Prayer Service (GCCM) - Register here

4 June - Monthly *Laudato Si’* Prayer Service (GCCM) - Register here

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**Upcoming Dates**

1 March - Zero Discrimination Day - Learn more

3 March - World Wildlife Day - Learn more

8 March - International Women’s Day - Learn more

15 - 26 March - 65th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65) - Learn more

20 March - International Day of Happiness - Learn more

21 March - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - Learn more

21 March - International Day of Forests - Learn more
22 March - World Water Day - Learn more

24 March - International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims - Learn more

25 March - International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade - Learn more