The way we live and work these days has been irrevocably altered but not dominated by the COVID-19 landscape that surrounds us. Because of our commitment to working for global justice from a contemplative stance in unity with the whole of creation, we are people of hope. In the words of Raphael Consedine PBVM speaking of the work of Nano Nagle: “She did not spend her energies on anger or on violence in response to injustice, nor did she let herself be paralysed by the magnitude of the problems around her. Accepting the suffering which her decisions entailed, she gave to others the gift of life and of a future.”

We acknowledge the progress made on vaccine production and roll-out in some but not all countries across the globe. But we cannot fail to recognise the inequitable distribution, and that the North-South divide still provides a predominant statement of inequality. Pope Francis has given his backing to the campaign calling for the suspension of coronavirus vaccine patents to boost supplies to poorer countries. In a recent video message, he said there needs to be: “Universal access to the vaccine and the temporary suspension of intellectual property rights”. He also voiced his condemnation of the “virus of individualism” that “makes us indifferent to the suffering of others.” We continue in our work to combat this indifference, wherever we find it. Our prayers in these days remain with the people of India for an end to the devastation there.

Listening to and observing the chaos and suffering prevalent in the most fragile areas of our world makes us resolute in our commitment to the fulfilment of the “IPA Directions”. Wherever we find ourselves, let us open our compassionate hearts to practice non–violence of mind and heart. Peace after all is the seed of justice.

In this second edition of IPA Matters, we look at the ways non-violence of mind and heart is being promoted and acted upon from within and outside the IPA. Our recent Webinar on June 1st “Called to Respond: Sharing Together the IPA Challenges & Opportunities in the COVID-19 Era” allowed us as Presentation people to seize the opportunity to come together to discuss practical ways of implementing the priority actions from the 7th IPA Assembly. This brought home to us the profound appreciation of just how far-reaching we are in the realisation of our work in honouring the IPA Priority Actions in advancing the rights of women and children, the earth, and indigenous and tribal people.

This very positive event was an inspiring opportunity to come together to share and to hear the stories of opportunities taken to respond to suffering across the world through the ‘sharings’ of our people in the USA, Australia, and Thailand. Let us continue going forward with our obligation to give the gift of life and a future to those we come into contact with.

At this time, we pray the prayer of Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body”.

Christ has no body now on earth but ours.

Blessings,
Ann Marie

Message from Ann Marie Quinn PBVM, IPA Executive Director

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IPA Webinar, June 1st

140 Presentation People participated in this webinar, titled “Called to Respond – Sharing together the IPA challenges and opportunities in the COVID-19 era’, to bring about IPA’s Priority Actions – Women and Children, Care of Earth and Indigenous and Tribal people, all linking with the IPA UN Advocacy Focus of “Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children.”

The IPA team joined by the webinar presenters Billie Greenwood, (Justice Promoter Dubuque 2nd row, far left); Lynne

During the event, IPA NGO Representative Dr Despoina Afroditi Milaki launched the new IPA booklet on the “Elimination of Violence against Women and children”, titled ‘RESPOND – ADVOCATE – PREVENT, Guidance and practical tools on how to take action’. Click here to read the booklet.

IPA Directions

“We Presentation People embody the compassion of Jesus and Nano. We practise non-violence of mind and heart as we listen into the chaos and feel the pain of our time. We find strength in connectedness trusting that our feet know the way and our hearts carry the light.”

Presentation Sister Shalini Mulackal is a feminist theologian at the Vidya Jyoti Theologate in Delhi, India. During her keynote address at the 7th IPA Assembly, she invited participants to share the issues, both local and global, that disturb them.

Sr Shalini also told the story of how during the Indian independence movement Mahatma Gandhi coined the Sanskrit word “Satyagraha”, meaning firmness in truth, to reflect the challenge of our Christian faith to take the side of justice.

In contemplating our readiness to live the total rejection of injustice in our world, she asked participants, “Are we really as disturbed as Nano was when she returned to Ireland after her comfortable and enjoyable life in Paris?” Acknowledging that only love is worthy of faith and the way of the struggle for justice is non-violence, Sr Shalini challenged us to be compassionate and to act for justice for those issues that disturb us as they did Nano.

“Non-violence means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed”. It is a culture of “love” and “peace.”

(Mahatma Gandhi & Martin Luther King)
Non-violence Promise Group – Dubuque

On the 10th of April, the Non-violence Promise Group of the Sisters of the Presentation hosted a Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) training workshop, titled ‘Courageous Conversations’.

The training was facilitated by Dr Alan Heisterkamp, Director of the Center for Violence Prevention and Mentors in Violence Prevention Leadership Institute at the University of Northern Iowa, USA.

A valuable takeaway from the session is the steps for responding to problematic situations, as below:

1. **Direct**: Respond directly with words or deed to the aggressor or victim or both
2. **Protocol**: Report, inform or advise the person in charge, authority figure or supervisor
3. **Indirect/distraction**: “Shift the focus,” use humour, tell a story, raise current events, ask about weekend plans
4. **After the fact/next day**: Return later when things calm down. Check in. Let the person know you care about them
5. **With an ally or friend**: Recognise another peer’s disapproval of the situation and act together.

Living non-violently in communities/families (Laudito Si 70) reflection – India South Unit

Sr Christy Xavier from the India South Unit recently wrote a thought-provoking reflection published in “Embracing Care For Our Common Home”. In it, she considers choosing non-violence as a way of life by using compassionate Non-Violent Communication (NVC) and Non-Violent Relationships (NVR) that “may take time but never fail”. You can read this reflection here.

Fratelli Tutti: A Foundation for Advancing Nonviolence in a Violent World

In its statement about Pope Francis’ encyclical, Pax Christi International says his “clear analysis of global violence sets the stage for a deeper understanding of nonviolence” and that it “offers a clear foundation for developing and integrating the theology and practise of nonviolence in the teaching of the Church, an effort to which Pax Christi’s Catholic Nonviolence Initiative is dedicated.” Watch the video here.

Pax Christi International Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

In a Pax Christi International article, titled “Gospel nonviolence for a Laudato Si future”, its Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) sets out its belief that non-violence is essential to reaching the seven sustainability goals in the spirit of Laudato Si. Read the article here.

Earlier this year during a protest in a northern Myanmar city, Catholic Sister Ann Rose Nu Tawng, SFX knelt before heavily armed police officers and begged them to spare “the children” and take her life instead. The photo from this moment went viral around the world and it is the basis for a helpful ‘Discussion guide for faith groups’ prepared by the CNI. Click here for the guide.
Joe Nagel OFM

You can find out more about Pax Christi International and its Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) and their work in an article written by Joe Nangle OFM - a Pax Christi USA Ambassador of Peace and a member of the Assisi Community in Washington, D.C. In the article, he talks about a document CNI has been working on with the Dicastery that is a companion to Pope Francis’ 7-year plan, every aspect of which he believes has been informed by nonviolence. Read his article here.

Beatitudes Centre for the Nonviolent Jesus

This centre was founded in California to help teach and promote the nonviolence of Jesus and work for an end to racism, poverty, war, nuclear weapons, and environmental destruction. The centre is doing this by creating a new culture of nonviolence through Zoom classes and workshops, podcasts, conferences and in-person retreats.

Its Founder and Executive Director is Fr. John Dear. He is an internationally known author, activist and teacher of peace and nonviolence, and has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Read more here.

“Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world would do this, it would change the Earth.”
(William Cuthbert Faulkner, American writer and Nobel Prize laureate)

IPA UN Advocacy Focus: Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children

IPA Webinar on Transforming Gender Stereotypes

Work honouring our advocacy focus continues around the world through IPA events and initiatives. On 16th March 2021, during the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, IPA NGO Representative, Dr Despoina Afroditi Milaki hosted an engaging IPA Webinar, titled “Transforming gender stereotypes: Making the uncomfortable conversation comfortable”. The event covered the pathways for gender stereotypes and norms and transformative change, and it featured nine distinguished speakers all of whom shared their thoughts and wisdom on this topic. Watch the recording of this event here.

Our Journey Toward Justice

The Justice Promoters of the Sisters of the Presentation, Dubuque, have developed a strategic action plan to help eliminate violence against women and children and support justice issues. Each month they ask their congregation to see, reflect and act. In February they reflected on Pope Francis’ prayer:

Universal intention - Violence against women

“We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.”

They asked their congregation to act by praying to God to “look upon the victims of domestic violence with compassion and guide their journey through the legalities of obtaining an Order of Protection so they might begin a new life free from fear and pain’ and to “learn ways to take action to help end violence against women.”
Also, Billie Greenwood, Associate and Justice Promoter, Dubuque has written an empowering article, titled ‘Supporting Life for All, Women and Children Free from Violence’, also in the Summer 2021 edition of Presentations Doorways. Read the article here.

**Elimination of Child Labour**

Almost one in ten of all children worldwide are in child labour. According to a joint report by the United Nations International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, 160 million girls and boys around the world are affected and more are at risk because of the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Both agencies say the progress to end child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years. Other findings in the new report, titled ‘Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward’, suggest that 72% of all child labour occurs within families; boys in child labour outnumber girls by 34 million; and child labour is much more common in rural areas, with almost half happening in Africa, followed by Asia and the Pacific. Read the full report and recommendations to stop child labour here.

**IPA Eradication of Poverty 2020 Project, Papua New Guinea**

In her update about this project, Sr Anne Lane PBVM, IPA Justice Contact, Papua New Guinea, writes, “The characteristics of Presentation People around the world since our foundation is to respond to the needs as they occur”. To read more click here. Sr Anne Lane shares that while the Leadership Team and the other two are of two Presentation Sisters, Elizabeth and Bernie, who get their inspiration from Nano Nagle. By inviting these two young women into their homes, they have ensured their safety and have given them the opportunity to continue with their education. To watch these videos click here.
Nano Our Heart for Mission
- Sr Raphael Consedine

The 10th Commitment from the 7th IPA Assembly is to ‘continue to work toward collaboration and partnership building’, a sentiment captured in this prayer written in 1994 by Sr Raphael Consedine PBVM.

Nano, Edmund, formed in your separate stories in the heart of the one Lord, you looked on the hard realities of your world and saw the Spirit’s boundless possibilities.

Living always closer to your people, you learned to share the Spirit’s urgent longing: “that they may have life and have it to the full.”

Hearts broken open to the world’s pain, hearts afire for justice and compassion, hearts free for service, joyful in welcome, steadfast to endure, you walked with firm steps, hands open to receive life and share life, learning to be sister, brother with each one especially with the poorest, with the least.

At home in the Presence of the One, your lives show forth a unity not clear when you walked your separate journeys here, a unity of vision and of heart.

Together teach us all who walk your way how to live as brothers, sisters, now in our world which yearns in travail still to be re-born, one family in God.

“IPA Justice Contact Update”
Read the latest update shared by our IPA Programme Action Leader (Mary T Krueger PBVM) here.

Notice Board
Moving Forward with the Laudato Si’ Action Platform
Recording of webinar presented by ‘Sowing Hope for the Planet’ from 9th June 2021. Watch the video here.

Ann Marie Quinn PBVM
IPA Executive Director
Presentation Sisters
Lucan, Co Dublin, K78 A6Y5, Ireland
IPA Office Mobile: +353 86 4116160
execdirectoripa@pbvm.org

Internationalpresentationassociation.org
International Presentation Association
@IPA_UN
IPA YouTube Channel