

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



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*We, women of healing,
commit ourselves to defend and care for all of creation.
In light of this, we will **boldly** address the causes of climate change.*

Chapter 2019 Chapter Direction Statement, Congregation of Bon Secours

Each year we begin the Advent season with the cautionary gospel verse, "Stay awake!" This wise warning from the gospel writer is an invitation to keep our eyes open, spirits alert and sleeves rolled up to do what must be done in our day to birth the kingdom of God – a kingdom where justice and peace are the defining qualities. This admonition to "stay awake" and pay attention comes to us almost daily as we hear and read about the alarming urgency that is needed to address climate change.

From the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to young climate activists like Greta Thunberg we are all aware that a deep interior conversion is needed if life on our planet is to survive and thrive. At our recent Chapter, we Sisters of Bon Secours, renewed our commitment to address climate change and to do it boldly. As you read and reflect on this issue of JPIC News, spend time with the reflection questions, talk about them with others and share your bold ideas for addressing climate change as a response to our Chapter direction.



Advent – Week 1:

"It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep."

October, 2018: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released their latest report on the potential impacts of a rise in global temperature of 1.5 degrees Celsius or more. After examining over 6,000 scientific studies they concluded that "global carbon dioxide emissions need to start to decline well before 2030" to avoid the most severe consequences of global warming. It said "global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate."

December, 2018: World Health Organization (WHO) said that emissions from fossil fuel-powered electricity, transportation, and other sources are "a major contributor to health-damaging air pollution, which every year kills over seven million people."

May, 2019: A landmark UN biodiversity report provided another stark statistic: One million animal and plant species on Earth are threatened with extinction, and rates of extinction are accelerating.

In spite of all of this alarming news, scientists agree it is not too late to adopt meaningful mitigating strategies to prevent the worst effects of the climate crisis.



**What BOLDNESS does the climate crisis ask of you personally, the Congregation of Bon Secours and the Bon Secours Family?
What are your ideas for BOLDLY addressing climate change?**

December
JPIC Days of Remembrance

December 1
World AIDS Day

December 2 – 13



December 2
Anniversary of the Deaths of
Maura Clark, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel
and Jean Donovan

International Day
for the Abolition of Slavery

December 10
Human Rights Day

December 18
International Migrants' Day



December 20
International Human Solidarity
Day

Sisters of Bon Secours...Women of healing...defending and caring for all creation (Mission Focus)

Advent – Week 2: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

In the final document from the Synod for the Amazon, the bishops defined “ecological sin as an action or omission against God, against our neighbor, the community, the environment and future generations.” This social sin is one for which we truly need to repent.



At our recent International JPIC Committee meeting, Sister Carol Zinn, SSJ challenged us to address the climate crisis first by owning my/our own complicity in this social sin. John the Baptist, a prominent Advent figure, calls us to repent.

Pay holy attention to your own complicity in the climate crisis.

Ask yourself:

Who is benefitting from the harm I/we are causing the planet? (eg. fossil fuel industry)

Who is suffering because of the harm I/we are causing the planet?

“I used to think that the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation and we scientists don't know how to do that.”

Gus Speth, Environmental Lawyer and Advocate

During this Advent Season notice how subtly selfishness, greed and apathy play a role in your consumption habits: use of fossil fuels, meat consumption, throwaway items, etc.

REPENT of these spiritual disorders.

Advent – Week 3: On that day the desert and the parched land will exult. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song.



“Every year we celebrate the holy season of Advent, O God. Every year we pray those beautiful prayers of longing and waiting, and sing those lovely songs of hope and promise.” ~Karl Rahner

Advent is a season of longing, of hope and of promise for the day when...

In ancient times this longing was for the birth of the Messiah. In our day it is a longing for the birth of the reign of God – a deep heart-felt yearning for peace coupled with justice.

What is your hope for our common home this Advent?

What kind of planet do you want to leave to the children 7 generations from now?

Imagine a thriving healthy planet. What would it take to make this a reality?

“We must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and the use of plastics, changing our eating habits especially excess consumption of meat and adopt more sober lifestyles.”

Final Document, Synod for the Amazon

Greening Your Christmas

When buying gifts, commit to spending 5 to 10 minutes researching ethical and sustainable sources. A quick internet search may help you support a small-scale producer and protect the goodness of creation. The story of your gift may inspire its recipient, and the gift will directly benefit the producer and his or her local environment.

“A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment.” (Laudato Si', 222)



Advent – Week 4: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means “God is with us.”

God, who calls us to a generous commitment, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. God does not abandon us nor leave us alone and God's love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. (Laudato Si' #245)

As we come to the end of this calendar year, reflect on the positive contributions you have made to care for creation these past 365 days.

As you look to the year ahead, what new ways forward can I and the Congregation of Bon Secours explore to boldly care for creation?



International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS (Peru)
Sr. Fran Gorsuch, CBS (USA)
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