CONNECTIONS:

CRC-JPIC Ontario Network

MAY 07, 2019

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Mark Your Calendar!

This year's CRC-JPIC Ontario Network Meeting

November **12-13**
Sisters of Providence Spirituality Centre
Kingston, Ontario

Editor's Note

Dear JPIC Ontario Members,

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November 12-13
Sisters of Providence Spirituality Centre
Kingston, Ontario

We welcome you to our new volume of Connections, the JPIC Ontario Network Newsletter! In this volume, you will find calls to actions and accounts of things that are going well in Canada. The Core Committee members wrote all the articles.

Sister Marlene Kelly highlights progress achieved by the Government of Canada in reducing poverty. Social justice workers can only rejoice that some of their demands to the government are bringing some results. This overall progress is an encouragement to continue advocating for our brothers and sisters who still live in dire poverty, in some cases caused by human greed and consumption.

Monica Lambton's article urges us to continue our advocacy for a nuclear-free world. It reminds us that action on nuclear weapons is not an issue from the past, but rather an urgent critical issue today. I can only agree with Monica that 'working for disarmament is indeed working towards change on many issues of ecological and social justice'.

Promoting ecological conversion also means to heal our relationship, to build new ones, strengthened by dialogue and common action among Indigenous people and settlers. Sister Priscilla Solomon's article indicates that Catholics are engaged in that journey of reconciliation through the Guadalupe Circle members' engagement and sharing beyond the Circle itself.

Bridget Doherty's article warns us about the urgency to take actions. 'We can't prevent some of the negative impacts because climate change is already here,



but we have the power to avoid the worst-case scenario', she writes. She suggests practical ways of doing the right thing, right where we live.

If we think of trafficking as being a concern for some remote countries, Sister Lois Anne's article reminds us that it may be happening in our own city through exploitation of migrant workers. Even the Police forces need to be made aware that such situations do exist in Ontario.

We hope you enjoy the reading and invite you to take action!

Sincerely,

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POVERTY

Poverty in Canada



In a country as prosperous as Canada, everyone should have a real and fair chance to succeed. The Government of Canada is focused on growth that benefits all Canadians, investing $22 billion since 2015 in efforts to help grow the middle class and reduce poverty.

“An imbalance between rich and poor is the oldest and most fatal ailment of all republics.”

Plutarch, Greek historian

Statistics Canada released results in 2017 Canadian Income Survey, which revealed that the Poverty Reduction Strategy interim target of reducing poverty by 20 percent by 2020 had already been reached—a full three years ahead of schedule. By meeting this target, Canada has reached its lowest poverty rate in history.

The poverty rate of 9.5 percent in 2017 represents the lowest rate of poverty ever based on Canada’s Official Poverty Line (formerly known as the Market Basket Measure). This historic low poverty rate represents an important step towards the Government of Canada’s goal to cut poverty in half by 2030.

The Government of Canada is working hard to reduce the number of Canadians living in poverty and strengthen the economy. With the help of programs such as the Canada Child Benefit and the top-up to the Guaranteed Income Supplement, there were 825,000 fewer Canadians living in poverty. More are expected to be lifted out of poverty as the impacts of these investments are realized in the years to come.

“Fewer Canadians than ever are living in poverty and more are joining the middle class. However, we know there is much more to do. That is why we remain committed to cutting poverty in half by 2030 by building a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country where all Canadians can realize their full potential.”

– The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Quick Facts

- Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy, released in August 2018, established the Market Basket Measure as Canada's first Official Poverty Line.
- A total of 3.4 million Canadians, representing 9.5 percent of the population, lived in poverty in 2017, down from 10.6 percent in 2016.
- The data for 2017 also reflect the first full year of the Canada Child Benefit and the increased Guaranteed Income Supplement top-up, which were both implemented in July 2016.
- Between 2015 and 2017, there was a decrease of 52,000 single seniors living below Canada's Official Poverty Line.
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy's targets are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate poverty.

Marlene Kelly, GSIC
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PEACE

We continue our advocacy for a nuclear free world



In June 2018, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on National Defence issued a report with 27 Recommendations. Recommendation 21 states that "the Government of Canada take a leadership role within NATO in beginning the work necessary for achieving the NATO goal of creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. That this initiative be undertaken on an urgent basis in view of the increasing threat of nuclear conflict flowing from the renewed risk of nuclear proliferation, the deployment of so-called tactical nuclear weapons, and changes in nuclear doctrines regarding lowering the threshold for first use of nuclear weapons by Russia and the US." The Government of Canada responded that it agrees with the recommendation but it has not taken any action to initiate new approaches with NATO towards this aim. Ceasefire.ca, with a coalition of nine Canadian peace groups, including Project Ploughshares, has been corresponding with the Government to ask them to put Recommendation 21 into practice. More information can be found here: https://www.ceasefire.ca/canadian-silence-on-nuclear-issues-becoming-deafening/

At the same time, Canada has still not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons adopted by the United Nations almost two years ago. The Sisters of Charity have developed a model letter for Sisters and Associates to send to Prime Minister Trudeau urging him to sign the treaty. We invite you to join in this advocacy. Click on the following link to download the letter: http://bit.ly/Taking-Action-Connections-2019. You are encouraged to share it far and wide.

It may seem like action on nuclear weapons is an issue from the past that fades in urgency in the face of so many other critical issues today. But when we consider the fruits of disarmament, a reduction in uranium mining for starters, and all that it will take to make disarmament happen in term of trust between nation states, international cooperation, forgiveness of past aggressions and a commitment to priorities of the common good over national security, we can see that working for disarmament is indeed working towards change on many issues of ecological and social justice.

Monica Lambton
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"Disarmament requires trust."

Gustav Heinemenn, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Moving Toward Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples: Seeking Right Relations



"What's happening in reconciliation?" "Is the Catholic Church doing anything about reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples?" "What is the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle doing? I've heard that the Circle was formed but I've heard nothing more. Is it doing anything?" These are but a few of the questions I've heard in the last few months. I don't pretend to have all the answers. Yet, I am aware that there is a growing sense that there is so little information shared that one might assume nothing is happening. Not so. Many Catholics are engaged. Here are a few national and provincial instances of which I am aware.

The Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle has created its own website. On it you will find out who the members are; what its goals are; and a number of resources and links. Go to: https://ourladyofguadalupecircle.ca/

Two members of the Circle presented on Reconciliation at a recent meeting of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association. Later, the same two presented at a meeting of the Institute of Catholic Education in Ontario. Twenty-eight of twenty-nine District Separate School Boards sent several representatives - including their Indigenous Leads - to this meeting. Others watched live-streaming of the day's program. Ontario's Catholic Educators and Boards are taking the call to reconciliation very seriously.

The Canadian Religious Conference posted in the March 2019 Newsletter, a link to a new 5-part video documentary series on reconciliation in relation to Residential Schools. It's titled: They came for the Children. Go to: https://www.crc-canada.org/en/march-2019/. The Jesuits and other religious Congregations who funded it are involved in helping reconciliation happen.

In an effort to reconcile the negative impacts on Indigenous Spiritualities and to facilitate intercultural theological dialogue and reconciliation, Canadian theologian, Michel Andraos, has edited a new book. In the introduction he says: "The driving question of both the 2016 conference and this publication is this: 'How can theology and the churches contribute to moving forward the processes of decolonization and reconciliation?"
Among the contributors from North, Central and South America are five Canadians: Eva Solomon CSJ, Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie, Brian McDonough, Marie Battiste and Michel Andraos. The book is available for $30.00 CDN from Michel Andraos at: MANDRAOS@CTU.EDU

"How can theology and the churches contribute to moving forward the processes of decolonization and reconciliation?"

Michel Andraos: The Church and Indigenous Peoples in the Americas: In Between Reconciliation and Decolonization.

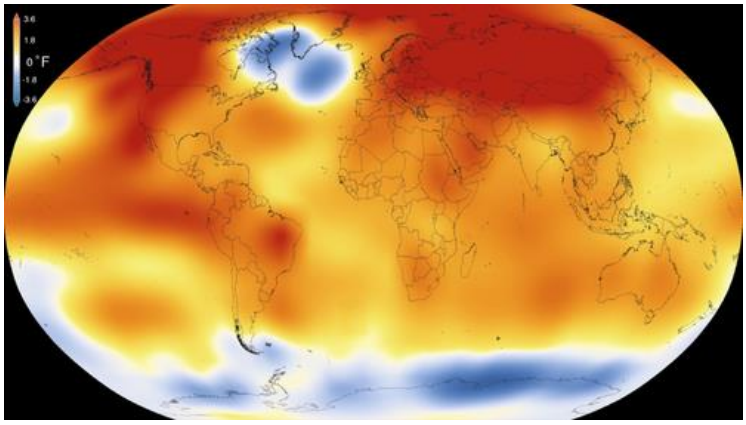
It is also available at: Amazon Canada. Michel teaches at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

In addition, some Catholic parishes are providing opportunities for education and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples in their area, which hopefully will encourage others to do likewise.

Let us not give up hope!

Priscilla Solomon, CSJ
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ENVIRONMENT



Climate Change - Here and Now

Recent research from the University of Alberta discovered that Arctic temperatures are the warmest in more than 10,000 years. Climate change is here. It is not something that is going to happen in the future, but it is something that is going to increase. Storms will escalate in frequency and severity, more species will become extinct and an increasing number of people will be displaced.

The decisions we make in the next decade will determine how bad climate change gets. We can't prevent some of the negative impacts because climate change is already here, but we have the power to avoid the worst-case scenario.

What can we do?

<u>Support the Canadian Chapter of the Global Catholic Climate Movement</u>

The national interfaith charitable network, Faith & the Common Good and the Global Catholic Climate Movement have come together to launch GCCM Canada in September this year. Their goal is to work in partnership with local allies and Canadian Catholics across the country in order to animate the social, political, and ecological insights articulated in Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si'. The initiative will enhance understanding of Laudato Si' by focusing on four pillars; Spiritual- to promote ecological conversion, Lifestyle- changes to heal our relationship with creation, Public Policy- advocacy with all levels of government and Reconciliation- through relationship building strengthened by dialogue and common action among Indigenous people and settlers.

For more information website for the Global Catholic Climate Movement.

"We won't have a society if we destroy the environment."

Margaret Mead

It's https://catholicclimatemovement.global/ and to learn how you and your congregation can support this movement, contact:

Agnes Richard, Laudato Si' Animator, GCCM
arichard@faithcommongood.org

Get your City to Declare a Climate Emergency

It started in January when Vancouver and Halifax declared a climate emergency. In March, Kingston, the first city in Ontario, followed suit and while I'm writing this we are waiting for Ottawa's City Council to determine if they will join the growing number of cities.

Send an e-mail to your mayor and council members asking them to declare a climate emergency in your community.

Why does this matter?

Declaring an emergency sends a clear picture to the broader community and to City staff that climate change is a priority for council. All decisions by City staff need to be viewed through a climate change lens.

For more information and a copy of the motion contact:

Bridget Doherty
Bridget.doherty@providence.ca

ANTI-TRAFFICKING INITIATIVES

Exploitation of migrant workers



In the last issue of Connections (April 2018), I wrote about a new program on migrant workers at the FCJ Refugee Centre. Since the beginning of the program, an average of one person per week has been given the opportunity to escape from an exploitative situation and apply for a Temporary Resident Permit (TRP). They were the ones who alerted the police in Barrie about the conditions of the 43 workers who were working in the Wasaga Beach area. See https://globalnews.ca/news/4956517/human-trafficking-labour-canada/ One of the good things about this situation is that it raised the awareness of the Police forces that such situations do exist in Ontario.

Pope Francis has added his voice for the protection of trafficked persons, and has gathered organizations for conferences in Rome. The office for Migrants and Refugees has written a resource which is available to download here: https://migrants-refugees.va/trafficking-slavery/

The February issue of Stop Trafficking is devoted to networks around the world that are working in partnerships to prevent this 'crime against humanity'.

http://www.stopenslavement.org/assets/stoptraff1702.pdf

Sometimes our only response can be to pray. I offer this prayer: https://educationforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Prayer-to-End-Human-Trafficking_12914.pdf

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