



August 2, 2024

WE COMMIT TO... MIGRANTS, REFUGEES, AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

[Province Assembly, 2020]

Five years ago our General Chapter called us to go to the “peripheries,” and to create and join networks “beyond our own boundaries.” Our own province assembly further defined this by directing us to ministry to “migrants, refugees and asylum seekers,” and to “initiatives of inclusiveness that accept and welcome all.”

We are all aware of the immensity of the world-wide refugee problem. War, violence, poverty, climate change –all are fueling mass movements of people seeking a better life, or, in too many cases, escape from a situation that threatens their very lives.

One response to this is advocacy that pushes governments to respond with compassion to desperate people at their borders, and to honor international laws for asylum seekers. Many of us have signed petitions and called our elected representatives to this.

Another is meeting the immediate needs of those just arriving in a new land, needs for security and assistance. Our RJM communities in Morocco and San Diego are focusing on this.

Then, there is the service of welcome and on-going friendship to individuals and families as they work to find their place in a new land. Joining with other groups, sisters in the MD/DC region have been doing this for a number of years. When she came here three years ago, Sr. Janice Farnham (pictured here 2nd from left) joined them. This photo, with its written message, was presented to her as a farewell gift when this Guatemalan family learned she was leaving. Janice (“Sister Juanita”) gave English lessons, focusing especially on the family “abuela” (grandmother). She also was instrumental in helping the two teenage girls to get into Catholic school and raising money through Regina alumnae and others to support that.



Each member of this extended family now has a “green card” (can permanently live and work in the USA); the two older boys have graduated high school and are enrolled in a community college; the adults are employed and continuing their English classes as well as professional training. They are making their way with determination.

Earlier this year, they presented sisters with coffee mugs carrying the words, “Thank you for your friendship.” Those feelings are matched by our own gratitude for the friendship of these strong, faith-filled and loving people. They are a gift to us and to our country!

- Sr. Rosemary Mangan

WEBINAR ADVOCATE US SHIPPING ARMS STOP

On July 30, the USA-Haiti Province joined a coalition of congregations and organizations led by the Justice Coalition of Religious (JCoR) and our longtime partners at the Quixote Center and the Sisters of Mercy to offer a webinar focused on the interconnections between U.S. gun policies and the trafficking of weapons to Haiti that fuels Haiti's gang violence. *The RJM are also members of this coalition through UNANIMA, which is a member of JCoR.* If you did not get a chance to attend the webinar, you can view it on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OVZrTAGHnl>).

The primary purpose of the webinar was to raise awareness to the fact that **the majority of the weapons and ammunition used by the gangs in Haiti that has destabilized Port-au-Prince and threatens our sisters and partners in Gros Morne and Jean-Rabel come from the United States.** Many of the weapons are obtained through "straw man purchases" at legitimate U.S. gun sellers and smuggled to Haiti onboard regular, legal shipping vessels out of the Port of Miami River.

With these facts in mind, **there are steps that can be taken within U.S. gun policies and U.S. customs and border control to address the issue of the guns ever leaving the United States.** There are also international weapons trafficking policies that can be taken by the U.S. and through the United Nations to deal with the flow of weapons into Haiti. *It is worth noting that the same types of weapons are illegally flowing into other parts of the Caribbean and Latin America and fueling the violence in those countries that often pushes poor and vulnerable people to flee and to become the kinds of refugees and asylum seekers that the RJM and our partners work with at the border in San Diego.*

The coalition outlined a number of U.S. bills and policies that we can support to decrease the amount of weapons leaving our country. The Quixote Center has prepared a listing on the legislation (<https://quixote.org/summary-of-weapons-trafficking-legislation>)

The coalition has recommended action that each of us, as U.S. citizens, can take immediately. **We urge you to consider using the online tool provided by the Quixote Center to write to Congress and the White House demanding action:** (<https://quixote.org/action#/16>)

Additionally, the coalition is planning in-person and online visits to Capitol Hill to speak directly with elected officials about the weapons situation and to urge them to take real action! **The advocacy will take place on September 25 and 26. If you are interested in being part of either the visits in DC or the virtual vests, please contact Toby Harkleroad (tharkleroad@rjmusa.org) to discuss options.** There are possibilities for accommodations at the Stuart Center and other locations in the DC area and there may be opportunities to carpool with sisters from your area.

Because of the direct impact that the weapons and gang violence has on our RJM ministries in Haiti, the province is strongly committed to the RJM being a part of this advocacy work. We especially encourage RJMs, QUEST volunteers, and friends who have direct experience of Haiti to consider being part of the in-person and virtual advocacy meetings.

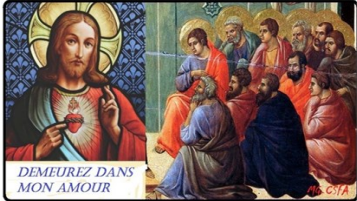
- Toby Harkleroad, Director of Mission Advancement

Co-Sponsors

Beyond Borders	Pax Christi USA
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes	Pax Christi USA Gun Violence Working Group
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill	Quixote Center
Dominican Sisters of Hope	Religious of Jesus and Mary
Faith in Action	Rich in Mercy
Felician Sisters of North America	Seeds of Hope in Haiti
Franciscan Action Network	Sisters of Charity of New York
Global Exchange	Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters	Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team
Justice 4 Ayiti	Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Justice Coalition of Religious-Network of the USA	Sisters of the Good Shepherd National Advocacy Center
Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns	Sisters of the Humility of Mary
Mennonite Central Committee	St. Patrick and St. Anthony Parish
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate	Stop US Arms to Mexico
Nuns Against Gun Violence	Stuart Center
Passionists International	UNANIMA International
Pax Christi International	US Province of the Spiritans
Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore	

CONGRATULATIONS TO SR. MARIE-JO DÉSIR, NJM!

 ♦ ...DEMEUREZ DANS MON AMOUR ♦ JN 15,9



Cérémonie d'entrée au noviciat de :
 ♦ ATIM Mngusughun Doris
 ♦ DESIR Marie-Jo
 ♦ MBOUMENE TSAPI Marie Belviane 1^{ère}
 ♦ TINOUADE-GBETO Laetitia Rosemonde

Noviciat Jésus-Marie Afrique Yaoundé/Simbock : 31 Juillet 2024

Together with three companions, Marie-Jo Désir was received into Novitiate on July 31st, the feast of St. Ignatius.

This happy event is a milestone in the quest that began with months of anxious efforts to obtain the documents necessary for the journey from Haiti to Cameroun and culminated in her arrival there on April 28th.



Our prayers are with Marie-Jo and her community as she begins another journey – one that needs no documents, only a heart open to the work of the Spirit.

SR. MIDDIA DOUTE MISSIONED TO MEXICO

On August 10, Sr. Middia Doute will renew her vows for one year, and shortly after, fly to Mexico City where she will join the RJM Community of Colegio Regina Jesús María for the coming year.

Middia has just completed the International Juniorate Program in Valencia, Spain, where she was joined by sisters from various parts of the JM world.

She is currently ministering in a summer camp for children in the south of Spain, while working on obtaining the documents needed for travel to Mexico.

This missioning will bring her to the province that welcomed her to Novitiate some seven years ago, after her postulancy in Cuba.

Vaya con Dios, Middia!



MESSAGE FOR FEAST OF ST. IGNATIUS

Just two days ago we celebrated the Feast of St. Ignatius, whose apostolic spirituality grounds our own JM “way of proceeding.”

Attached to this issue of *Bridges* is a letter from Sr. Monica Joseph, highlighting how that Ignatian spirit was present in our earliest history.

A PRAYER FOR THIS ELECTION SEASON

Pax Christi USA has published the prayer card below and the Provincial Office has placed an order. If you would like cards, please let Molly know how many you'd like sent to you.

A PRAYER FOR THIS ELECTION SEASON

By Dianna Ortiz, OSU, Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace

God, Promise Keeper of the new creation, in this election season guide us to be Gospel-informed voters, who stand on the side of justice and truth.

As a community of conscience, we recognize our shared responsibility in righting the wrongs that dishonor and dehumanize the dignity of the most vulnerable among us.

As a community of conscience, we acknowledge the harm that has been done to the environment and the urgency to work collectively to care for the Earth, our common home.

We see our country in turmoil—experiencing a time of chaos that not only impacts every person of this nation, but peoples from across the globe.

As individuals and a faith community, we recognize that we bear a privilege and a burden to vote our conscience and to make choices that will and do affect the future of everyone.

As we ready ourselves to go to the polls this November, may our time of discernment be rooted in the teachings of our faith and our common life together.



May our faith guide us to vote for genuine servant leaders, who, like Jesus, will welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the prisoner, embrace the sick and dying, and promote peace and nonviolence.

Send your Spirit to be with us as we cast votes for the common good, and, regardless of the outcome, may we continue to work for a more just, sustainable world.

May we always stand on the side of justice and truth. Amen.

Action Suggestions

1. Practice your & protect others' voting rights. Learn about how to exercise your voting rights, resist voter intimidation efforts, and access disability-related accommodations and language assistance at the polls. Find more at aclu.org.
2. In the lead-up to Election Day, invite your pastor to address people's anxiety and tension by cultivating our commitment to the common good, respect for individual conscience, belief in nonviolence, and trust in the democratic process.
3. Get trained in de-escalation techniques to help facilitate difficult conversations & defuse situations of possible violence.

"I ask God to give us more politicians capable of sincere and effective dialogue aimed at healing the deepest roots – and not simply the appearances – of the evils in our world! ... I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!"

~Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*



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With the very near assassination of the Republican nominee and former President, Donald Trump, incidents at an event and at the home of Independent candidate Robert Kennedy, as well as President Biden leaving the race and with Vice President Kamala Harris transitioning into the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party, let us pray for God's light and grace during this time.

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Sr. Janet Farnham has a new address: **Marillac Residence, Room 416, 125 Oakland Street, Wellesley Hills, MA 02481. Her room phone number is (781) 997-1345.**

Her cellphone remains 617-470-0689 and her email jfarnhamrjm@gmail.com.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



September 3	Stella Herrera, RJM
September 10	Claire Dandeneau, RJM
September 11	Antoinette Jacques, RJM
September 22	Gertrude Lavoie, RJM
September 25	Fátima Viramontes, RJM
September 29	Thérèse Picard, RJM
September 29	Patricia Dillon, RJM

PROVINCE OFFICE

August 5 - 9 Full Team In-Person Meeting

September 6 Next *Bridges* published (articles due by Wednesday 9/4 at noon)

Note: There will not be a Bridges on 8/16

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR...

- Michael Morse, the brother of Sr. Teresita Morse, as he recovers from Glaucoma surgery. The pressure in his eyes is good and his vision is generally clear, but there is a fog that sometimes comes and obscures his vision which we pray ends so that his vision is always clear;
- Continuing Prayers for: Karen Kudelko who is the mother of Toby Harkleroad; and Terri Contreras who is the grand-niece of Sr. Fatima Viramontes;
- The Kay Jezi Mari Community (Srs. Liz Cornejo Carpio, Pat Dillon, Rosario Fumanal, Jackie Picard and Roodjina Joseph (Aspirant), as this week's community for special prayer.



**WE ALSO PRAY
FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF OUR
RJM SISTERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

Praised Forever Be Jesus and Mary