

April 2016

Volume 2, Issue 4

WE COMMIT OURSELVES:

A social justice newsletter of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order St. Francis



Special Interest Articles:

- Sr. Marge White: This April Issue
- Climate Change
- Our Food Supply
- A Prayer for Our Earth (Pope Francis)



Individual Highlights:

- FAN "Ecumenical Advocacy Days" 1
- What are GMOs? 2
- Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network 3
- Sustainable Development Goals 4

Sr. Dorothy Pagosa, Sr. Marjorie White, Maxine Smith, Sr. Rose Grabowski, Rose Marie Bommer, Sr. Shannon Fox—Social Justice Committee

Earth Day *by Sister Marjorie White*

On April 22nd we will celebrate Earth Day.

Guided both by our Franciscan values to care for creation and the words

of Pope Francis in his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, I have taken an "earth" focus for this issue of our newsletter, *We Commit Ourselves*.

My hope is that the articles and resources you will find on the following pages will be helpful for you. ■

Join FAN at Ecumenical Advocacy Days in April



As we focus on the care of our earth, we are aware that in this election year lives, votes, and the global economy are at stake.

As followers of the gospel we ask, "Who has a voice?" The response is, "Everyone!" This year's theme for Ecumenical Advocacy Days is "Lift Every Voice!"

But in our neighborhoods, cities, and around the world, the voices of too many people are silenced.

In this country, communities of color are under siege: named and unnamed black people are killed each year by police; immigrants are detained and scapegoated; and

public displays of discontent and calls for solidarity have too often been met with disregard, suppression or violence.

Around the world, decisions that affect the well-being of lives and the entire global economy—ones based on continued growth despite the limits to earth's natural resources and capacity to absorb such growth—are often made in closed boardrooms and in great secrecy.

But as Christians, we believe that leaders and policy makers are called to act and to govern in fairness and with justice for all!

Like the persistent widow who demands that the judge hear her plea

(Luke 18:1-8), at [Ecumenical Advocacy Days, 2016](#), we will bring our petitions for justice to Capitol Hill. Like the persistent widow, we will not be silenced.

FAN will be presenting two workshops at this year's weekend: one on Christian-Muslim relations and one on Money in Politics.

Be sure to [register to attend](#) EAD (Ecumenical Advocacy Days) April 15-18, 2016.

If you are unable to attend, please connect with the Franciscan Action Network website for updates at:

<https://franciscanaction.org>

Our Food Supply

Every time we sit down to eat we know the food has been harvested by farm workers who are not always treated justly. An integral component of caring for the earth is also caring for those who harvest the food.

The struggle for just wages, a safe working environment, and decent housing began in the late '50's and culminated in

the formation of the United Farm Workers led by Cesar Chavez.

Some remember and participated in the lettuce and grape boycotts in the '70's.

Through nonviolent tactics such as boycotts, pickets, and strikes, the UFW brought the struggles of farm workers out of the fields and into

cities and towns across the country.

This movement of farm workers organizing for better pay and safer working conditions has continued to grow since 1962.

Currently, the UFW organizes in major agricultural industries nationwide and continues to win contracts for worker protections. ■



Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network

Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network, a national organization founded in 1986, is dedicated to pastoral ministry and leadership development with migrant farmworkers and rural immigrants in the U.S.

Since 1996 CMFN has provided faith formation and leadership develop-

ment through [Pastoral Courses](#) and other workshops.

The themes of these weekend programs include spirituality and leadership development.

CMFN also coordinates [Episcopal Visits](#) to different states throughout the country as well as [immersion](#) experiences

for college students and other interested groups.

- **For a greater understanding** of the United Farmworkers and their work today visit www.ufw.org
- **For more information** on the Catholic Migrant Farmworker Network visit www.cmfwn.org ■



Continued from page 2...

What are GMOs... ?

any country where they are grown, including the United States.

Where does the Non-GMO Project come in?

The Non-GMO Project is a non-profit organization with a mission of protecting the non-GMO

food supply and giving consumers an informed choice. They offer North America's ONLY third party verification for products produced according to rigorous best practices for GMO avoidance (for more info, [click here](#)).

Their strategy is to empower consumers to make change through the marketplace.

If people stop buying GMOs, companies will stop using them and farmers will stop growing them. ■



Sustainable Development Goals

"We respect the earth and recognize that all life is interconnected in a continuing cosmic evolution."

SSJ-TOSF Congregational Commitments
26th General Chapter

On September 25, 2015 countries adopted a set of goals to **end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all** as part of a **new sustainable development agenda**.

Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years.

For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private

sector, civil society and people like you.

Do you want to get involved?

- You can start by telling everyone about the goals.
- They've also put together a **list of actions** that you can take in your everyday life to contribute to a sustainable future.

For more information visit and/or click on the above link "list of actions."

You can view their website by going to

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> ■



A Prayer for Our Earth

Pope Francis ended his Encyclical, Laudato Si', with two prayers, reminding us all of our relationship to Creation and the Creator. Below is one of those prayers.



All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned

and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and

contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen.



**April 22:
Earth Day**

www.earthday.org

REMEMBER...

We welcome your submissions in the form of

- "Sightings"
- Brief write-ups of your activities, "prototypes," suggestions for workshops, books, articles, films, resources.

You can send items to any member of the Social Justice Committee for inclusion in the next issue of our newsletter, *We Commit Ourselves*.

~Your Social Justice Committee