

December 2020

 SISTERS of ST. JOSEPH of TORONTO



# Journey for Justice

Listen! Learn! Act!

From the Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care

## Introducing our Newsletter

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate 170 years as a community of women living our Oneness with God, Creation & Neighbour, we continue to find new ways to share our mission of love and unity with the world.

One of these projects is the launch of this quarterly newsletter, *Journey to Justice: Listen! Learn! Act!*

This publication will share some of our exciting justice initiatives and, we hope, inspire you to join us in working for a world transformed by Gospel values of peace, justice, and Creation care. We invite you to join us in this journey.

**Sister Georgette Gregory, CSJ**  
**Congregational Leader**



# Land Acknowledgement

Hello, Aniin.

The Sisters of St Joseph arrived in Toronto 170 years ago. As an order of Catholic women religious, our charism to care for the dear neighbour led us from Le Puy-en-Velay, France to the United States, and finally here to Toronto.

For our 170th anniversary, we are **Celebrating our Oneness with God, Creation & Neighbour.**

We acknowledge that Tkaronto has been a home to many nations since time immemorial. These include the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

These nations were irrevocably harmed by the arrival of European settlers who have systematically tried to erase these indigenous communities and their teachings.

In our ongoing journey towards reconciliation, we are re-learning the history of this country and this land, critically examining the ways we have benefitted from systemic racism and the role the Catholic church has played in systems of oppression in Canada. We are committed to redressing these harms.

# Joint Ecological Ministry (JEM)

## Catholics United for Climate Action Petition

In celebration of the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, Joint Ecological Ministry (JEM) created an online petition calling on Catholics across Canada to unite and demand the government take immediate, concrete actions to flatten the curve of global warming and move towards a just and sustainable future. Seventy-three Catholic communities and organizations, and 551 Catholic individuals from

across Canada signed the Catholics United for Climate Action petition.

The petition demanded that Canada's recovery reject bailouts of oil and gas industries, implement a Just Transition Act and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and prioritize action on multilateral debt cancellation for countries of the Global South struggling

to meet the challenges of the pandemic as well as the climate emergency.

## Co-Creators of Just Recovery Events

At two online events in November, JEM explored essential elements of the Just Recovery process. The first featured Anishnaabe writer and professor Dr. Niigaan Sinclair who

addressed the path of reconciliation with the Indigenous peoples, protectors of ancestor lands and waters. At the second event, Sr. Sue Wilson (CSJs in Canada) highlighted elements of her Ethical Framework for a Just Recovery and the role of Catholic communities in shaping the recovery process. Congregational Leaders Sr. Elizabeth Davis (Sisters of Mercy) and Père Luc Tardif (Oblates of the Notre Dame du Cap) responded with their own ideas before participants broke into small discussion groups.



# Joint Ecological Ministry Resource Links

*Please hold CTRL before clicking on links to open them in a new window.*

**Click here** to see the recording of the JEM event.

**Click here** for the Catholics United for Climate Action letter and signatures.

**Click here** to read *Ethical Framework for a Post-COVID Recovery*, by Sister Sue Wilson.



# Creativity of Love

## Hope in a Time of Pandemic

In his 2020 Holy Week address, Pope Francis told us that a “creativity of love” would help us to get through this time of pandemic. COVID-19 has laid bare the inequality and inhumanity of our political-economic system. This reckoning is also an opportunity for us to rethink and rebuild these systems. Around the world, discussions are taking place about what comes next.

Through the spring and summer, CSJ Ministries collaborated on a social media campaign called Creativity of Love where we provided inspiring examples and practical solutions from other nations and organizations of what a post-COVID world could look like.

[Click here](#) to see the full posts.

You can also [click here](#) to watch a wrap-up video with highlights of the campaign that was prepared by the CSJ’s Communications Department.



# Migrant Workers Justice

Collaborative Network to End Exploitation (CNEE) is a collaboration of faith-based organizations, community groups, and individuals working to raise awareness about the spectrum of exploitation of human beings and to inspire action for structural and societal changes.

Administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto, CNEE is actively advocating for policy changes at the provincial and federal level that will adequately address the spectrum of exploitation, including human trafficking, to which migrants in Canada are subjected.

CNEE's current members include: Sarah Guinta (Office of Peace and Justice, Diocese of Hamilton), Sister Ursula Witowska, IBVM, Luis Mata (FCJ Refugee Centre), Leah Watkiss and Varka Kalaydzhieva (Ministry for Social Justice, Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto).

Our most recent project was the Migrant Workers Exercise.



# Migrant Workers Exercise

## An Experiential Workshop



This innovative experiential workshop led participants through various stages of migrant workers' journey to work in Canada.

Playing the role of migrant workers, participants learned about some of the ways that migrant workers are targets of exploitation and what role we, as a society, can play in bringing much needed policy changes.

We will resume delivering this in-person workshop once it is safe to do so.

We are currently in talks to create a podcast of migrant worker stories to share similar information with the public. Stay tuned!

# Prayers and Actions for Migrant Workers

As we enter the winter season, the Sisters and the Collaborative Network to End Exploitation express our deepest gratitude to migrant workers who work tirelessly to bring food to our tables.

**Migrant workers come to Canada every year**, leaving loved ones behind. They work very hard on farms and in agricultural businesses growing the produce that we consume. We are deeply grateful for migrant workers' tireless work that brings food to our table. We pray for their health and well-being

for the Christmas season and acknowledge the myriad ways they enrich the fabric of our communities across the country.

At the same time, we are pleading to the Government of Canada to consider a comprehensive pathway to permanent residence for migrant workers to eliminate the instances of harsh exploitation they face.

Two Sisters, Sister Grace Sauvé, CSJ and Sister Mary Mettler, CSJ have written prayers for migrant workers. Please read them and also

consider visiting the Migrant Rights Network website and add your name to their petition calling for a single-tier immigration system where everyone in Canada has the same rights.

We also encourage you to add your name to the Amnesty for Undocumented Workers campaign calling on the federal government to create a permanent residency program for all migrant workers who provide essential services and work in jobs where there are labour shortages.

# Links to Prayers and Actions for Migrant Workers

*Please hold CTRL before clicking on links to open them in a new window.*

**Click here** for the prayers from Sister Grace Sauvé, CSJ and Sister Mary Mettler, CSJ

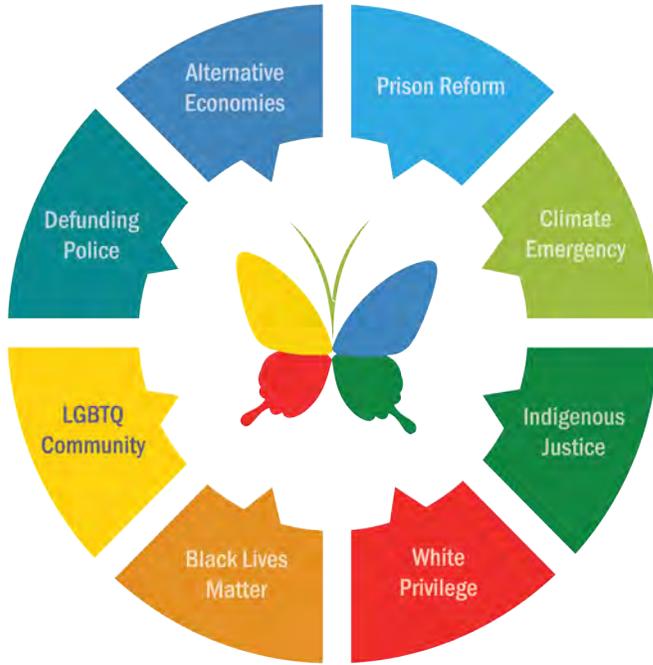
**Click here** for the Migrant Rights Network Petition

**Click here** for the Amnesty for Undocumented Workers Campaign



# Social Justice

## Let Us Engage!



Social justice engagement is the main vehicle to transform our society towards Pope Francis's vision of integral ecology. Everything is interconnected and as the Pope suggested, "Today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis."

Inspired by this vision, this ministry is embarking on a journey to deepen our understanding of unjust social structures and systems that have led us to the current ecological and spiritual crisis.

As we go along, we will invite you to educate, reflect, pray and engage in action! Our upcoming newsletter editions

will share various awareness raising activities and readings to engage us deeper in social justice issues such as:

**Prisons in Canada and decarceration**

**Climate emergency**

**Indigenous justice**

**White privilege and Black Lives Matter**

**Theology and justice for the LGBTQ community**

**Alternative economic models**

**Defunding police and investing in community services**

Please email [vkalaydzhieva@csj-to.ca](mailto:vkalaydzhieva@csj-to.ca) to be informed of opportunities to engage.

# Water Action Milestones

by Paul Baines, CSJ Blue Communities Coordinator

*As a Blue Community, the Sisters are dedicated to protecting water as human right, shared commons, and sacred gift. It is a continual effort and here are some milestones to remember.*

A blue water drop icon with a white number '5' inside it.

5

**Years Ago**

The Vatican's Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'* (*On Care for our Common Home*) was released linking social and environmental justice. Access to safe water was presented as the foundation for all other human rights and as a political and moral challenge.

Also in 2015, the Government of Canada promised to end all Drinking Water Advisories on First Nations reserves by March 2021. But in 2020, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that they would not meet this target. As of this writing, 920 communities in Canada are on a Drinking Water Advisory.

A blue water drop icon with a white number '4' inside it.

4

**Years Ago**

In 2016, the Ontario government implemented a two year moratorium on new bottled water permits after most of the 20,000 public submissions were against expanding this industry. In September of 2020, the government announced another extension of this ban until April 1, 2021.

# Water Action Milestones (cont'd)



3

**Years Ago**

Water unites. The three congregations of the Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada committed to becoming a Blue Community and channeling their charism for water justice.



1

**Year Ago**

An investigation across Canada that spanned 32 cities with 20,000 water samples revealed that 39 per cent of Canada's drinking water has lead that exceeds the federal government's guidelines. There is no safe level of lead in drinking water.

## Resource Links

*Please hold CTRL before clicking on links to open them in a new window.*

**Click here** to read Water Today's listing of provinces and water advisories.

**Click here** to read the *Toronto Star* article, "Is there lead in your tap water?"

**Click here** to visit the CSJ Blue Community website for news, updates and water action.

# Your Gift Matters

## Contributed by Cécilia Meunier



The holidays are fast approaching. Visions of the perfect present dance in your head. Shopping for that special gift for family, friends and even pets, can prove challenging.

Everywhere we turn, advertisers are extolling the virtues of their wares. They purposefully use terms such as pure, natural, holistic, eco-friendly to grab our attention.

We want to select gifts that show how much we care and we know that our consumer

choices have ramifications for our global home. How do we choose thoughtful presents that have minimal negative impact on our planet?

The following are measures that will guide us on the road to an eco-friendly holiday shopping experience:

**Shop with Intention:** Read the labels to ensure that the products you buy contain pure, natural ingredients. Avoid synthetic materials as much as possible.

**Ask Questions:** Some companies that sell body care products certify under the standards of other countries. Look for USDA/ NOP standards or Ecocert certification.

**Consider the Packaging:** To reduce our environmental impact, look for biodegradable and cruelty free products that come with minimal packaging.

**The gifts you buy matter...**

# Ideas for Eco-Friendly Gifts

## Kitchen Implements Like:

Straws made of stainless steel, bamboo, glass

Ceramic cookware

Sustainable cutting boards made from end grain wood.

Glass food containers with BPA free lids

## Personal Care Items Such As:

A wooden hair brush

A bamboo tooth brush

Certified organic cotton bath towels

Pillows with organic filling

Natural skin care gift sets from natural & organic skincare brands

## Additional Resources

*Please hold CTRL before clicking on links to open them in a new window.*

Find natural and organic skin, hair and body care products at [organic4nature.com](https://www.organic4nature.com) and [truebotanicals.com](https://www.truebotanicals.com).

[ireadlabelsforyou.com](https://www.ireadlabelsforyou.com) offers a wealth of well researched information on natural products as well as great holiday gift ideas.

You will also find an assortment of ethical and sustainable gifts at [earthhero.com](https://www.earthhero.com) and [eartheasy.com](https://www.eartheasy.com).

# Meet the Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care

**Leah Watkiss** is the Director of the Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care and has a Master's Degree in Peace and Justice from the University of San Diego as well as 10 years of experience as a social and ecological justice worker with Christian organizations.

She sat on the board of Christian ecumenical group Citizens for Public Justice for six years, during which time she contributed a chapter to their publication *Journeys to Justice: Reflections on Canadian Christian Activism*. She recently completed the Influencer Certificate program from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.

**Varka Kalaydzhieva** is the Program Manager. She has a law degree from South-West University in Bulgaria and a Master's Degree in International Law from the University of Montreal.

She has worked with international survivors of exploitation and human trafficking and sat on numerous networks to advocate for policy changes on provincial and federal level.



**Leah and Varka**

# About This Newsletter

This newsletter will be released quarterly with our next issue coming in Spring 2021.

We are hoping this newsletter will inspire our readers to listen, learn and act to create a just and equitable world.

Please **click here** to subscribe to our next issue.

If you have any suggestions or want to connect with us, you can email us at **[vkalaydzhieva@csj-to.ca](mailto:vkalaydzhieva@csj-to.ca)**.



**Journey** for **Justice**  
Listen! Learn! Act!

From the Ministry for Social Justice, Peace, and Creation Care



SISTERS *of* ST. JOSEPH *of* TORONTO