



# Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

*called by the Spirit • embracing the world*

## PROVINCE BULLETIN

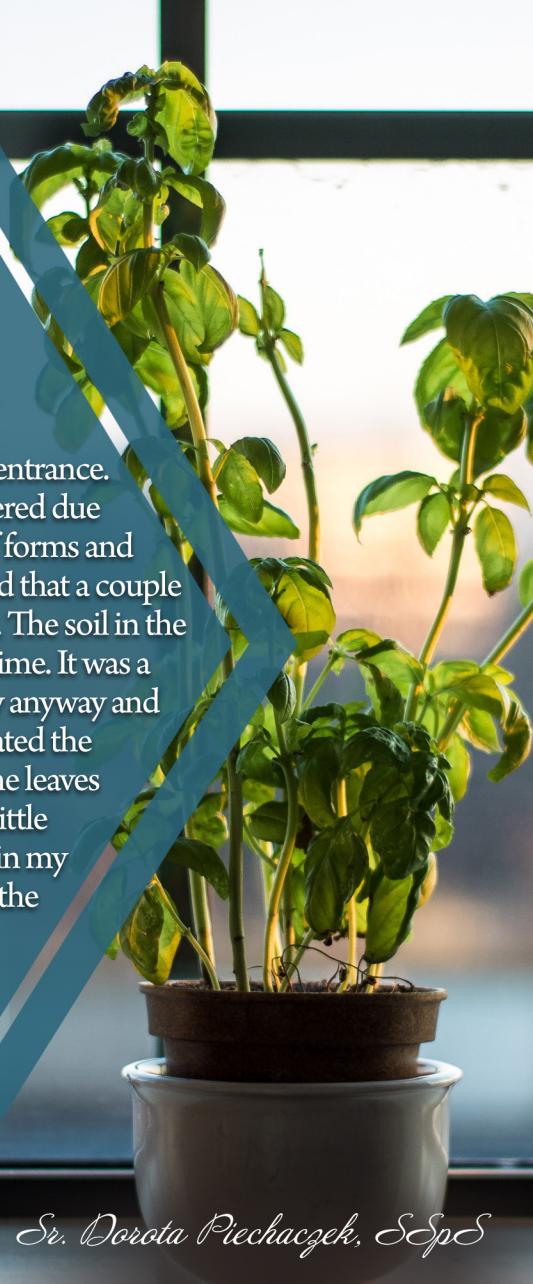
Vol. 39 No. 7 – USA-JULY 2019

# Watering Dry Sticks

This metaphor for our privileged time of annual retreat came to me some days before the beginning of the session at the Convent of the Holy Spirit. Have you experienced similar feelings before the retreat? I certainly did earlier on. So I joined the retreat in Bordentown at the end of May. It is essential that we recognize the state of our heart and soul and consciously long for the living water of God's Word, for God's redeeming mercy, and for the Spirit's guidance for the next steps.

Four big vases with ornamental plants are placed in front of the Convent's entrance. Our employees dutifully take care of the plants. Even though the plants suffered due to the late cold weather, they quickly recovered and dressed up in a variety of forms and colors. When vacation time came and much warmer weather set in, I noticed that a couple of the plants, though in full bloom just a few days ago, looked dry and lifeless. The soil in the vases was rich and airy and therefore, unable to hold water for any length of time. It was a sad image to see them gone so quickly. With little conviction, I decided to try anyway and give the plants a chance. Slowly I poured some water into the vases and repeated the action a couple of times. When I walked out of the door five hours later, some leaves had begun to uncurl and their color turned from brownish to green and the little stems straightened; a few buds were ready to burst in lively color. Hope rose in my heart as they asked for further caring, more water. By the evening, I plucked the dead leaves and flower heads convinced that the plants will produce new healthy and beautiful ones very soon.

We are made to bloom and radiate joy and beauty around us. We are planted into the rich soil of our faith, congregational heritage, mission opportunities, community relationships, and therefore, we need to care for our lives and vocations. We need the 'Living Water', the nourishment for our hearts, souls and minds, for togetherness in God's mission, for communion among ourselves.



*Sr. Dorota Piechaczek, SSps*



## Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters: in the United States and in the Caribbean

Northfield, IL  
Waukegan, IL

Grayslake, IL  
Chicago, IL

Epworth, IA  
Memphis, TN

Antigua  
Jamaica

New York, NY  
St. Kitts

# 1st Holy Communion

## From Preparation to Celebration!

Sr. Alexis Tjahjani, SSpS

From the beautiful Island of Antigua, I would like to share about the beauty of the 39 children who received the First Holy Communion at the Holy Family Cathedral. On April 6, 2019, we had the first retreat for the children of the First Holy Communion Class. The theme was "I am the Way to the Father." As we know, that Jesus is the Father's gift to us and aware that we receive it, the children reflected on this during the retreat.

The children were enthusiastic with the retreat. I led the opening prayer. We began with the reading of the Gospel (John 15: 9-17) which was about the gifts that we would receive that day. Each child got a chance to take a gift from the small box: they would find an encouraging word and a



Young girls lining up for First Holy Communion.

cookie. Then they would reflect on the word that they received and eat the cookie as an example of how nice is the word that came to each of them. Each child had a good reflection on their gift as they became aware that Jesus is the biggest gift.

The session began after the opening prayer. The children were divided into three groups to discuss and complete an activity in each session:

- Scripture about Jesus healing the sick
- The Prodigal Son
- Leading the blind

We concluded by singing "Carry Your Candle".

The second retreat was on June 8, 2019, which was the day before Pentecost. I thought that this retreat presented a true message of what a first Holy Communion candidate truly is. Sr. AnnIta, Mrs. Alexander, Mrs. James, Deacon Pershing, and I worked as a team. The theme for this time was, "I Long to Eat This Meal with Jesus". The retreat focused on the Eucharistic Celebration.

The children reflected on the story "The Giving Tree" that the tree could give everything that we need. The tree reminded them of a particular person; especially for this time it reminded them of Jesus.



Young boys lining up for First Holy Communion.

(Continued on Pg.3)

The reflection brought them to an awareness of the joy that comes from giving generously while receiving humbly and respectfully.

On June 23, 2019, we began preparing the first Holy Communion Day. The children practiced for the liturgy and confession. They concluded, ready for the day of the celebration.

The celebrant was Bishop Robert Llanos. In his homily he gave the message that each of us must be aware of how important it is to receive Holy Communion as we nurture our spiritual life.

On the same day, we celebrated Corpus Christi. We had the procession with the Holy Sacrament and the children followed along nicely.

As we celebrated the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ, we could see the joy of the children who were receiving their Holy Communion for the very first time. Thank you to all who had a part in making this a very wonderful and blessed celebration.



Children together preparing for First Holy Communion during the Mass.

## RALLIES AND MARCHES TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANTS AND KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER

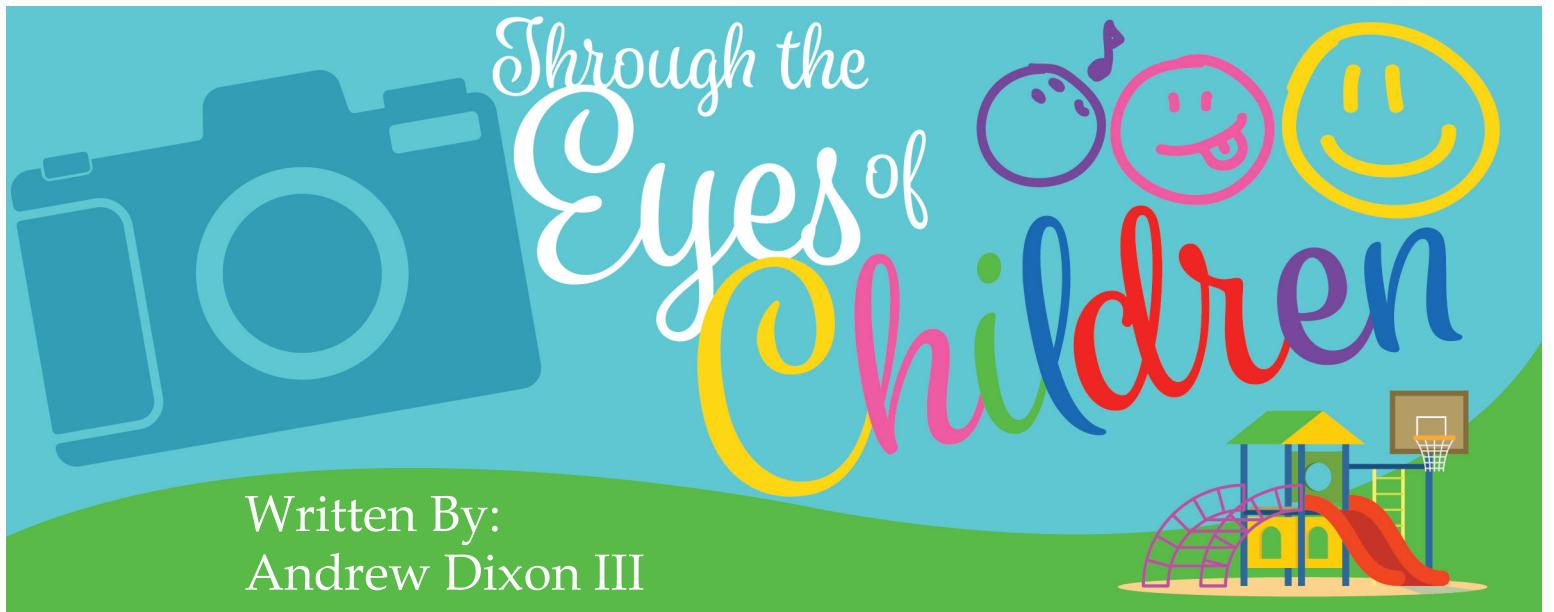
Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS

On Saturday July 13, 2019, thousands of people joined a rally and march in Chicago, IL to “end criminalization, detention, & deportations.” It was held at the Richard J. Daley Center at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. I, Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, was representing the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters. There were so many people that I was unable to find other Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants (SBI) members even though they were present. During the rally and march many held signs homemade or bought, big or small and colorful or black/white.

For me it was energizing to see so many supporting immigrants and standing against the raids. There were many spirited talks but the two that touched me the most was one given by a 12 year old whose father was deported. She shared at a personal level what this does to families. She asked us, if we would stand with her? The shouts of “yes” and the applause made the answer clear. The other talk was given by a Japanese woman who had been interred in isolated camps as a child. After sharing the situations of these camps, she expressed her amazement that there had been no public reaction to moving thousands of Japanese Americans to these camps. The crowd expressed that they would not let the same things happen today.

After the rally people marched with their signs to the offices of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Both the rally and march was ahead of the planned ICE raids that were expected to begin on Sunday, July 14, 2019.





Written By:  
Andrew Dixon III

Nelson Mandela, the former President of South Africa once said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." This I believe to be especially important to ponder in prayer as we consider the world around us today. A few weeks ago, I was greeted by Sister Dorota Piechaczek with a rather interesting request. She asked if I would communicate with Sisters Maria Theresa Nguyen and Rosa Da Costa Menezes to set up some time to visit our Holy Spirit Life Learning Centers (HSLLC) in Wheeling and Rogers Park Illinois. My assignment was to gain a better understanding of the Summer Peace Camp programs we offer while also taking some photos of the children's daily activities.

As many of you may already know, Sr. Dorota is one of the most gracious and thoughtful people you can come to know, which inspires me to want to do whatever I can to help with any project she assigns me. While I was willing to serve in this capacity, it did present a challenge, as I am not as familiar with photography as would a professional photographer. However, I proceeded in taking the opportunity to practice and become better acquainted with the camera. On July 12, 2019 I would be presented an opportunity to learn as SSpS Sisters in Northfield would be welcoming the children from Rogers Park HSLLC Summer Peace Camp who were eager and ready to perform some songs they had rehearsed.

*Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

- Matthew 18:4



The children sang wonderfully and were in perfect harmony and unison. While taking photos of the children I caught a glimpse into their childlike faith, humility, openness to make mistakes but more importantly, being understanding of others mistakes and differences. These children are all different ages but they work together to help each other which is something I would like to see more in this life. Afterwards, the children ate lunch with the Sisters and enjoyed playtime outside before heading back to Rogers Park. Meanwhile, I had begun confirming which days I would visit both locations to take further pictures. Sr. Maria Theresa and I agreed on a date of July 17, 2019, while Sr. Rosa Da Costa and I prepared for July 22, 2019.

Upon arriving at the Wheeling HSLLC, I noticed the area looked very familiar with the locations I grew up in when I was a child in Chicago, IL. Although I noticed there were many apartment complexes near each other, Sr. Maria Theresa brought to life the reality that these homes were extremely close quarters and did not provide a place for children to play safely. She also enlightened me on the fact that for many of these children, which are of various

(Continued on Pg.5)

ages, this time each weekday, is what they have to look forward to. The Holy Spirit Life Learning Centers allows them to learn about God, each other, and just enjoy being a kid. It was inspiring to see so many mothers there with their little ones. They could be seen walking them to the arts and crafts area and helping them with their projects. On this day, the children were making necklaces with plastic string and a variety of beads and other objects. It's interesting that as I write this, I am now able to see that while all of the materials were of different sizes, shapes and colors when put together they make such a beautiful work of art.

The children were a bit taken back at first by the presence of not just the camera but myself as well since we had not met each other before. However, after a few minutes they became more open to the idea of my photographing the events as they unfolded considering I was more so capturing what they were making versus them solely. Afterwards, Wheeling Police Officer Scott Laverd arrived to give an outdoor presentation on the role of the Police Department in the area and things to look for when being outside in order to be safe and offer help to others as well as law enforcement. The presentation concluded with the children receiving an inside view of Officer Laverd's patrol vehicle where children and parents had their picture taken behind the wheel. Immediately following, Mr. Don Brayer & Charlie Mann volunteered their time and equipment to offer free golf lessons to the children. Both gentlemen were very kind and gracious offering their expertise. The boys and girls separated in groups and learned not only how to putt but also the differences between the various irons.

While observing I noticed one boy had distanced himself from the group and sat alone. While I am careful to say this, I truly felt nudged in a way, by God to step out of my comfort zone and reach out to him. I asked why he stopped golfing and he replied, "I'm not good at it". I told him, "You may not be naturally good at something but that doesn't mean you're bad at it. You just need to practice! Remember, Tiger Woods practiced since he was a child and look where he is now." He got up, smiled and continued with the lesson. I stood by his side encouraging him for the remainder of the course and would you believe he actually got better, even his form and swing improved. I know firsthand, what a tremendous impact a positive male influence can have on a child, especially a young boy. I am thankful for God's grace in that encounter. After lunch, I gathered my things and said farewell for now. One of the little girls said, "thank you for taking our pictures!" What a lovely salutation to a wonderful time.

Rogers Park made me feel right at home. Seeing the familiar places and restaurants really gave me a feeling of nostalgia. I arrived in the morning and was very impressed, as both locations really utilize the space they have very nicely. The children were broken up into three groups. The older kids were downstairs while the toddlers and grade school children were upstairs. The teens and pre-teens were learning art, spirituality, and music. While the younger ones also participated in these activities, they were geared more towards their age level. The toddlers were excited to see me again, while the teens welcomed me and allowed me to interview them and inquire into what they liked most about the program, which for many of them was art although they wanted more opportunities to draw versus paint. Having a chance to see them interact outside as well as inside put a smile on my face and comforted my heart knowing these children had somewhere to be that was away from the violence that grips the inner city today.

The Sisters really do a wonderful job of keeping the children engaged and offering a variety of activities that will help them grow to be more well-rounded students and individuals. I have heard it said that the eyes are the "windows to the soul", if this is true, I feel more optimistic about the future of the generation after us. Thank you Sr. Dorota and all the Sisters who serve and have served at the Holy Spirit Life Learning Centers. Thank you for welcoming me into your community and opening my eyes to the many wonderful things SSpS is doing in Chicagoland. Thank you to the children who participate in the Summer Peace Camps as well as their parents. I hope you continue to be blessed by the experience and cherish these moments throughout your lives. It is through your eyes I see the world around me a little different than I had before.



**ARNOLD JANSSEN  
SPIRITUALITY CORNER REFLECTION**

Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS

***"A Spirituality Resource For Personal Growth"***

Last April a group of SSpS Sisters went to a mini retreat led by Don Bisson, FMS. Allow me to introduce you to Don in the hope that you will visit his website and perhaps order some of his audio productions for your own spiritual growth. <https://www.yesnowproductions.com/audiocds>

**Brother Don Bisson, FMS** is, first and foremost, a spiritual director and is widely respected as a specialist in the training, formation and supervision of spiritual directors. Brother Don is a Marist brother whose soulful humanity attracts hundreds of people who find their way to virtually everything he offers. He is a man committed to "walking the talk." From this commitment comes a grounded wisdom and an authentic humility. His gems of wisdom have been formed in the heat and pressure of the deep underground passage of his own healing journey in God. Compassion for what it means to be human is the result, alongside clarity about the compelling call of the Spirit to "wake up" and participate consciously in God's purposes in our world. This waking up is not an achievement but a process that invites Bro. Don as well as ourselves into a transformation that is ongoing. This description is from his website and I found it to be so true.

"Don Bisson is a man who has said 'Yes' to the unfolding invitation of the Spirit. Even more, as a gifted teacher and guide he makes the journey accessible to any who are ready to undertake the holy, healing journey into a deepening relationship with God-and into a better understanding of self. I encourage you to 'taste and see.'" (Sandra Lomasson)

# Solidarity

The Catholic Day  
of Action with  
Immigrant Children



Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS

The SSpS stand with the migrants especially with the children by being a part of the "**Catholic Day of Action with Immigrant Children**" in Washington, DC on July 18, 2019 by stopping at 10 am Eastern time with a time of silence and a Holy Hour in the afternoon. Earlier in July, Pope Francis urged Catholics around the world to stand with migrants and against an attitude of indifference and despair. He said, "Migrants are persons..."

**"It is easier to build strong children  
than to repair broken men."**

Frederick Douglass, Abolitionist and Statesman

They are the symbol of all those rejected by today's globalized society... The weakest and most vulnerable must be helped... This is a tremendous responsibility, from which no one is exempt if we wish to fulfill the mission of salvation and liberation, in which the Lord himself has called us to cooperate." The SSpS say, "Go and do likewise."



SSpS Sisters gather to pray for the children detained at the border.

# NEWS



Sr. Xaveriana Ngene, SSpS was granted permission to join Our Lady of the Angelus Parishioners on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in November 2019. We pray for safe travels and spiritual renewal as

you visit the Holy Land Sr. Xaveriana.

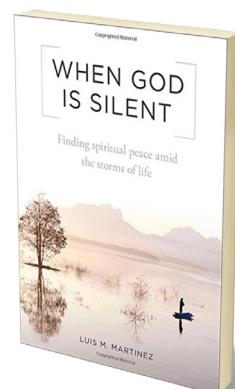
## Book of the MONTH

**"We Did It Together"**

By: Archbishop Luis Martinez

In this book, **WHEN GOD IS SILENT**, the author, Luis Martinez shows us how to trust God even when He seems unresponsive and remote, even when, as in the Gospels He seems asleep. Author, James Martinez quotes that beautiful line from the Song of Songs, "*I sleep, but my heart is awake...*" and shows how God's love for us never sleeps. Best of all, he teaches us the secret of happiness by taking refuge in the comfort our Lord offers. In this book you will discover how the summit of love is silence.

The author's style is easy, contemplative and poetic. Luis Martinez, Archbishop of Mexico City is a philosopher, theologian, educator, poet and spiritual director.



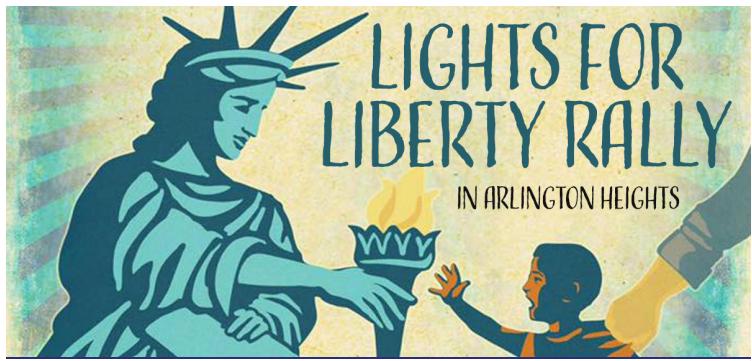
- Sister Betty Tranel



Congratulations & much gratitude to the staff, Sisters, volunteers, collaborators and supporters for another year of successful Summer Peace Camps in our Wheeling and Rogers Park locations!

Also, we would like to offer our thanks to the Rogers Park Community for "extending their tent" for the Campers and their Instructors.





Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, SSpS

There were speakers along with many people who held signs and candles. Some of the signs had phrases from Emma Lazaras' immigration poem that is engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired...." Others carried signs that read: "Your ancestors were immigrants too." "Suppose these were your children." "No room for hatred here." (This sign was in English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic and Spanish). "Take a stand for freedom." A dog wore a sign that said "Canines Against Cages".

The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and a group of Viatorians came together for a photo to show that detention of children was not right. As cars drove by and saw the signs and demonstrators, many honked and raised their fists in solidarity. The mood of the group was peaceful and determined. There were people of different ethnic groups and ages from babies to grandparents, individuals and families, all united in a common concern for the immigrants suffering on our southern border and those in our cities that are fearful of deportation.



Seven Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and the Viatorians.

On Friday July 12, 2019 the "Lights for Liberty" street-corner rally was a part of events held nationwide on behalf of immigrants. Seven SSpS Sisters (Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, Sr. Anita Marie Gutierrez, Sr. Maria Joseph Nguyen, Sr. Aprilia Untarto, Sr. Yanet Lopez, Sr. Angelica Oyarzo Chavol and Sr. Rose Therese Nolta) from the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Northfield joined over a hundred people in Arlington Heights, IL to demonstrate solidarity with immigrants and refugees. The demonstration was held in a small park next to the train station along Northwest Highway from 7pm- 9 pm.



SSpS Sisters Yanet, Angelica, and Aprilia.



SSpS Sisters Yanet and Aprilia seen holding up a banner.

## MY MINISTRIES IN MEMPHIS

Sr. Rebecca Chaan David, SSpS

My ministries in the Memphis Community lasted two years. I enjoyed the time spent serving at Ave Maria nursing home and in the parish. As a Certified nursing assistant (CAN), I could offer exceptional care to the elderly and as well as sharing their concerns with the charge nurses who do the elderly care plan.

I worked with the African Refugees' families at Blessed Sacrament Parish. I visited the families in their homes, shared God's word, praying the Rosary as well as organizing the Swahili language mass once a month.

In God's mission, service to others does not connect me only with God and my religious Community, it also connects me with my family and friends. I am so grateful for God's gift of reaching out to those in need and taking their concerns to God in prayer.



## JPIC Corner – July 2019

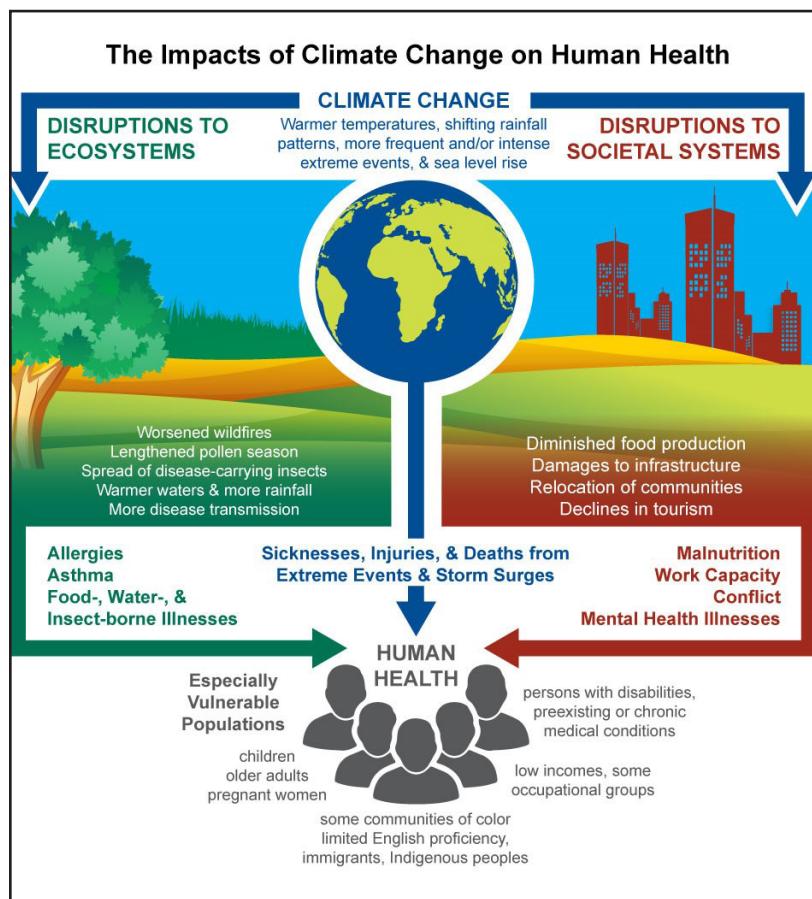
### Climate Change - The New Apartheid

It has long been believed that a clean, healthy environment is integral to the support of human rights, such as the rights to life, health, food and an adequate standard of living. “It has been determined that **anthropogenic climate change**, environmental pollution originating in human activity, is the largest threat to natural environments and human societies that has ever existed.” (UN’s Intergovernmental panel on climate change).

So now we need to acknowledge that **climate change is a human rights issue**. “The world is facing a **climate apartheid** between the rich who can protect themselves and the poor who are left behind,” the UN has warned (from the UN Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights). Climate change affects us all but not equally. When catastrophic climate events hit, these events remind us that those most likely to suffer first and worst from the impacts are the poor.

**Social challenge now: the world's poor are bearing the brunt of global warming.** Climate change has disproportionate effects on the world's poor. Their exposure to climate change is higher and their capacity to adapt is lower, because they lack the means for protecting themselves from the harm caused by rising sea levels, increased natural hazards and the ever changing patterns in rainfall. This poses a significant ethical challenge.

The adverse effects of global warming on the world's poor are felt in the following areas:

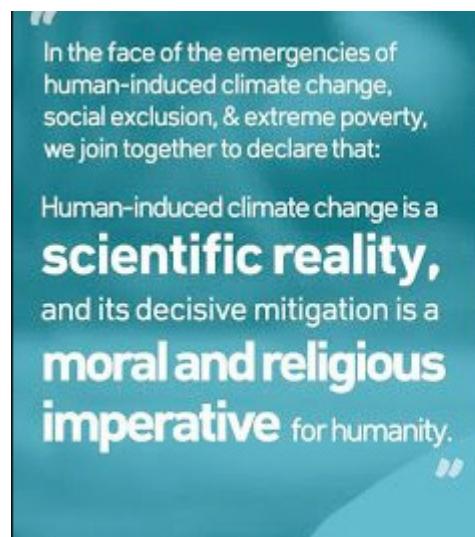


- » Ag production and food security. “Hunger is significantly worse in countries with agricultural systems that are highly sensitive to rainfall and temperature variability and severe drought, and where the livelihood of a high proportion of the population depends on agriculture.”  
(FOA report, The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018, United Nations)
- » World demand for alternative energy resources. This has created a big demand for bio fuels which drives up the prices of corn, soybeans, palm oils and other grains. It's creating a competition between the world's food source and energy markets.  
(Worldwatch Institute Vital Signs 2019)
- » Rising sea levels and exposure to climate disasters. “Hurricane Katrina provided a potent reminder of human frailty in the face of climate change even in the richest countries—especially when the impacts interact with institutionalized inequality. Across the developed world, public concern over exposure to extreme climate risks is mounting. With every flood, storm and heat wave, that concern is increasing.”  
(UNDP Human Development report 2018)

- » Human health. Climate and weather changes and disruptions to ecosystems have an impact on human health. There are more temperature related deaths and illnesses from air quality impact, water related illnesses, vectorborne disease (Lyme disease, West Nile virus), and mental health issues. (US Global Change and Research Program)

SSPs communities are spread throughout the African continent and surrounding area (South Sudan, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Ghana, Togo, Zambia and the island of Madagascar) which is and will continue to be greatly affected. "In Africa, climate change will bring about an increased incidence of extreme weather events (droughts, floods, mudslides, etc.), as well as a rise in infectious diseases." (United Nations University). They can attest to all of the changes and its impact.

So what does all this mean? **The world is increasingly at risk of "climate apartheid", where the rich pay to escape heat and hunger caused by the escalating climate crisis while the rest of the world suffers. (Climate change and poverty report, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Philip Aston).** "Climate change has immense, but largely neglected, implications for human rights. The rights to life, food, housing, and water will be dramatically affected. But equally importantly will be the impact on democracy, as governments struggle to cope with the consequences and to persuade their people to accept the major social and economic transformations required." (Philip Aston – UN report)



Philip Aston recommends that we work toward human rights compliant solutions. **One of his suggestions – acknowledge The Paris Agreement.** "It is the first climate change agreement to explicitly recognize the relevance of human rights. It calls on State parties to respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations on human rights when taking action to address climate change." He also recommends that the human rights community, with some notable exceptions, stop being complacent like the governments in the face of this challenge.

Pope Francis has told us that 'we are the guardians of creation'. So we need to stop being complacent in our attitude toward climate change.

As SSPs, we need to pray, advocate and get involved in actions. We should embrace the need for change in our lifestyles. We can start by becoming more informed, hold ourselves more accountable for our carbon footprint, and unplug our electrical devices are just a few of the things we can do. We can all help.

**"O Lord, grant us the grace to grow deeper in our respect of and care for your Creation. Help us to recognize the sacredness of all your creatures as signs of your wondrous love. Spark our imagination so we might find new ways to live harmoniously with creation and new technologies to reverse the damage we have done to your Creation. Help us turn from the selfish consumption of resources meant for all and to see the impacts of our choices on the poor and vulnerable. Amen."**



*By Sr. Rose Therese, SSPs & Lori Brayer*