Suggested FCJM-Participation for the Month of August, 2015

August 6 and 9 Atomic Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. 2015 is the 70th anniversary for these tragic bombings. See observance on August 29 Against Nuclear tests.

August 9th United Nations International Day of the World’s Indigenous People is observed to promote and protect the rights of this population. The day focuses on indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, health and education. The event also recognizes the achievements and contributions that indigenous people make to improve world issues such as environmental protection. Examples of the indigenous people include the Native Americans in the United States, Native Indonesians, the hunter-gatherers in the Amazon and the traditional pastoralists like the Maasai in Kenya.

Indigenous communities maintain that they are increasingly under assault outside economic interests, from mining, oil, dam building, logging and Agra-industrial projects. Often they resist this invasion with courage and skill but their protests are often ignored by governments and corporations. Pictured here, our Indonesian Sisters join other religious congregations in a demonstration for the rights of the Native Indonesians. On the banner is written “Peace is beautiful. Samosir Peace.” Many members of our Congregation have continued to advocate for the rights of indigenous people.

Let us pray for the courage and the skill of the indigenous people in Para, Brazil to address their concerns in meetings held with government and corporate leaders. And, may we also be inspired by their care and concern for the environment which for them is sacred.

August 12th UN International Youth Day was established by the United Nations as a means of raising awareness of issues affecting young people. For this day, Pope Francis has taken the theme focused on the beatitude: “Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.” In his message, Pope Francis urges young people to” have the courage to be happy.” He inspires the young people to enter in the spirit of the Kingdom of God so as to be poor with the poor and to see the face of God in those who are poor. He said that a pure heart is a heart that knows how to bend down and share life with those in need. Our Sr. Mariana Muțiu has had several programs with the young people reflecting on the theme of what is happiness in their lives. She is pictured here with some youth from Romania helping to clean up a neighborhood where poor people live. They collected garbage, painted curbs and planted some trees. After several months they will return to the neighborhood and again invite the young people to join them in this work.

Let us pray that the youth of today will come to understand the wisdom of a life lived with a pure heart and that they find ways to give to those who are in need.
August 23rd UN International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and of its Abolition is held to remind people of the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade. It also serves as a reminder of the modern day slave trading of human trafficking. Pope Francis is collaborating with other partners to put an end to human trafficking which he says “is a crime against humanity”. As a Congregation, we are in countries that have victims of human trafficking. Countries are donors or recipients of these victims. Our Sisters in Holland have long been concerned about the human trafficking problems. Our Sisters in Brazil participated in prayers and activities around the diocesan theme “Brotherhood and Human Trafficking”. Our Sisters in the United States and in Indonesia are involved in programs regarding human trafficking.

Pictured here is Sr. Sheila Kinsey participating in a demonstration in the Piazza of St. Peter where Pope Francis would recognize the efforts of the group to pray for victims and to advocate against human trafficking.

Let us pray for the wisdom and guidance to find ways to end this horrible scourge of human trafficking today even as we look for ways to protect and encourage respect for the human rights of victims.

August 29th UN International Day against Nuclear Tests brings public awareness and education regarding the effects of global nuclear weapon tests. The day aims to end nuclear testing and to promote peace and security. The day intends to raise people’s awareness on the need to prevent nuclear catastrophes so as to avert devastating effects on humankind, the environment and the planet. The day also promotes the need for a nuclear weapon-free world. Both the United States and France are considered to be “nuclear-weapon-states” and are under the terms of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In 2013 North Korea shocked the world with the nuclear testing from that country. Pictured here is the devastating atomic bomb explosion in Japan because this nuclear bomb was dropped by the United States during WWII.

Let us pray that the countries of our world work together to find peaceful means to resolve our conflicts. And, let us also pray for the openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our efforts to initiate ways to compassionately respond to the needs of others before conflicts can arise.