

PJIC Office Update, May 2017

As Sisters of Charity of New York, we are grateful that our lives and experience draw from our local, regional and global presence. In this issue, we hear from Sr. Claire Regan and her New Orleans experience and give thanks to her and the House of Charity – a Federation Project!



Has the Civil War Ended? A New Orleans Experience of Ongoing Conflict by Claire Regan, SC. In picture on left, Sr. Claire and Loyola University students participated in an Interfaith Prayer Service. Below Sr. Claire offers an overview of her varied ministries.

You may have heard or seen on national media reports the story of the removal of four confederate statues in New Orleans and about the accompanying clamor of opinions and persons. The fourth statue was finally removed on May 19 after a year and a

half of court battles in the aftermath of our City Council's vote 6-1 in favor of removing the statues. Spearheading this crusade has been our Mayor Mitch Landrieu who is serving his final year of eligibility in the Office. On Sunday, May 21, the newspaper headline declared "The Civil War is Ended". In this city, there is much that occurs daily which would have one pause in the light of that very declaration.

Here at the House of Charity, we witness to ongoing efforts for peacemaking and racial understanding through our community prayer, monthly interfaith prayer for peace and a monthly Catholic peace walk. We have often brought the student groups to one of these witness events when they have been with us. I meet regularly with mothers who have lost their children to violence. We each worship in parishes marked by ethnic and racial diversity on Sundays. As consecrated religious we are members of "Burning Bush" Religious Sisters and Brothers working to end violence. I serve on the steering committee for Burning Bush. New Orleans has a per capita murder rate that exceeds Chicago's rate. Our police force has suffered severe loss of manpower over the past five years and it operates under a Federal consent decree due to past civil rights violations and deficiencies. Our educational system and economic base of tourism both operate with low rates of return and so drug dealing becomes an attractive alternative way to gain wealth and/or escape the effects of poverty. Gun control legislation is basically nonexistent here in Louisiana. We are a "right to carry" state where a licensed weapon can be worn in clear sight.

The members of Burning Bush are sending a letter in support of the Mayor in the difficult decision he made to remove Confederate statues in the face of the terrible slaughter of AME Church members as they prayed in North Carolina. The powerful symbols of the Confederacy have justified the oppression and sufferings of a people in the age of slavery. Such pride of place and honor for these symbols can no longer be justified in our time and in the

America of today. We can and must stand together as a people united, as raised at our SC Assembly, “as a community of one mind and heart”.

To this end we minister, for this end we re-build, and around this end we pray, not just in New Orleans but wherever we find ourselves as Sisters of Charity in this bicentennial year.

Share your story! We invite sisters and associates to write a paragraph on their experience of “living lives of love” in this new time. Share ways you are living gospel values: inclusiveness, welcoming the stranger, nonviolence, reconciliation, justice. Pope Francis calls us to civic and political love. We are living it! Let’s share our stories! Send a short story to Sr. Carol!

Creation’s Transformative Energy Task Force affirmed its belief at May 22nd meeting the importance of “seeing in a new way” in this transitional transformational time. We talked about how the Congregation (and individual sisters and associates) are raising awareness, empowering and responding as a presence, as witnesses, pray-ers and educators, especially in SCNY focus areas of poverty, immigration, human trafficking and care of Earth and all God’s Creation.



Healing of Our City, Still We Rise NYC: Human Justice Summit Part II. At Riverside Church on May 17 Police Commissioner, James O’Neill and his entire top leadership attended Healing of Our City event chaired by Clergy Roundtable NYC chairs Rev. Que English and Rev. Devine. At least two hundred faith and other community minded leaders participated. Topics addressed were: immigration, human trafficking, Sanctuary City, crime, community policing, bullying, youth concerns, and more. This uplifting and inspiring meeting highlighted the continuing efforts of NYC faith leaders and police to work together. **Community policing is a goal of our NYC Police Department** and requires “a tremendous amount of training ... to make sure ... that they (police) have great listening skills and great problem-solving skills.” Let us hold our police, firemen, all public servants, and our community in our heart, thoughts and prayer.

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative invited Catholics in the United States during May to share their hope for greater teaching and commitment to active nonviolence with their bishop and to invite him to affirm active nonviolence as the “nucleus of the Christian revolution”. <https://nonviolencejustpeace.net/>

National Catholic Pledge to End the Death Penalty – if you wish to sign. It is found on Catholic Mobilizing Network website: <https://catholicmobilizing.org/>

Carol De Angelo, SC, Director of SCNY PJIC Office, cdeangelo@scny.org