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# The UN & YOU

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## AT A GLANCE

- Finding Hope
- Summit of the Future
- Virtual UN Orientation

## From the NGO Desk



### Finding Hope



One early morning this August, I was driving with my oldest daughter, Shea, through the lonely streets of Manhattan. Although I thought she was sleeping, she was wide-awake, noticing the many men and women sleeping on the street, hidden to many who are indifferent, familiar, or simply too tired to respond.

Shea then said, "If I was president, the first thing I would do is give everyone a home." Smiling, I asked her how she would do that. She responded, "All those who have a home would give their home to someone else."

"What happens to those who now are giving up their homes," I asked.

“Well, they have more than those who are homeless, so they can move somewhere else.”

Although her plan has its flaws, she reminded me of the Vincentian Charism and Christian virtues of simplicity and solidarity.

I felt resistance as she offered her path to solve homelessness. I wondered what I would sacrifice for someone else. I am not sure I found the answer just yet.

As I approach my two-year anniversary of this role as NGO Representative at the United Nations later this fall, representing you, the Sisters of Charity Federation, I find myself wrestling with more questions than answers when I started.

Some of these questions include:

- *Are we making any difference at all in a political system that moves to slow when urgency is required?*
- *Does our advocacy matter to those in positions of power? Does the reality of those living in poverty change because of our work or is it just performative as we put on our work clothes and fill fancy board rooms?*
- *Am I living what I preach, from recycling cans to using less energy to making choices focused on simplicity and solidarity?*
- *Who is God calling me to be and how might I step more fully into a faithful person who finds the balance of advocacy and charity, who can trust deeply in God when I know of so much suffering, and to be an instrument of peace when I explore my own woundedness.*

It is understandable to be overwhelmed by the inequalities, from the local to the global. I struggle to find the balance of remaining empathetic and passionate in advocacy while also trusting in that I am one piece of a much larger puzzle. Not one of us will change the UN or change the world, but as a colleague reminds us often- if we are not doing this work, who is?

When I hear personal accounts of the sexual violence in Haiti against young girls, reports of famine and war in Sudan, the unnecessary loss of life in the Middle East and Ukraine, the increasing numbers of migrants and refugees, those without secure housing and food, and the rising temperatures on our planet, it is hard to remain hopeful.

Then I think of my daughter with her eyes rooted in justice and care for all of God’s creation. Then I think of all of you who keep moving forward and finding Christ in those you serve- like so many were touched by this charism of charity and love hundreds of years before. Your charity and advocacy, inspired by the many Vincentian and Setonian holy men and women that went before us, inspires me to join you in this mission. We share our charism, trusting we are using our talents, voice, and prayers to improve the realities for others.

As I turn to the words of our holy guides, these words of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton ground our ministry:

**“Do we serve God in hope, looking to His promises, confiding in His love, seeking His kingdom, and leaving the rest to Him? Rejoice in hope, for hope shall never be compounded.”**

From my young, generous daughter, to the example of you, and so many who lived and live each day in prayer and action to love, may we continue our lives in love and hope, serving God as Mother Seton instructs us.

# Summit of the Future



## An Update

The long-awaited Summit of the Future will occur from September 22-23rd, 2024, at the UN Headquarters. Two action days were recently announced to occur prior to the Summit from September 20-21st. The action days are meant to engage all stakeholders, including youth and the larger civil society with UN agencies and Member States. The question from Civil Society regarding the action days is how many Member States will actually be present. A similar effort occurred last year with little representation from global leaders.

As reported earlier, the role of Civil Society in the actual Summit is minimal at best. The goal of the Summit is to agree to an outcome document titled, the Pact of the Future. You can read the second revision ([July 17, 2024](#)). You can read more about the Summit and what it hopes to deliver [here](#). This will lead to the Second World Social Summit in November 2025 in Qatar.

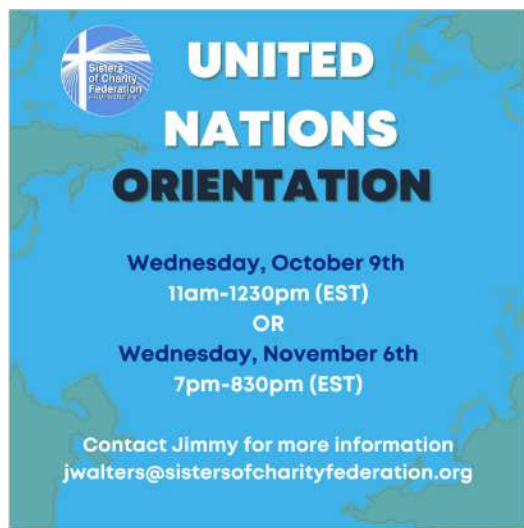
We will keep our attention on decisions (or lack of discussion/decisions) addressing poverty, climate, and women and girls, and youth. This Summit attempts to “accelerate the SDGs” and to respond to new opportunities and risk. With the SDGs off track and the 2030 deadline quickly approaching, will the UN fulfill their promises or will many continue to be left behind.

One area where there may be an inroad is finance for development. The international financial structure needs to change, especially prioritizing social protection floors for all people and relieving debts that keep so many countries in poverty. In July 2025, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development will occur in Spain. The hope is that agreements will lead to a transformation that creates an economic structure that lifts up people instead of further dividing the wealthy from those living in poverty.

# Save the Date



## Federation UN Virtual Orientation



This October and November, I will offer a virtual orientation to our ministry at the United Nations. The goal of this 90-minute session is to explore how we work within the UN structure, the ways we seek advocacy and change, and how we find communion with other NGOs.

The hope is for this to not only be information sharing, but it will be rooted in prayer and dialogue, as we journey together, in charity and advocacy to seek justice and human rights for all.

Please consider joining us as we walk together in our shared charism. You can register [here](#).

# Reach Out



## Let's Stay Connected

**For questions, feedback, article ideas, or story contributions, email [JWalters@sistersofcharityfederation.org](mailto:JWalters@sistersofcharityfederation.org) and we'll be in touch.**

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