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The UN & YOU

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AT A GLANCE

- Vincentian Convocation
- COP29 Results
- Gaza Exhibit at UN

From the NGO Desk



Hearts on Fire



As I sipped the first of what would be many delicious espressos before the Second Vincentian Convocation started this past November, I found myself wondering if St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac could have ever imagined that over 400 years later, people would continue to serve and love in their name and example. I wondered if St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and her companions, when she was responding to the needs before them, could ever anticipate the legacy they would leave for us to follow.

This wonder was reinforced as I gathered with over 300 other Vincentians, people from all over the globe who share in this beautiful yet challenging charism. The significance of meeting in Rome was not lost on me. As I walked the ancient cobblestone streets, I sensed the past that led us to this gathering, where like so many past pilgrims before, we come together in this eternal city to grow in a deeper relationship with Christ and one another.

The gathering was filled with prayer, song, synodal conversations, and an invitation to strengthen our relationships to better serve those living in poverty. Two afternoon sessions, a joint session between our Sisters of Charity Federation of North America and the Sisters of Charity Federation of Strasbourg and a session focusing on the Vincentian Family's ministry at the United Nations, were of the utmost importance.

Meeting with the Sisters of Charity Federation of Strasbourg challenged us to explore how we may better collaborate and support one another. Like distant cousins at a family reunion, we sensed the possibility of what could be as we face similar challenges and opportunities. Our ministry at the UN was one specific example of where we could share resources and information and also represent those they serve in our advocacy.

The UN afternoon session on the final full day was unique in how so few in attendance were aware of our ministry in New York, especially the impact on homelessness. We wrestled with the challenges of systemic change and how to best serve and represent those who need our friendship, care, and advocacy. It was also shared how some could not advocate for their rights, due to fear of retribution or lack of access.

I left these encounters with an even greater appreciation for this larger Vincentian Family, and the opportunity to be among you, the Sisters of Charity Federation. As daunting as it may be when encountering the daily narratives and statistics of injustice, this collaborative network provides solidarity and wisdom. I am hopeful that we, as a family that is much larger than we can imagine, will only strengthen our bonds and find innovative ways to enhance our advocacy to impact the realities of those who are experiencing injustices.

St. Vincent de Paul is attributed to saying, "So, our vocation is to go, not just to one parish, not just to one diocese, but all over the world; and do what? To set people's hearts on fire, to do what the Son of God did. He came to set the world on fire in order to inflame it with His love."

How blessed we are to share in this vocation and mission of love.

COP 29



Frustrating End to Climate Talks

The Conference of the Parties (COP) concluded last month with great frustration and disappointment. The headline was a climate finance agreement of \$300 billion annually from developing countries to combat global warming. Advocates were asking for trillions, not billions, to support those in developing countries who are most impacted and will continue to feel the wrath of our warming planet.

Last year, COP 28 gave us the first agreed upon acknowledgment of fossil fuel's impact on the rising temperatures. This year, countries like Saudi Arabia (among others) moved conversations away from this focus, losing the momentum that started last year. To make matters worse, a senior official at COP29 in Azerbaijan appeared to have used his leadership role to arrange a meeting to discuss potential fossil fuel deals with an oil company. "We have a lot of gas fields that are to be developed," the official is recorded as saying [according to BBC News](#). Saudi Arabia was also accused of [modifying official COP29 texts](#) before other countries had access to make edits.

As COP concluded, climate grabbed a legal focus this month as a record number of oral statements are expected to be presented to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as highly awaited public hearings on States' legal obligations with respect to climate change. The hearings are part of the process towards the court issuing an advisory opinion, which will clarify States' legal obligations under international law and the consequences for

breaching them. A record number of 151 written statements were submitted and 97 States and eleven international organizations are scheduled to participate in the oral proceedings. You can read more [here](#).

New Gaza Exhibit



Entering a Second Year



This photo to the left shows the Al-Rimal neighborhood in Gaza City after it has been targeted with a large number of explosives and missiles. An entire residential square was completely annihilated.

10/10/2023- Photo Credit, Middle East images.

UN "Gaza, Palestine: A Crisis of Humanity, A Cry for Justice" Exhibit.

A photo exhibit, titled "Gaza, Palestine: A Crisis of Humanity, A Cry for Justice" is now displayed in the Visitors' Lobby of the General Assembly building, at the UN Headquarters in New York (curved wall) until mid-January.

As the nightmare in Gaza enters its second year, the photos, although difficult to view, remind us of the horrific realities that so many innocent people are experiencing. If you wish to explore the images and the photographers' stories, you can view the photos [here](#). (Viewer discretion is advised as there are disturbing images, including those of children).

This exhibit is organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.

As we journey through this Advent season and into Christmas, we recall that Mary was a Jewish woman living in first-century Palestine. May we call upon her intercession for peace in the holy land, including Israel, Palestine, and the larger region that is experiencing so much unrest at this time. May we find the courage to be a voice for justice and love.

Reach Out



Let's Stay Connected

For questions, feedback, article ideas, or story contributions, email

JWalters@sistersofcharityfederation.org and we'll be in touch. Follow us on **X (formerly Twitter)** and on **Facebook** @ngoscfederation.