

# The UN & You

BY DR. JIMMY WALTERS – FEBRUARY 2023

## From the NGO Desk

One of the more challenging aspects of the role as the NGO Representative at the UN for the Sisters of Charity Federation is the [unimaginable statistics](#) and heartbreaking stories of injustices and human rights violations that are shared almost daily in meetings and reports.

For example, how does one wrap their head around:

- One in 10 people worldwide suffering from hunger
- 641 million women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime
- An estimated 1.6 billion people are lacking safely managed drinking water by 2030.
- As of mid-February, 41,000 dead from the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey.

And, as we know, there are many other issues of injustice that simply break our hearts. I find myself, along with the other NGO representatives, wondering and struggling how to best communicate the magnitude of these statistics and the stories that accompany them, while discerning how to be a part of the solution. I keep returning to the familiar Vincentian question: What must be done?

I imagine St. Vincent, St. Louise, and all our Founders asking this question as they stood before injustice and suffering.

I also expect that you too have asked yourself this very question in your many ministries.

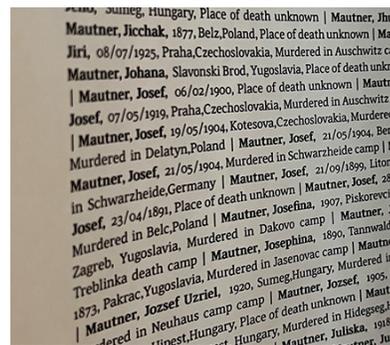
### Connecting the Head and Heart

Earlier this month, I spent time in prayer at a temporary exhibit located in the main entrance of the UN that attempts to connect statistics to the head and the heart.

Last January, the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day brought the Yad Vashem Book of Names of Holocaust Victims to the UN. This memorial



details alphabetically the names of each of the approximately 4.8 million Holocaust victims that Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, has so far documented and confirmed. There are an additional 1.2 million names that are unknown and symbolized in blank pages. [Read more](#) about the memorial and the Holocaust Remembrance.



When I approached the 26 feet long and 6 feet tall memorial, at first, I did not realize what I was looking at, but this soon changed as I turned the pages. I moved to the front of the memorial to read the memorial's description, and my heart sank.

Perhaps [Bronia Brandman](#), an Auschwitz survivor

from Poland who located her family's names in the pages, said it best: "When I saw the book, I was overwhelmed because the book reports that they lived and they breathed and they dreamed and they were murdered."

As I processed this experience, I felt grateful to feel and touch the symbol-



ic 6 million lives. I wondered and prayed how to make this real for others. From the hatred that led to the murder of 6 million Jewish individuals 80 years ago to the continued persecution, pain, and injustices that impact billions of our brothers and sisters today, how do we find the grace and strength to respond?

In the call to be global citizens, we will continue to struggle with the harsh reality facing humanity and our planet. Yet, as people of hope and by the charge of our charism, we strive to be a part of the solution, both locally and globally.

May we continue to support one another in our commitment to prayer, charity, and advocacy to touch humanity, person by person, and may we ask for the intercession of our saints and loved ones to guide us as we respond to that familiar question: What must be done?

## CSocD61 Recap

The 61st Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD61) concluded earlier this month (Feb. 6–15) with a focus on full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). This was the first in-person meeting since February 2020.

At the conclusion of the commission, all five resolutions were adopted by consensus. These include a focus on social development, youth, ageing population, and increasing attention to the ECOSOC Commission.

The federation had a small contingency to attend events both in person and online, including an orientation and networking event sponsored by the NGO Committee on Social Development, the opening ceremony in the UN headquarters, thematic sessions and many side events offered by NGOs and member states. Those in attendance included myself, Sister Teresa Kotturan, SCN (former SC Federation NGO representative); Sister Marion Sheridan, CSM and Darlene O’Leary (outgoing and current NGO Liaison for the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish); Sister Carol DeAngelo, SC (NGO Liaison for Sisters of Charity of New York).

## CSW

The [67th Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW67) begins next month, March 6–13, at the Unit-



ed Nations. The priority theme this year is “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”

The review theme is “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.”

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

You can follow the majority of the CSW on [UN WebTV](#), as well as register for [virtual side events](#) facilitated by Permanent Missions, UN entities, and NGOs.

## Conference on Water

March concludes with the [2023 Conference on Water](#) from March 22–24. There is a commitment to making the conference a watershed moment that will bring stakeholders from all sectors together and that will create a global momentum for accelerated implementation and improved impact to advance the broad challenges surrounding water.

You can read more about the [Water Action Agenda](#) online. There is an urgency and focus on creating and implementing innovative and transformative ideas that can be replicated.

You can watch the conference on [UN WebTV](#) and register for [virtual side events](#).

## Stay Connected

During CSW and the Conference on Water in March, please visit the [Justice Coalition for Religious](#) (JCoR) for guides and resources. Also follow the SC Federation NGO Office on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for updates.