



The UN & You

BY DR. JIMMY WALTERS – MAY 2023

From the NGO Desk

Last fall, I joined many of the NGO Liaisons and several Sisters of Charity Federation representatives in attending a tour of the

United Nations. It was my first introduction to the liaisons, and the next day, to many in leadership.

During the tour, we were brought to a long hallway that featured an agonizing exhibit on the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We were all touched (and troubled) by the images and remnants of destroyed homes, cathedrals, and clothing. What was especially moving was that our tour guide's mother was a child in Hiroshima during the bombing. He shared how many generations continue to suffer from the long-lasting effects of that atomic bomb.

The cruelty and pain humanity can cause is evident in this exhibit, and I find myself thinking about this tour guide from time to time. I sense the hope he finds in the United Nations and the importance of reminding us to look to the past to avoid the same errors in the future.

Hiroshima was again the focus of global attention this month, as it hosted the Group of 7 (G7) Summit. G7 member countries are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Union also joins as a non-country member.

On the same land that was devastated in the final chapters of the second World War, leaders gathered to discuss some of today's conflict, especially the war in Ukraine. It is worth noting, troubling, and not surprising, that at the UN Security Council in April, which is under Russia's rotating presidency, the human catastrophes in Ukraine were not debated nor discussed.

It is also worth noting that according to



the [Geneva Academy](#), there are more than 110 armed conflicts in our world at this time. More than 80 armed conflicts occur in the Middle East and Africa.

The fear of nuclear war remains a frightening concern and, I fear, an inevitable conclusion. According to the [UN's Office for Disarmament](#), about 13,400 nuclear weapons remain in our world and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date.

So, what can we do as our world faces conflict and dysfunction? The UN [offers these concrete actions](#) to support the agenda for disarmament.

Pax Christi USA, an inspiring organization that we partner with at the UN, offers resources, study circles, campaigns, and prayers that shows the world a different way.

Echoing Pope Francis in 2019, Pax Christi reminds G7 leaders that "the possession" of atomic weapons is "immoral," as well as their use. [Read the letter](#) from Pax Christi International to the G7 leaders.

Pax Christi also informs us that one day of nuclear costs spent globally is equivalent to the cost of 200 million vaccines. To provide greater context, an estimated 25 million children under the age of 1 year did not receive basic vaccines in 2021, which is the highest number since 2009. Like it is with the climate crisis,

migration, and all humanity's injustices, our priorities are not in order.

Impelled by Christ's love and joined together in the mission of charity, we remain people of hope and committed to providing charity and systemic and transformative justice. As conflict and crisis continues to increase and rear its ugly head, we can turn to Saint Louise de





previous ministry at St. John's University. I spoke to the Vincentian mission and the charge to encounter and love Christ in the poor, and the transformation that occurred with our students as they served.

I also spoke at a recent meeting with the Barbara Ford Peacebuilding Center, a ministry of the Sisters of Charity of

Marillac, who reminds us, "Do not be upset if things are not as you would want them to be for a long time to come. Do the little you can very peacefully and calmly so as to allow room for the guidance of God in your lives. Do not worry about the rest."

Easier said than done, Saint Louise, yet we patiently and courageously move forward, together.



Laudato Si' Week 2023

Themed "Hope for the Earth; Hope for Humanity," the world celebrates Laudato Si' Week this month (May 21–28.) [View the schedule](#) of virtual events.

Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical, *Laudato Si': On Care for the Common Home*, "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. (#202)"

In celebration of this groundbreaking teaching on the encyclical's eighth anniversary, one idea to ignite this necessary transformation is the film, "The Letter: A Message for Our Earth." [Watch video](#) An [accompanying prayer resource](#) is also available for continued reflection.

Committee on Social Development

On May 17, during the monthly committee meeting of the Committee on Social Development, I had the opportunity to contribute to a panel focusing on the theme of next year's CSocD conference. The theme focuses on poverty and social justice.

I was invited to speak on my experience with poverty and I pulled from my own experience in facilitating service programs to those living in poverty in my

New York in Guatemala. Coordinated by Sister Carol De Angelo, SC, this was an opportunity to learn more from the center's director, Luciano Laynez Perez, about the important services provided by the center, for new relationships to develop, and to enhance advocacy, support, and prayer.

As I shared the ministry in Guatemala with my NGO colleagues, it led to a larger and rich conversation about the balance of charity and systemic justice. We discussed our role in promoting systemic justice at the United Nations and how to secure that everyone has a place at the table, urging those in political leadership to listen and to act.

I was moved by the wisdom and passion of our NGO colleagues, representing over 20 religious and non-religious communities. There was a focus and determination that reminded us all why we are here.

I am grateful to be a part of this monthly committee. My leadership in this group is expanding as I accepted the position of communications chair and to serve on the 2024 Civil Society Forum Subcommittee of the NGO CSocD. I will keep the NGO liaisons updated on this work and I look forward to continuing to learn all the SC Federation's grassroots efforts and ministries so I can best represent you, those you serve, and the mission of the Sisters of Charity Federation.

Social Media

Please continue to follow @ngoscfederation on Twitter and Facebook for updates on areas of interest and advocacy. Also visit the updated Justice Coalition of Religious website at www.jcor2030.org for resources and updates.

Watch your inbox and the SC Federation web site for the next UN & You newsletter, which will be posted in mid-August.