



Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat of the Society of Jesus

April 2019

...to exchange social justice and ecology news, stimulate contacts, share spirituality and promote networking...

Greetings



*Christ is risen! It's Easter!
It's time for resurrection
It is time for hope, time to
Walk along the path of life
With the trust and mercy of God
It's time to build bridges that take
Serenity, peace, joy and forgiveness: bridges of light
Leading from east to the west and
Join all the people !*

Narrative

The Son of Man Came Eating and Drinking

Eugine Muthu, SJ (MDU)

Working against Discrimination on the basis of work and descent has been the one thing I have been grappling with during the 37 years of my life as a Jesuit. It all started when I chose to study Rural Development Science instead of Botany even while I was a candidate to the society of Jesus. My desire to work among the discriminated people became pronounced during my regency at IDEAS (Institute for Development Education Action and Studies), the first of the social action centres of The Jesuit Madurai province, founded by Fr. Aloysius Irudayam SJ. He drew scores of Jesuits into social action including me by his example and inspiration.

In 1993 November I was ordained a priest. Soon after I had an invitation to deliver a homily in a feast day mass in a small chapel in a remote village in Tamil Nadu. We were four priests celebrating the mass. Even before we vested for the mass, the elders of the village entreated that the priests should have a meal soon after the mass. The mass was over in an hour. As the people were milling around the statue of the saint in the chapel, I heard the car of the



Vicar Forane leave the campus, and it was followed by the motorcycle of the parish priest and the third priest who concelebrated left with the parish priest. The elders came and almost dragged me to a house where they had prepared a meal and had set a table for all the four priests. I was the only one left behind. That day I came to know that Catholic priests belonging to other castes discriminate the Catholic *Arunthathiyar* (a social group that is forced to work with leather as well as forced to take up sanitary work in the villages and towns) and consider them polluting and wouldn't eat or drink anything given by them. It was my first encounter with this type of

discrimination. I saw the priests running away from the church campus before the people could offer them something to eat. [Read more...](#)

Flashnews

Latin America - Prepares for the 50th Anniversary of the Social Apostolate



In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the social apostolate, throughout this year the Conferences of Provinces of Latin America will be celebrating events to look back at the history of the social apostolate in the region, the work that has been done, and the preparation for the Congress in Rome in November 2019. At the CPAL level, from June 3 - 8, there will be a conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of SJES in Mexico. To the event will attend members from all the different provinces, different sectors, and social networks. The three main areas of focus for the conference in Mexico will be: 1) Celebrating God's faithfulness in the work done the last 50 years, 2) Fomenting collaboration in all the social and ecological projects, 3) To discern collectively the steps needed to implement UAP. The provinces too will host diverse events and reflections opportunities.

Africa - Tax Justice: More about human dignity and wellbeing than Money



Three Jesuit organisations, the Justice and Ecology Office of JCAM, the Nairobi-based Jesuit Hakimani Centre and the Jesuit Mission Office in Nurnberg, Germany commissioned a research to study correlations between tax and poverty. The [final report](#) was presented at a conference titled "Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Stemming Illicit Financial Flows: Tax Justice for Promoting Equality and Social Justice", that took place from 12-14 March in Nairobi,

Kenya to consider the aspects of Tax Justice and Illicit Financial Flows. The conference attracted more than 100 delegates from across the world to the Kenyan capital city. Those gathered interrogated issues surrounding just taxation and poverty to offer solutions to this mammoth problem. [Read more...](#), [A video interview](#)

Mozambique-Zimbabwe -JCAM President Statement on Cyclone Idai



My thoughts are with the hundreds of thousands in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi who have been affected by Cyclone Idai over the past week. The devastation this storm has caused deserves the attention and support of the international community to rebuild. I'm encouraged by the level of humanitarian assistance to the affected countries... Disasters such as this one need not awaken only our sympathy towards humanity, but also our sympathy towards our planet, to

God's creation itself. As humanity, we need to respond to the distress of our planet. Global increase in adverse and calamitous weather conditions is a manifestation of climate change, which we humans are largely responsible for. [Read more...](#), [Watch a video.](#)

SJES - Promoting a Consistent Culture of Protection



John K. Guiney SJ was appointed to coordinate a three-year project promoting a "consistent culture of protection" in the Society of Jesus. John Says, "The project will involve two stages. Firstly, the current global situation will be mapped and assessed; and then, appropriate guidelines for ethical, pastoral, and professional conduct and safe environments will be developed. It advances and intensifies work which has already been done by Provinces, Conferences, networks and ministries". The prevalence of child abuse both within and outside the Church is a social reality that urgently requires higher levels of understanding and more decisive action in order to promote justice in the matter of child safeguarding and protection. Since this issue is fundamentally a matter of justice, the project will come under the supervision of the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology. [Read more...](#)

Philippines - AIR Community's commitment to the environment



Arrupe International Residence (AIR) in Manila is home to 56 Jesuits representing 17 different nationalities. The community produces 15 - 20 kilos of organic scraps daily suitable for composting. Composting is part of the community's commitment to the environment, and one brother and two scholastics are assigned as compost seniors to monitor garbage segregation and composting. Vegetable scraps and fruit peels are segregated in two main areas: in the kitchen and dining room. Usually, the kitchen supplies most of the vegetable scraps while the dining room supplies a good amount of peels from a variety of fruits in season. [Read more...](#)

Spain - Jesuits live in Communities of Hospitality with Migrants, Refugees and Ex-Prisoners



Hospitality communities are Jesuit communities where life and projects are shared with people in need. In Spain, there are Jesuit communities that live with migrants, refugees and people who come out of prison. Those who flee from misery and conflict are provided, in addition to a dwelling, opportunities to learn the language and regularize their situation; those who leave prison are offered a home that will take them away from old companies, and they are helped to regain confidence and autonomy. Together, in the community, a common project is elaborated in which all participate and feel co-responsible for both the care and the common tasks. In most cases, living together lasts a few months, until people have the skills to get by on their own, avoiding unwanted dependencies. [Read more...](#)

Xavier Network - Advocating for a More Just World



The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, international disaster relief and Child Safegu were top of the agenda for the Xavier Network Directors when they met in Nuremberg last week. Founded in 2004, the Xavier Network is an international mission and development partnership between 13 Jesuit organisations united in their commitment to global justice. Fr Klaus Vathroder SJ, Coordinator of the Xavier Network said: "The Xavier Network is a thriving example of Jesuit networking. Our meeting in Nuremberg was historic because of the commitments we made to building a safeguarding culture for children at home and overseas, advocating for justice on several fronts, and working together with global Jesuit partners to strengthen our impact". [Read more...](#)

Global - JCAM at the Fourth United Nations General Assembly on the Environment

Three Jesuits participated in the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly, held in Nairobi, from March 4 to 15, 2019. Tshikendwa Matadi, SJ one of the participants says, "We



brought the experience of the Church to this forum, highlighting the beautiful and invaluable work of many religious leaders among the poor and the marginalized". Three important areas of consultation was on: a) *Ancestral knowledge and the need to safeguard it*; b) the urgency to involve young people in the fight for the safeguarding of our Common House, and c) Religious and cultural aspects as a basis for respect for the environment. [Read more...](#)

Global - Religions and SDGs



The [International Conference on Religions and Sustainable Development Goals](#) organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Pontificate for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican on 7 to 9 March 2019, brought together representatives of different UN agencies and cardinals, leaders of the Catholic Church and other religions including the Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jainism, among others, as well as development experts. The conference intended to motivate the fulfillment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to promote the role of religions in contributing to the implementation and achievement of the SDGs based on the conviction that all people and institutions are necessary for its fulfillment. Valeria Méndez de Vigo, the Advocacy and communication coordinator at SJES shares the 6 lessons learnt. [Read more...](#)

East Africa - Br. Vincent Soreng honoured by Pope Francis for the Care of our Common Home



Mzee (an elder in swaheli) Br. Vincent Soreng SJ, recently received a papal accolade for his care for our common home. The Pope recognized Br. Vincent's contribution to environmental conservation through the promotion of horticulture and forestry with his unique style of doing tasks quietly with great dedication, consistency, commitment, and amazing diligence. Mzee was honoured with a toast from his good friend, Fr. James Ayaga SJ, who said that Mzee Soreng envisioned

and implemented *Laudato Si* long before his age mate Pope Francis promulgated it. [Read more...](#)

USA - Pre-Synodal International Conference on Integral ecology at Georgetown



As part of the process leading to the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region in October 2019 at the Vatican, the [International Conference on Integral Ecology](#) - A synodal response for the care of our common home was held from 19 - 21 March 2019 at Georgetown University in Washington DC. More than 100 delegates from every corner of the planet, lay and religious leaders from Catholic and other international organizations, representatives of

indigenous communities, 20 Jesuits, 10 cardinals and Bishops participated in it and shared strategies for protecting our Common Home. This international conference was part of the diverse actions and international advocacy that [Red Eclesial Panamazónica \(REPAM\)](#). [Read more...](#)

Vatican - Spiritual Retreat with South Sudan Leaders: Time to Choose Life



Father Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, President of the Conference of Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar guided a *spiritual retreat involving civil and ecclesiastical authorities of South Sudan in the Vatican*. Bator at the retreat dwelt on the true meaning of a spiritual retreat, understood as a time "to meet God" or, even better, as a time "for God to meet us". He

invited the members to speak "to one another" from the depths of our hearts, enlightened by the Spirit, never forgetting the 13 million inhabitants of South Sudan, so that the peace agreement may be signed, above all, "in our hearts". [Read more...](#)

Philippines - Indigenous Youth Join the Global Movement to March for Climate



On March 15, over a hundred learners from the Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Centre (APC), a Jesuit institute that seeks to provide an integrated and holistic education for the indigenous children and youth along the Pantaron Range in upland Mindanao, Philippines, joined the global school strike for climate action. They were inspired by 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg's global movement. The strike involved 71 countries and 700 places around the world,

including the Upper Pulangi region in Bukidnon. [Read more...](#)

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