



JUST Love

MARCH 2020



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

March is Women's History Month. This year for Women's History Month, *JustLove* invites you to consider the subversive feminist symbol that has been hidden in plain sight among the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth for all of their 160 years – the symbol of the nursing mother pelican. The myth of the mother pelican feeding her young with the blood from her wounded chest is an ancient one. There is an image of the “vulning pelican” in the pyramids. This image has had appeal for Christian artists and writers for centuries because of its symbolic resonance with Jesus nourishing the faithful on his own flesh and blood in the Eucharist. Countless depictions exist in Christian art. Perhaps the most famous Christian reference is that of St. Thomas Aquinas in his popular Eucharistic hymn *Adoro te devote*.



The 6th verse reads:

Pie pellicane, Iesu Domine, me immundum
munda tuo sanguine; cuius una stilla salvum
facere totum mundum quit ab omni scelere.

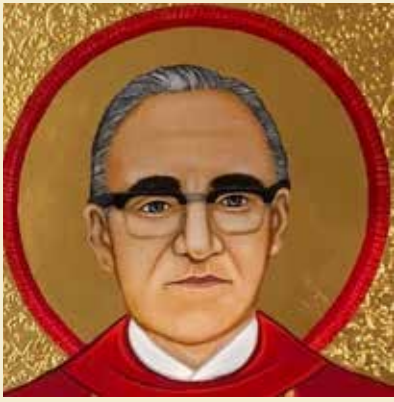
Deign, O Jesus, tender Pelican, me, a sinner, in
Thy Blood to lave, to a single drop of which is
given all the world from all its sin to save.

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth are unique among the Charity Congregations who trace their origin to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in having the nursing pelican on their Congregation seal. It was also adapted after Vatican II as part of the community pin worn by the sisters. It is a very appropriate expression of the charism of Charity. God's love is not a detached philanthropy but is a very sharing in God's self. Mother Seton was renowned for her devotion to the Eucharist which was a deciding factor in her entering the Catholic Church. The symbol of the mother pelican who nourishes her chicks on her own blood has strong Eucharistic resonances. In Christian art, the number of nursing chicks varies. The seal of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth has five – to represent the five founding sisters of the New Jersey Congregation.



The Mother Pelican by Sister Anne Haarer, SC

It is also one of the rare traditional Christian symbols that depicts God as feminine. Generations of Sisters of Charity gazed contemplatively on this image on altars, in stained glass, on plaques. Perhaps it helped formed their image of God and fueled their 160 years of advocacy for women. The statement of the SC Priority Justice, Peace, and Ecological Integrity Issues affirms: “Through education and advocacy we promoted the full flourishing of women's lives in church and society.” Today the average woman's unadjusted annual salary is 81% of that of the average man's. Women are still far from equal participants in the Church's life and ministries. During this Women's History month, spend some time contemplating the image of God the Mother Pelican. What are you called to do to promote the full flourishing of women's lives in church and society?



March 24 is the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of Saint Oscar Romero. The feast falls this year at the heart of the Lenten season – the season of embracing the Cross as the path to resurrection. Take some time during these Lenten days to reflect on these words of Monseñor Romero. To what do they call you?



“A church that doesn't provoke any crises, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed— what gospel is that?”



“There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried”



“I will not tire of declaring that if we really want an effective end to violence we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression. All this is what constitutes the primal cause, from which the rest flows naturally.”



“God is not satisfied with appearance. God wants the garment of justice. God wants his Christians dressed in love.”

Some St. Oscar Romero Resources:

<http://www.uscatholic.org/culture/social-justice/2009/02/oscar-romero-resources-internet>

Resources for Primary Schools: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/St-Romero>

Resources for Secondary Schools: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Secondary-and-youth-resources/Romero-secondary-resources>



It is estimated that 40% of the food purchased in the United States ends up in the trash – in a world full of hungry people. Raise your consciousness about food waste this Lent by signing up for the Lenten Food Waste Fast of the Ignatian Solidarity Network <https://ignatiansolidarity.net/ignatian-carbon-challenge/lenten-food-waste-fast/>



#Faith4Asylum is a project of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC). This campaign is about ending Remain in Mexico/MPP and other cruel asylum policies of the U.S. government, as well as restoring the promise and protection of asylum in the United States. Our diverse faith traditions believe that “welcoming the traveler” and treating newcomers as we would God are part of our human social contract. Join this new campaign here <https://faith4asylum.com/>

During Lent, in this 5th anniversary year of Laudato Si', continue to use our Living a Laudato Si' Lent calendar found at these links -

English: https://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/Living_a_Laudato_Si_Lent_2020_English.pdf

Spanish: https://www.scnj.org/images/justicepeace/LIVING_A_LAUDATO_SI_LENT_Spanish_2020.pdf