



Glimpses of Artisans of Change

Heartbeats invited our USA Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Team (Dianne Baumunk, Mary Ann Dooling, Alrie Giordano, Maureen Welch) to organize and share our reflections for **Lent 2020**.

One of God's calls to Ursulines in our Chapter Road map is to "be artisans of change through meaningful connections with people and all of creation." Each Wednesday during Lent you will receive "Glimpses of Artisans of Change." This will provide snapshots of our sisters' and colleagues' various engagements, in their own words, around social justice concerns, e.g. racism, environment, immigration, homelessness, alternative investments, etc. We welcome your responses and the sharing of your own engagements.

Blessings on our Lenten journey in becoming a "Global Community Living New Life."

USA Mission/Charism Team (*Diane Fulgenzi, Elisa Ryan, Karen Mortillaro, Maureen Welch*)

I have recently become a volunteer for the Ministry of Accompaniment, a ministry of presence and a way to witness fair treatment of migrants, whom we refer to as *compas* (companions), when they present themselves for required meetings with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) personnel. Presently in St. Louis most of these *compas* seeking asylum have been released from detention camps, given ankle monitors and must report each month at ICE's Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP)

These *compas* have risked their lives, travelled long and dangerous journeys under unbelievable conditions to reach what they hope will be a place of safety with some future hope for their children and themselves. Recently I was accompanying one of the young women, whom I will call Maria, from her work place to take her to a check-in at ISAP. As she sat next to me, checking her phone for messages and listening to lively music from south of the border, it was hard to believe all that this petite woman and her three year old daughter had experienced in their gargantuan efforts to get here from Honduras, and the many challenges she has faced in her three years here.

I have come to realize with greater clarity all the "hoops" these *compas* have to jump through while living with very unpredictable expectations. Each complicated step of the way also has fees attached and sometimes requires a trip to Chicago or Kansas City, as a number of consulates here have been closed. These *compas* must be in their home one designated day each week, so if they are fortunate enough to have a work permit, they are not able to work that day. An ICE official MAY come to check on them. Meanwhile, these *compas* have very little clarity of what lies ahead with any definite timelines. A few who do have a court date to decide their asylum status know this is a year or two away.

When I think of the frustration I experience with the way the policies of our government make our country look so unwelcoming to "the tired, the poor, the huddled masses" seeking a home here, I feel very blessed to be a Minister of Accompaniment helping to offer these people a more humane and Christ-like experience of our country.

Madonna O'Hara, osu St. Louis, Missouri

Each year students and educators from our Ursuline Schools come to New York for the commission on the Status of Women. (This year, CSW 64). Here they experience what it means to be a “Transnational Advocate for Gender Equality” As we prepare for this year’s CSW anniversary celebrating Beijing + 25 we want to share with you some of the statements girls submitted last year.

Alice Marie Giordano, osu New Rochelle, New York

“As I attended events at the CSW I became aware that women and girls have been underrepresented for too long even as they have been fighting for reform and equality. I learned about Gentech which expands girls’ knowledge of science in many ways holding science boot camps for girls. Dr. Austen from Boston spoke about a program she introduced. STRIPED (Strategic Training Initiative for Prevention of Eating Disorders) supports research to promote body confidence, protects children from harmful dieting pills and muscle-building supplements and promotes realistic advertising that depicts girls of all shapes.”

Enjelique Adams, Academy of Mount St Ursula 2020

“I was able to listen to many different women and girls who had accomplished amazing things. Each panel was diverse. One young woman spoke about a film she had created to help us realize that we are “global citizens”. Just being in the same room with young girls who had accomplished so much made me feel good about myself. I felt as if I was a part of something larger than I had ever imagined”

Janasia Otano, Academy of Mount St Ursula 2019

Sonoma County has a huge homeless problem with 3200 homeless people living out of tents, cars, and RVs. Recently both City and County have been grappling with a homeless encampment on an eight mile County parkway. The issue grew into a public health emergency with over 250 homeless persons living on that trail with no water, garbage or sanitation.

One solution was developing a homeless village of sixty 8ft by 8ft metal building designed to house a single person. In partnership with St. Vincent de Paul this village was developed on County property across from the retirement community of Oakmont on the eastern border of Santa Rosa. There was resistance from some members of Oakmont, but after several community meetings, some people stepped forward to assist in the transition. A small group from the Star of the Valley Catholic Church spearheaded a donation drive for necessary items to assist our new neighbors. This ground roots group of parishioners quickly donated needed items such as jackets, blankets, clothing, toiletries, sleeping bags, new socks and underwear, and bottled water. Welcoming our new neighbors with two and a half pick up loads of house warming gifts began a movement from “others” to be feared to “neighbors” to be welcomed.

Pete Hardy and Joanne Abrams, osu
Members of Star of the Valley Parish, Santa Rosa, California

P.S. The welcoming seems to have inspired others as well. Ladies from Oakmont were joined in welcoming the old fashioned way with baked goodies for their new neighbors. Our newspaper carried a large story about the local artist who created individual paintings on metal to grace the front door of each tiny home. Residents chose which painting spoke to their life experience and their shared reflections were touching.

What can you do?