

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first Newsletter of the Society of the Sacred Heart at the United Nations. This is our "Christmas card" this year. The Newsletter does not claim to be more than what its name implies: giving news about the UN and the RSCJ presence at the UN, in short, informational, articles. It is meant for wide distribution, so please feel free to share it with the larger Sacred Heart family. This opening issue is unfortunately only available in English - we hope to add French and Spanish in the future.

We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a healthy 2010. What is our wish for this New Year? That we will all grow in understanding that we are one human family, and that we are responsible for the earth that is home to us all!

Society of the Sacred Heart

at the **UN**



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Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen



Fiona Hogan interviewed Sister Joan Kirby rscj (USA) on the eve of Sister Kirby's departure for Copenhagen to attend the global Climate Change Conference. Sister Kirby will be among the NGO participants for the Temple of Understanding. Following is a summary of their conversation.

What does climate change have to do with inter-religious dialogue?

If life is sacred, so is the entire web of the universe that sustains life. This is a religious issue. Our global environment is essential to the continuation of life. Faith communities

must focus on the survival of the planet. Scientists tell us that we have very little time to reverse the damage done to the earth. This is a matter for Eco-Justice. From the inter-religious perspective, the natural environment unites us in ways that transcend doctrinal differences. This concern brings together all the diverse religious communities. Eastern religions have a more global and integrated vision than the human centered world view of the west that has had devastating consequences for the planet. Inter-religious dialogue can teach us better ways to relate to the Earth our Mother.

What are your hopes and fears for Copenhagen?

We are hoping for a Climate treaty from Copenhagen that will go well beyond the Kyoto Protocol that the US never signed. We need a treaty that is bold, strong and comprehensive. We fear that the US will have nothing substantial to offer because we have not passed an Environment Bill in the Senate. Without US participation, the developing world will withdraw, causing very serious consequences for the planet.

rscjinternational
women of compassion, communion, and reconciliation

Have you looked at our [web page](#) lately? We have posted the following articles since October:

- [Stand Up 2009 - End Poverty Now!](#)
- [Educating for Tolerance](#)
- [Ending Violence against Women](#)
- [World AIDS Day 2009](#)
- [The UN and Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [International Migrants Day](#)
- [Report of the DPI/NGO Conference 2009](#)
- [Prayer Service for Nonviolence](#)
- [Copenhagen Climate Change Conference Needs Prayers](#)



Our application to ECOSOC by Judith Garson, rscj

Our (electronic) in-box is bursting at the seams these days! Materials from all over the world are arriving in the office, as we prepare to apply for a new status as an NGO at the UN. Since 2002 the Society has had associative status with the Department of Public Information (DPI), and we disseminate UN materials to the Society in the 40 plus countries where we are present, welcome visitors, make presentations, etc. In 2008 our General Chapter decided to apply for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN, which would give us much wider opportunities here. Basically, this status will enable us to feed back to the UN information about what is happening "on the ground" in the countries where we are present. The application process is long but we are well begun, and you will hear more about it in 2010.

General Assembly 64th Session

by Fiona Hogan

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly began on 15 September 2009 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

The beginning of this new General Assembly Year also marked the commencement of H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of Libya's term as the President of the General Assembly. Elected in June 2009, by the General Assembly, Dr. Treki will serve one session as president. He brings with him many valuable years of experience in the fields of international relations and conflict resolution both inside and outside of the United Nations.

In his report to the General Assembly, "Now is Our Time," on 23 September 2009, Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon expressed the



overall feeling of the sixty-fourth session: "Now is our time. A time to put the "united" back into the United Nations. United in purpose. United in action." This dedication to unity and progress is reflected in the key issues that are on the agenda of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, including:

- development, particularly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- the world financial and

economic crisis and its impact on development

- climate change
- dialogue among civilizations
- Security Council reform
- non proliferation and disarmament

For more information about the work of the General Assembly, click [here](#).

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The Water Flows

by Lydia Collado, rscj



Lydia Collado, rscj and
Ms. Gigi Tupaz

December 3rd was a day of awe and wonder spent with Cecile Meijer and Judy Garson at the Society's NGO Office in New York. I came with Mary Glen (Gigi) Tupaz, one of our mission partners at the Sacred Heart Institute for Transformative Education (SHIFT) Foundation in Northern Samar, Philippines. Our sharing evolved spontaneously when Cecile mentioned the richness of the responses received from the different Provinces, with material for the Society's application for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN. These responses must be an ocean of treasures, full of our "past, present and future JPIC activities, **seen through our lens as educators.**"

Their information-sharing with the whole Society inspired me, as they touch our little contribution as RSCJ in the Philippine District, in particular in Samar, where the SHIFT Foundation works with the poorest of the poor. I sense that our programs for children, youth, women, the environment, as well as broad justice and peace concerns that call forth transformative education are deeply connected with the rest of the Society and with the UN's goals. Our discussions culminated with a tour and orientation at the UN itself.

As I thank God for the union of hearts and minds that we felt with the whole Society and the world, I had the image of water flowing through us – in and through

the UN, the Society, the Provinces/Districts, communities and the people we work with at the grass roots. We continue to enter into the mystery of the Pierced Heart of Christ through our union and solidarity with the rest of the world. Let us allow the water of life to continue to flow.

DVD Tip!

Have you seen the movie **HOME** on planet earth? You can still watch it on the internet in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Russian](#) and [Arabic](#). It is about 1 hour 30 minutes long and ... fantastic.