UN Climate Action Summit
The recent UN Climate Action Summit featured sobering statistics, inspiring stories, and calls to action from the likes of Pope Francis and Greta Thunberg, and the launch of the Faiths for Forests campaign, 65 countries and major sub-national economies such as California committed to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, while 70 countries announced they will either boost their national action plans by 2020 or have started the process of doing so. Over 100 business leaders delivered concrete actions to align with the Paris Agreement targets, and speed up the transition from the grey to green economy. Read this summary. However, the outcome of the summit has been viewed by some as a disappointment – read this critique.

What can you do? Let your voice be heard. Check out these great resources (including a conversation guide and climate friendly cookbook) and this article that might help you in “Living the Change” for a healthier planet.

Climate Change and the Oceans
Climate change is heating the oceans and altering their chemistry so dramatically that it is threatening seafood supplies, fueling cyclones and floods and posing profound risks to the hundreds of millions of people living along the coasts, according to a sweeping new United Nations report. The report concludes that the world’s oceans and ice sheets are under such severe stress that the fallout could prove difficult for humans to contain. There is some guarded hope that the worst impacts can be avoided, with deep and immediate cuts to carbon emissions. Learn more.

Feast of Saint Francis – October 4
The Feast of St Francis of Assisi (10/4) marks the conclusion of the season we have come to know as the Season of Creation. We invite you to take the occasion of the Feast of St. Francis to pause and use this Examen of Consciousness to consider in a contemplative way the interconnectedness of all of God's creation. Learn more about this patron saint of ecology and ways to honor and imitate his example. As we carry our developed consciousness of the web of life through the upcoming liturgical year, let us make the prayer of St. Francis our own: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.”

Synod on the Amazon
The Vatican has invited the bishops from all dioceses in the world to travel to Rome in order to discuss the Amazon and its people. This gathering, or synod, is officially titled “The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for Integral Ecology.” This is the first synod in which integral ecology will be applied to a specific place in creation. That’s a landmark for the Church. The synod runs October 6-27, with the week of October 13 dedicated to integral ecology. Resource for reflection, conversation, and prayer.

Human Dignity
Refugee Acceptance Cap Cut Dramatically
The Trump Administration has just set a target cap of admitting no more than 18,000 refugees into the U.S. during the next 12 months, the all-time-lowest number in our history (the average had been 95,000). In addition, a new executive order from the President will allow state and local authorities to block refugees from settling in their areas. Meanwhile, there are nearly 26 million refugees worldwide with 1.4 million needing resettlement. The administration said the decision was necessary so it could focus on processing asylum seekers at the southern border. Learn more. Read/reflect on Pope Francis’ message on migrants and refugees, let your voice be heard.
Talitha Kum – Ten Years of Action on Human Trafficking

The first International General Assembly of Talitha Kum, a global network of networks of women religious addressing human trafficking, celebrated 10 years of work last week in Rome. 86 women religious served as delegates from 48 countries, attending presentations and participating in prayer and roundtable discussions to discern what their future commitments against trafficking will entail. Learn more about the assembly, read about the Pope’s words of encouragement and gratitude.

More than 2,000 women religious are members of Talitha Kum, with 52 national networks doing work in 90 countries. U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (of which SSND is a member) is one of those national networks. Learn more, read their latest newsletter.

Day of the Girl (10/11)

Nearly 25 years ago, some 30,000 women and men from nearly 200 countries gathered in Beijing, China for the Fourth World Conference on Women, determined to recognize the rights of women and girls as human rights. The conference culminated in the adoption of a comprehensive policy agenda for the empowerment of girls/women. Today, more girls are attending and completing school, fewer are getting married or becoming mothers while still children, and more are gaining the skills they need to excel in the workplace. This year’s theme for the Day of the Girl is “GirlForce: Unscripted and unstoppable”. Learn more.

Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples’ Day (10/14)

Columbus Day was first recognized in 1937 when, in response to lobbying by Italian-American community groups, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made it a federal holiday. More recently it has been criticized for celebrating the discovery of a place that was already inhabited and because Columbus never actually set foot in North America, among other reasons. Several states and more than 130 cities and towns have now replaced their observance of Columbus Day with Indigenous Peoples’ Day. Learn more, teaching resources.

Harvest of Justice

The National Farm Worker Ministry (of which SSND is a sponsor) encourages us to take time this fall to reflect upon and stand with farm workers. Their theme for this year’s Harvest of Justice season is Ending Gender-Based Violence in the Fields. A disturbing 80% of farm worker women surveyed in a California Central Valley reported that they had experienced sexual harassment at work. Let us recognize farm worker women and efforts that challenge this harassment and oppression. Learn more/take action.

Record Income Inequality

Income inequality in the United States has hit its highest level since the Census Bureau started tracking it more than five decades ago, even as the nation’s poverty and unemployment rates are at historic lows. The gap is most pronounced in wealthy regions along both coasts, as well as in areas with widespread poverty, such as Puerto Rico and Louisiana. The most troubling thing about the new report, says William M. Rodgers III, a professor of public policy and chief economist at the Heldrich Center at Rutgers University, is that it "clearly illustrates the inability of the current economic expansion, the longest on record, to lessen inequality." Learn more.

Eradicate Poverty Day (10/17)

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty presents an opportunity to the global community to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that poor people are the first ones to fight against poverty. This year’s theme is “Acting together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty”. It is crucial that children’s participation be recognized as a process and not a one-time event. Too often consultation is mistaken for participation. Whereas the process of consultation gathers children’s views on a particular issue or question, participation means that children actually join in the decision-making. Learn more, prayer resource.
Peace and Non-Violence

International Day of Non-Violence (10/2)
The International Day of Non-Violence is observed on October 2, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. The Day serves as an occasion to disseminate the message of non-violence, reaffirm "the universal relevance of the principle of non-violence" and the desire "to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence". We invite you to learn about the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the SSND CPP corporate stance on nonviolence, consider these resources, and (for those in the U.S.) urge Congress to support efforts to prevent global violence and conflict.

Sustainable Development Goals Need Support
In his recent presentation to world leaders, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres indicated that efforts to rid the world of poverty, inequality and other social problems are being derailed by violent conflicts and climate change, and world leaders must invest more in health, education and technology in order to meet sustainable development targets. "We must step up our efforts, and we must do it now," Guterres urged world leaders. With just 10 years to go until the goals' deadline, he made a call for a "decade of action", with an annual meeting on the goals beginning next September. Learn more.

World Disarmament Week (10/24 - 10/30)
The elimination of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction remains a central but elusive objective of the United Nations. Despite commitments from Member States, there has been limited progress on this long-standing goal. For nuclear weapons, this is largely due to growing tensions between nuclear-armed States and the rigidity of the disarmament machinery. Learn more.

UN/SSND Foundation Days (10/24)
The charter of the United Nations, formed 74 years ago, lists four main purposes: to maintain worldwide peace and security, to develop relations among nations, to foster cooperation between nations in order to solve problems, and to provide a forum for bringing countries together. School Sisters of Notre Dame, founded 186 years ago, share much of that same purpose in our focus on educating with a world vision, perpectively reading the signs of the times, and risking innovative response to the needs of the world. Happy anniversary to both!

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