



International Solidarity Reflection School Sisters of Notre Dame

Shalom

Integrate Shalom into Life and Ministry

July 2025

Introduction

Sacred Scripture, the living word of God, is decisive for our life and prayer. God reveals himself to us through it, and through it we learn to recognize him at work in our lives. In love we are attentive to God's word and action and ready to follow whatever path the Spirit will lead us on. Our life in mission is an integrated whole: prayer, community life and ministry flow from and into one another (*You Are Sent*, Constitution 30, 31). Our *Shalom* Document reminds us that "indispensable to the meaning and functioning of *Shalom* are Jesus Christ, the church, the world, and our charism".

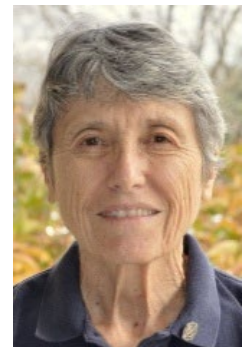
Call to Prayer

Most blessed Holy Trinity, Creator, Savior and Ruah, through Your Word of life all was and is created, all was redeemed and is called to redemption, all was united in Your bosom of love and called to live in communion. Because of You, dear Trinity, all of Creation is a constant exercise of listening to Your Word so that we can embody the Word in our own lives. Teach us, therefore, how to truly listen to Your creating and creative Word. Remind us that Your Word is present and can be heard in each living being. May we listen and learn from Your message present throughout nature. Open our ears and our hearts and teach us strength and courage so that we may hear the pain and suffering of our sister mother earth and of those most affected by the socio-environmental crisis. Amen.

~ Laudato Si' Movement [LSM] Prayer Book (<https://laudatosimovement.org/prayer-book/>), page 12.

Experience

While serving as a *Shalom* Contact and *Shalom* Branch Representative of Latin America, I had several meetings and experiences with a great person, an SSND who embodied the integration of life and mission, "Prayer, community life and ministry" in the service of our brothers and sisters in need. She was Sister Cathy Arata, who worked for eight years (1999 - 2007) as Coordinator of the International *Shalom* Office in Rome. In 2008, her global awareness led her to join other religious in South Sudan, in response to a request from the local bishops' conference. She became a leader and founding member of Solidarity with South Sudan, which trains teachers, health professionals, and farmers.



Sister Cathy experienced God's call to serve with greater intensity when she became aware of the urgent concerns of the most vulnerable and needy in her country, in her province, in the Congregation, and in South Sudan. These situations called for a bold response: listening to the people to learn about their needs and then finding effective ways to serve. Cathy's listening led her to always respond generously. Cathy remained in South Sudan until 2015, and then returned to Villa Assumpta (Baltimore, USA), where her ministry became "prayer and presence." Reflecting on her experiences in ministry, Cathy said, "It is a real privilege to do this kind of work and to be with people who are an inspiration to me. I keep getting more than I could ever give.... In the end, it's just a matter of love."

(Solidarity with South Sudan <https://solidarityssudan.org/es/2022/01/26/in-memori-am-hermana-catherine-cathy-arata-ssnd/> In Memoriam: Sister Catherine (Cathy) Arata, SSND)

Reflection

Her life, her witness, her person, her presence, her deep prayer life, her commitment and fidelity to God, the Gospel, the Congregation, the Church, the mission, her humanitarian and evangelizing work, had a strong impact on my life. We are called and sent. Like Jesus: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me... he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk 4:18-19). Like our Blessed Maria Theresia of Jesus Gerhardinger, tireless fighter for the work of God: “Poor and abandoned we began this work of God, with supernatural faith and confidence.... Let us continue to serve the Triune God all our lives with joy, to obey Him and to love Him above all” (Letter 714). Like so many of our sisters who in many parts of the world continue the mission of Christ, faithful to the Gospel, to the Charism, to *You Are Sent*, to the Church, responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

As we celebrate 30 years of *Shalom*, let us remember what our goal is: “to take actions which lead to reconciliation, solidarity with the oppressed, the promotion of human dignity, and collaboration with ecological movements to safeguard the earth.” ([Shalom Document](#)) In other words, we commit ourselves to promote the culture of life, to work against violence, the manipulation of truth, attacks on the family, the dehumanization of women and the abandonment of children. Let us remember our *Laudato Si’* Public Commitment: “In fidelity to our charism and mission to bring all to oneness, we commit to live more simply, responsibly, and sustainably and to Educate, Advocate, Act in collaboration with others, for the dignity of life and the care of all creation” ([SSND Laudato Si’ Public Commitment](#)).

- * What is our experience of integrating prayer, community life and mission?
- * What is the place in our life of listening to the Word of God, personal and community prayer?
- * How is our listening in the community, to our sisters, to the people with whom we share the ministry, the mission?
- * How do we prepare ourselves to listen with our hearts to the most vulnerable, to listen to the “cry of the poor and the cry of the earth”, and to respond generously and promptly?

Action

Our beloved Pope Francis (2013-2025) called us through the [Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025](#) (7-15): to be *signs of hope* in the face of the tragedy of war, the lack of care for life, prisoners, the sick, the young, migrants, exiles, displaced persons, refugees, the elderly, thousands of poor...

In the face of this call and in celebration of 30 years of *Shalom*, let us reread these texts of the Bull; reflect, dialogue, and carry out **concrete actions**, personally and communally, and in collaboration with the laity and associates. Let us be pilgrims of Hope.

Closing Prayer

God of Life, You love the universe into being, **let us give praise**. You embrace the world without distinction, **let us give thanks**. You call humanity to make flesh your tenderness, **let us live accordingly**. You endow all creation with Your divine beauty and wisdom, **let us acknowledge it**. You forgive all offenses, **let us learn Your ways**. You grant us unconditional graces, **let us receive with humility**. You are our hope, **let us remember**. Amen. (LSM Prayer Book, page 16)

*Prepared by Sister Susana Tomatti from ALC Province, for the International Shalom Network.
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