

people of hope



your personal retreat



The Sisters of Bon Secours, animated by a desire to bring the Good News and its message of joyous hope to all, invite you to walk with us using your voice to be of Good Help to others.

Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.”—Desmond Tutu

Sisters and Brothers,

God calls all people of good will to bring hope and love to those in despair and darkness in a world of uncertainty. Every person is a treasure, every life a sacred gift.

As our Mission Focus Statement states: “We, Women of Healing, commit ourselves to defend and care for all of creation; to cry out with others against injustice and all that diminishes life on earth.”

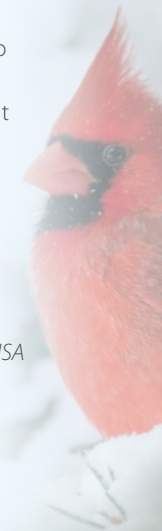
As Sisters of Bon Secours, our mission calls us to raise our consciousness to global justice issues. We are committed to work together and with others to eliminate gun violence and human trafficking, to support immigration reform, to assure adequate health care, and to protect the environment. We will continue to assist those whose life is threatened.

We have created this retreat for all of you, our friends and neighbors, our co-workers and those we meet along the way. Join with us in prayer and contemplation. Use your voice to respond to the needs of the oppressed. We encourage you to speak out as a force for good for those without a voice.

God’s blessings be with you!



— Sister Rose Marie Jasinski, CBS
Leader, Sisters of Bon Secours USA





Experiencing a Personal Retreat



A retreat is a special time of grace. This retreat is an eight-day journey with God following a pattern of listening, reflecting, and responding as you seek to use your voice in helping others. Each day includes ways to enter into reflection and prayer. You will find a desire for the day, a Scripture verse, a quote from Pope Francis, a prayer, a reflection, and a spiritual exercise.

As you begin, set aside a time and place to reflect and pray. Your personal prayer space might be within your home or a favorite chapel or surrounded by nature. As you start each reflection ask God to help you enter into this experience with confidence, asking for God's grace, asking for what you desire. You may wish to begin with soft music or pause at times during your reflection to read a favorite scripture quote. Go with the flow of what you are feeling. Talk to God. Listen, too. For God is calling us to be people of hope.



We stand in solidarity with all who seek the common good. We are committed to advocating for the protection of all, especially the marginalized and oppressed.

Day 1

"O Lord, open my lips." (Psalm 51:17)

POPE FRANCIS:

"Find new ways to spread the word of God to every corner of the world."

DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to find and use my authentic voice.

God Wants to Hear Your Voice

PRAYER:

Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know my heart and its longings. You know the world's needs and hurts. Be with me in this moment. Teach me to advocate, in other words, using my voice to be "Good Help to those in need"® today. Give me the courage to raise my voice as you ask.

REFLECTION:

People of hope bring light into darkness. People of hope sow peace where there is conflict. People of hope raise their voices in defense of "the widow, the orphan, and the stranger," in defense of those most in need, most lost, most suffering in our world. People of hope know that there is always spring to follow winter, and resurrection to follow death.



Spiritual Exercise: Spend a few minutes today singing to yourself. If you are shy about your voice, sing along to the car radio. Sing non-sense, sing a song from childhood. Reflect on the sound and feeling of using your voice.





We commit ourselves to ensure universal access to sufficient, affordable, safe water for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

Eileen Fernandini, Bon Secours Associate, shares a water purifier at a Water with Blessings mission trip in Peru.

Day 2

Draw Water Joyfully

"A stream was welling up out of the earth and was watering all the surface of the ground..." (Genesis 2:6)

POPE FRANCIS:

"Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water." —*Laudato Si'* #30

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to become more aware of the sacredness of water.

PRAYER:

God of Life, "At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters making them the wellspring of all holiness. The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness...." —Rite of Baptism #54
Lord, help me to raise my voice for the sacredness of water.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope, it is our job as citizens of the world to work together to keep water supplies uncontaminated. At this time 780 million people lack access to a safe water source. Unsafe water kills 200 children every hour. We must advocate with others for global actions now that assure the health and well being of the earth for future generations.



Spiritual Exercise: Observe how many time you consume water today. Use a timer to limit your shower to 5 minutes—save 1,000 gallons a month if you do this every day.



We commit ourselves to defend and care for all of creation; to cry out against all that diminishes life on earth.

Day 3

"God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good." (Genesis 1:31)

POPE FRANCIS:

"We must protect creation for it is a gift which the Lord has given us, it is God's present to us; we are the guardians of creation. When we exploit creation, we destroy that sign of God's love. To destroy creation is to say to God: "I don't care". And this is not good: this is sin."

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to care for our common home more each day.

PRAYER:

"All-powerful God, ...Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.... Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.... Teach us to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature." —Laudato Si' #246 Lord, help me to raise my voice on behalf of our common home.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope, we are all called to help shape the future of our planet. The earth is undergoing tremendous environmental challenges. All nations and all individuals must work for sustainable change. How are you challenged to change your relationship with the earth, with God, and with others to help our common home?



Spiritual Exercise: Gather a small bucket of soil. Get your hands dirty. Keep it in a place you will see regularly for the next week. With your bucket, spend time in prayer talking to God about your connection to creation.



We commit ourselves to actively work to promote sensible gun control legislation.

Day 4

Blessed are the Peacemakers

And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:51-52)

POPE FRANCIS:

"To all those who make unjust use of the weapons of this world, I make this appeal: lay down these instruments of death! Arm yourselves instead with righteousness, with love and mercy, the authentic guarantors of peace."

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace of peace in my heart that leads to action to eliminate violence and improve gun control.

PRAYER:

Lord, our hearts break when we read about people injured or killed by guns whether in war or within the confines of their homes and classrooms or on their streets. We are consumed with a desire to do something. Lord, help me to raise my voice for peace.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope we must confront the reality of guns and violence in our world. In one year, on average, over 108,000 people in the USA are shot in murders, assaults, suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, or by police intervention. Let us not turn away from this violence and suffering. Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith.



Spiritual Exercise: Write down your vision of peace. Share it with a family member or friend.



We commit ourselves to actively work against all forms of human trafficking.

Day 5

Ours is a God of Liberation

"For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

POPE FRANCIS:

"We call to action all people of faith, leaders, governments, businesses, all men and women of good will, to give their strong support and join in the action against modern slavery in all its forms."

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to join my voice with others to eliminate the grave injustice of trafficking and slavery.

PRAYER:

Saint Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of trafficked persons, pray for all those who are trapped in a state of slavery. God, release them from their chains of captivity. Lord, help me to raise my voice on behalf of trafficked persons.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope we contemplate the suffering of those whose rights are violated in our world today. We take time to thank God for the ways he has liberated each of us. Ask God for the courage to be a part of the healing of those whose rights are violated. Challenge the next offensive or demeaning comment you hear.



Spiritual Exercise: Trafficked persons are often the most voiceless in society. Spend an hour today in silence, in solidarity with all those whose voices have been taken from them. If you are willing, wear a sign telling people that is what you are doing.



We commit ourselves to actively work to promote immigration reform.

Day 6

One Human Family

"You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)

POPE FRANCIS:

"We must make our immigrant brothers and sisters feel that they are citizens, that they are like us, children of God, that they are immigrants like us, because we are all immigrants moving toward another homeland, and perhaps we will all arrive there. And no one will get lost on the way!"

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to recognize my own migrant status in the world and to defend the rights of all immigrants.

PRAYER:

God of the Exodus, you call all people to freedom and to flourish. All of us have migrated or have ancestors that have migrated to bring us to this place. Open my heart to the cries of the stranger. Lord, help me to raise my voice for the rights of migrants everywhere.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope we are called to recognize the dignity of all people. There are 46,627,000 migrants in the USA and 3,024,000 emigrants from the USA; 7,784,000 migrants in France and 2,146,000 emigrants from France; 91,000 migrants in Peru and 1,410,000 emigrants from Peru; and 746,000 migrants in Ireland and 882,000 emigrants from Ireland. Each individual number is a person made in the image of God. —Source: Migration Policy Institute



Spiritual Exercise: Challenge yourself to talk to "a stranger" today. Then spend a few moments writing about the experience, what you learned, and how you felt. Tell God about the experience in prayer.





We commit to take action to promote access to health care for all.

Day 1

Moved with Compassion

"But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved by compassion at the sight." (Luke 10:33)

POPE FRANCIS:

"The compassion of the Gospel is what accompanies us in times of need, that compassion of the Good Samaritan, who "sees", "has compassion", draws near and provides concrete help."

MY DESIRE:

I ask for the grace to comfort those who are suffering.

PRAYER:

Compassionate God, help me to understand the difficult path of those suffering grave illnesses and those who are disabled or struggle with crippling medical bills. Guide me in responding to their needs with compassion and meaningful support. Lord, help me to raise my voice advocating on behalf of all in need of adequate health care.

REFLECTION:

As a people of hope we stand with the United States Bishops who write: "Every person has the right to adequate health care.... The existing patterns of health care...do not meet the minimal standard of social justice and the common good."

— A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform



Spiritual Exercise: Spend time today connecting with someone you know who is challenged by a medical illness, physical disability, or inadequate health care. Talk about their challenges and your desire to advocate for them.





We are compelled to work toward a just world where the dignity of all persons is respected. Where an environment is created that allows each human person to flourish.

Day 8

People of Hope

"You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

POPE FRANCIS:

"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, children who are now growing up? Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us."

—*Laudato Si'* #160

DESIRE:

I ask for the grace of an open heart and an understanding of my connectedness to all. I accept God's invitation to partner with others in addressing needed global change.

PRAYER:

Creator God, fill me with your life so I may protect life. Let peace fill me so I may live as a brother and sister to all. Help me discover the profound connection that unites every creature. Encourage me in the struggle for peace, justice and love. Lord, help me to raise my voice.

REFLECTION:

As people of hope God calls all of us to be prophetic in the Bon Secours tradition that proclaims "the struggle for a more humane world is not an option. It is an integral part of spreading the Gospel." You have contemplated the call to meet violence with peace, care for migrants and refugees, eradicate human trafficking, advocate for health care, and protect the environment. Where can your voice make a difference?



Spiritual Exercise: Over the next week, commit to finding a way to address a root cause of human and environmental suffering. Work towards a future filled with hope. Love and live Goodness!

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together" – African Proverb

ADVOCACY LINKS

NETWORK

- www.networklobby.org
(Immigration, Health Care including Medicaid, economic justice)

UNANIMA

- www.unanima-international.org
(Human Trafficking, Earth, Immigration, etc.)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- Catholic Climate Covenant
 - www.catholicclimatecovenant.org
- Global Catholic Climate Movement
 - www.catholicclimatemovement.global

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking
 - www.sistersagainsttrafficking.org

Stop Enslavement

- www.stopenslavement.org

GUN VIOLENCE

- Faiths United Against Gun Violence
 - www.faithsunited.org

PEACE/NONVIOLENCE

- Pax Christi
 - www.paxchristiusa.org
- Catholic Nonviolence Initiative
 - www.nonviolencejustpeace.net

Pace e Bene

- www.paceebene.org

WATER

- Food and Water Watch
 - www.foodandwaterwatch.org

IMMIGRATION

- Interfaith Immigration Coalition
 - www.interfaithimmigration.org
- Justice For Immigrants
 - www.justiceforimmigrants.org

SISTERS OF BON SECOURS

- www.BonSecours.org
- www.BonSecoursVocations.org
- www.LifeAsASister.org

Personal Reflection

Use your voice to tell someone about your retreat experience and encourage them to make their own retreat.

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"PEOPLE OF HOPE" IS DEDICATED TO ALL WHO SHARE GOD'S LOVE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

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