

Advent 2009

Dear Friends of the Madonna Foundation,

Once again we begin an Advent Season with hearts torn between tragedies of injustice and expectant hope. We yearn for participation in strategic action that will usher in God's justice, peace and joy. We join in solidarity with our brothers and sisters who eagerly await employment, access to health care, and freedom from violence. We partner with many others in order to deepen our moral culture and rejoice when we see those shoots of justice spring forward and do what is right and just.

This year we have been particularly blessed with many small shoots of justice and right springing forth from the hearts, minds and hands of both the Madonna Scholars and their mentors, The Gannon Scholars. After participating in workshops on right relationships and dating violence, our Madonna Scholars sponsored a fund-raising activity for St. Jude House, a shelter for survivors of domestic violence. After facilitating a book club discussion on The House on Mango Street, the Gannon Scholars decided to delve more deeply into human trafficking and are designing a second semester teach-in for the Madonna Scholars on the issue. After participating in our annual leadership retreat, the Gannon Scholars and Madonna Scholars decided to collaborate on a presentation on how women can be architects of change for this year's Women in History celebration.

Oh, yes, the Madonna Scholars continue to work hard, study hard and be of service to others. And yes, the Madonna Scholars continue to make contributions to their schools and neighborhoods. And yes, Madonna Scholars continue to focus on college admission and professional development with an overwhelming percentage of them attending a four-year college on scholarship after they graduate from an all-girls Catholic high schools. They are most assuredly a sign of hope and transformation in overcoming the barriers they face to high school graduation and college admission. But, for them, that is not enough! They also yearn to be part of a movement that works to make a positive difference in our world...a difference that contributes to justice, peace and joy.

In many ways, Madonna and Gannon Scholars are doing what is just, right and joyful in our world. They are a very real reminder of God's promise to raise up a shoot, to continue the work of God in our world. Please join us in this work of justice, peace and joy through your financial support of the Madonna Foundation. I can guarantee that your financial contribution will be well invested in helping make our world a place born anew in hope.

Pax et Bonum,

Janet Sisler