All Saints, All Souls Day and
Ending Violence against Women and Children

The prayerful reflection for the month of November will center the commemoration of All Saints Day and All Souls Day on November 1st and 2nd through the remembrance of family, friends, colleagues and the women and children Good Shepherd serves in each ministry who are no longer physically present among us. The gracious presence each person granted to us during their lifetime will be lifted up and their lives will be forever be celebrated on All Saints and All Souls Day. St. Mary Euphrasia’s quote, “A person is of more value than the world” speaks eloquently to the preciousness of life – not only those we live with but those whom we live in solidarity with around the world.

Please take a minute of silent reflection to remember the persons we have known personally who have died and are now with God.

In addition to the sacredness of commemorating the feasts of All Saints and All Souls Day, the United Nations will also be celebrating the Universal Children’s Day and the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women on November 20th and November 25th respectively.

I encourage each GS sister, person, partner, family and friend to

- Bring into your silent reflection on All Saints and All Souls Day the lives of the many women and children, particularly girls whom we do not know personally, who are subjected to physical, psychological, sexual and emotional abuse and whose lives have ended because of such violence.
- Remember the women and children who are so resilient in finding within themselves the courage to face another day and another way of surviving the chronic harsh and degrading experiences they face without any certainty of positive change. With this sense of hope, women and children are able to continue in their struggle towards a day when this violence and these dehumanizing actions against them may be ended.
- Extend mercy to the perpetrators of such violence in the context of war, trafficking, prostitution, domestic violence, greed, power and inequality while praying for justice and peace and the ending of such violence and violent practices.
To ground our prayer with action, I encourage you to find out if your country signed onto either or both UN conventions - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) or The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Go to Social Watch: http://www.socialwatch.org/en/portada.htm
Go to Social Watch: http://www.socialwatch.org/es/portada.htm
Go to UN Division of Advancement of Women and CEDAW: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm (the website is English only, but the reports by each country are available in all of the UN languages-English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian and Chinese)

If your country has signed on, the next step is to find out if the country implemented any of these policies or practices through the creation and implementation of national laws.

Finally, if your country has signed on, congratulate the leaders of your country in supporting CEDAW and the CRC as a first step in ending violence against women and children. Depending on the results of your search on implementation of the UN conventions into the country’s laws, write to your local or national governing body encouraging them to create legislation or to implement their promises in ending violence against women and children or to say thank you for carrying forward the voice of the international community into the national structure.

Our combined Good Shepherd effort of prayer and activism will continue to create hope be a catalyst for social change.

Reading material: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/index.htm
Three reports of the Secretary-General on violence against women are being considered by the Third Committee during the 63rd session of the General Assembly now in session: