

Sapporo Sacred Heart School's Online New York United Nations Study Tour

At the end of 2021, we, the 10th graders of Sapporo Sacred Heart, count our online New York United Nations Study Tour as one of our biggest blessings in the midst of Covid-19 crisis. Though not being able to visit New York, we had the most precious experiences, that made us focus on refugee issues and learned what women with a global perspective need to do to play an active role in the world.

We are grateful for great talks and presentations from many people, including Sr. Sheila Smith rscj, Representative of the RSCJ UNNGO, Sr. Rita Pinto, former RSCJ UNNGO staff, Sr. Cecile Meijer rscj, former representative of the RSCJ UNNGO, and Sr. Lynne Lieux, University of San Diego project team on education of SDGs. From them, we learned that the mission of Sacred Heart Education and of the United Nations is the same. We also need to be concerned with the education of girls, especially in areas where girls are not blessed with many opportunities for education. We also learned that we, the young, with role models like Greta Thunburg, are entrusted with the work of advocacy. We were challenged to consider whether we are consumers or creators /contributors.

Other lecturers were:

- Judge T. Serita, from the Supreme Court of Queens County, New York. (Arranged and supported by the American Consulate in Sapporo)
"On human trafficking and discrimination against immigrant women."
- Mr. F. Queipo, Communications Officer from Department of Global Communications, UN.
"About the humanitarian objectives of the United Nations and the efforts of the SDGs"
- Mr. Y. Hosokawa, Counselor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN.
"Peacekeeping Operations"
Ms. K. Shimme (our alumna) Accounting team, Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN.
"The Corona Crisis and Immigrants in the United States"
- Ms. Naoko Kuramochi, Political Affairs Officer, Department of Political & Peacebuilding Affairs, UN. "The UN's efforts toward World Peace (ex. Mission in Liberia)"
- Mr. H. Kishimori, Senior Advisor, UN Development Programme.
"Towards Co-living: How to deal with discrimination, Changing the Image of Refugees "
- Mr. K. Amanuma, from UNHCR Japan, "Refugee Assistance."
Ms. Yoshika Yamashita, "The economic impact of hosting refugees in Uganda."
- Prof. Y. Yamanaka, from Hokkaido University Graduate School.
"Making Action Plans for a Sustainable World"

It was a great opportunity to be able to listen to those powerful speakers, learn about Global issues, ask questions and reflect deeply on them. Some of us were interested in working as allies for refugees, immigrants, and women in weak positions, as well as victims of discrimination.

Having had such a valuable experience, our eyes were opened to the fact that there are many world

problems that we are ignorant of. We were able to renew our determination to devote ourselves to helping solve as many of these problems as possible.

What we can do is to be interested in what is happening in the world, to think about it as a connection with ourselves, and to find solutions to problems through patient discussions while acknowledging each other's differences when we disagree with our friends. It is also important to think positively and be patient with the problem.

The world is populated by people of various nationalities, races, religions, and ways of thinking. It is difficult to unite everyone's opinions, but we realized equality increases when we discuss ideas together to understand each other for the better.

In addition, we think it is important to see what is happening in the world and then to grasp, share, and disseminate it to as many people as possible. We learned that doing even small things can accumulate to solve big problems.

We would like to share another blessing: our sister school in New York, Convent of the Sacred Heart 91st, sent a fantastic video letter to us. Our seniors had been invited to enjoy a great visit and homestay program there, and had voluntary service with their host sisters. We were so disappointed in not being able to visit them. But now, we could share their video letter with the whole school on the Feast of St. Madeleine Sophie, which must have pleased her, as well. In return, we sent them a video letter, and thus could have an exchange after all. We are so grateful for our friends in New York to send such a token of friendship. Thank you to all of the great lecturers and generous people who made this program possible.

With the permission of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, 91st, we would like to share their great video letter and ours. Below are the URLs.

NY Sacred Heart MV ↓ (With Japanese subtitles)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TPPfWDeuP9jtN_7CVyzZIrtDiLBMBhM6/view?usp=sharing

Sapporo Sacred Heart MV ↓ (With English subtitles)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1otsfqbX1L-7L0nhKwmgaR4AVgcTBLx-v/view?usp=sharing>

