



NEWS BULLETIN 277
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2016

Students Use Quilts to Spread the Pope's Message of Compassion

First public showing for the Mali Camel Quilt

Newport, RI: Echoing Pope Francis, students from [Salve Regina University](#) have used advocacy quilts to appeal for compassion towards immigrants and victims of racism at a major exhibition in Newport, Rhode Island.



Elegant setting: Ochre Court at Salve Regina University played host to quilts

The exhibition, *A Global Call for Mercy*, featured 19 quilts from the AP collection and took place earlier this month at Ochre Court, overlooking the ocean (photos). The event attracted a large audience of students, staff, Newport residents and quilters from the area.

The students are in the Nuala Pell Leadership Program at Salve Regina and they arranged their show around the themes of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, a campaign for social justice launched by Pope Francis. The themes chosen were nonviolence; women; earth and the environment; immigration; racism; and children. Salve Regina was founded by the Catholic Sisters

of Mercy and is deeply committed to the Jubilee mission.

Each student acted as a docent for a theme, in keeping with their academic interests. "Many of the images are graphic, but these are personal statements and a plea to be heard," said Kay Scanlan, a psychology major in the Nuala Pell program and docent leader.

Alexis Jankowski, another team leader, served as docent for the women's quilts and said she had learned a lot from the event: "It went so well. The people



Alexis Jankowski, left, was a student docent at the exhibition. Bobbi Fitzsimmons assembled two quilts.

(photo). The squares were assembled into a quilt by Merry May, from the South Shore Stitches Guild in New Jersey. The Mali project is generously funded by the German Foreign Ministry through the [Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations](#) in Berlin.



Kathryn Clancy served as a docent and later showed quilts to students at the Thompson Middle School

that have been depicted here. But it's (also) sad to hear the stories."

Kathryn Clancy, a special education major at Salve Regina, served as a docent at the exhibition and later showed several of the quilts at the Thompson Middle School in Newport town, accompanied by Iain Guest



The squares of the Mali Camel Quilt were embroidered by rape survivors in Mali

of this (Newport) community really want to learn about these things. There are a lot of genuine, caring and interested people (here)."

The docents are [profiled on the AP site](#) and [feature in this video](#) produced by Salve Regina on the event.

More than 150 individual artists from the Global South contributed squares for the quilts on display. This was the first public showing for the Mali Camel Quilt, which was embroidered by women from northern Mali while they were recovering from war rape at a center in Bamako run by [Sini Sanuman](#)

Three American quilters attended the March 10 reception in Newport. Bobbi Fitzsimmons, who worked on the [Graciana Roma quilt from Kosovo](#) and the Child Protection Quilt (made by families in Uganda that lost children to child sacrifice), drove from North Carolina for the event.

Two quilters from Rhode Island also attended. Allison Wilbur, a long-time AP partner, led the quilting of the [Chintan Wastepickers' Quilt](#) and expressed pleasure at seeing her quilt on display. Ruth Sears, president of Quilters by the Sea, a guild in Portsmouth RI, also worked on the Chintan quilt and praised the exhibition: "I'm very impressed. It's amazing to see all the work and the fantastic things



Henna Pride, the LGBTI quilt from India, was much admired by students at the Thompson Middle School in Newport

from AP. The students come from a range of countries, including Bulgaria, India, and Yemen and seemed to appreciate the message of inclusion and diversity behind several quilts.

The students were particularly impressed by the [Maasai Girls' Quilt](#), which expresses the dreams of Maasai schoolgirls; [Henna Pride](#), made by transgender artists in India (photo); and the [Chintan Wastepickers' Quilt](#), made from recycled clothing by children who were rescued from garbage in Delhi by [Chintan](#).

Following the presentation Lisa Olaynack, the class teacher, launched a competition among her students for the best recycling product.

- * [Click here](#) for more on the Newport quilt exhibition
- * Watch a [video of the Newport quilt exhibition](#)
- * Watch videos about the making of the [Ahadi quilts](#) (DRC); the [River Gypsy Quilt from Bangladesh](#); and the [Nunca Mas quilts from Peru](#). All three videos were shown at Newport
- * Contact us to hold an exhibition or help to assemble a quilt.

Thanks to Humanity United for supporting our fellowship program and to the Peace and Collaborative Development Network for re-posting our bulletins.

