



# Shalom News North America

An instrument of hope, formation, and action concerning priority matters of social justice.

January 2016



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## Integrity of Creation

### **Laudato Si' Reflection – Mercy**

Pope Francis says that the call of Jesus pushes each of us to never stop at the surface of things, especially when we are dealing with a person. We are called to look beyond, to focus on the heart to see of how much generosity everyone is capable. In this Holy Year of Mercy, “we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.” (*Laudato Si' 52*)



### **Historic Agreement - UN Climate**

#### **Conference in Paris** ([Margaret Swedish](#))

Last month's historic UN Climate Conference [agreement](#) was significant for acknowledging the urgency of action, and for getting governments to commit for the first time to clear ceilings for global temperature rise (2 degrees Celsius, with 1.5C as an

“aspiration”). However, it fell short of setting binding, enforceable limits on carbon emissions, gives no clear direction for how to reduce emissions (e.g., words like “fossil fuels,” “oil,” “coal,” are never used), and leaves each country to decide on its own how to do its voluntary part. So we can applaud the progress, and use it as leverage, while still noting that it is not enough. [Overview of agreement.](#)

### **Food Insecurity and Climate Change**

[This website](#) allows you to explore how different scenarios of global greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change could change the geography of food insecurity in developing and least-developed countries. By altering the levels of future global greenhouse gas emissions and/or the levels of adaptation, you can see how vulnerability to food insecurity changes over time, and compare and contrast these different future scenarios with each other and the present day.

## Human Dignity and Economic Justice

### **National Migration Week – January 3-9**

In the Gospel of Matthew (25:35), Jesus tells his disciples, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” That call to welcome the stranger challenges us as Christians today as the world faces a crisis in meeting the needs of millions of migrants forced to flee their homelands. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops offer some insight about the [European refugee crisis](#), a [bilingual prayer card](#), and a [sample prayer service](#) that can be adjusted to fit your needs.

We need to respond in some way. How can we, how will we offer welcome and support to these strangers among us? Consider reflecting on Pope Francis' message for the [World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#) (1/16), the LCWR statement on [Welcoming Syrian Refugees](#), and the SSND CP Province statement [In Solidarity with Syrian Refugees](#). Consider [contacting your elected officials](#) about not turning our backs on Syrian and other vulnerable refugees. Even if they have already done so – repeated messaging is important and effective!



### **State and Local Immigration Policies**

Civic engagement by immigrants and their allies has been effective in moving inclusive state and local

policies and in defeating virtually all of the significant anti-immigrant proposals filed in state legislatures during the past two years, according to a new report by the National Immigration Law Center. The report [Immigrant-inclusive State and Local Policies Move Ahead in 2014-15](#) demonstrates that the groundwork built by immigrants' rights groups has helped preserve, implement, and gain new ground for inclusive state and local immigration policies.

### **Human Trafficking Awareness Month**

Human Trafficking is a form of modern slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others. There are 27 million slaves today which is more than in any other time in our history. High profits and low risks motivate traffickers to lure and ensnare people into forced labor and sex trafficking by manipulating and exploiting their vulnerabilities. It is easy to be unaware of the [victims](#) in our midst. Check out this [animated documentary](#). To learn more about the hidden slaves that work for you visit [Slavery Footprint](#). You can also visit [Free2work](#) for information on forced labor and the products you purchase. Additional resources for [reflection](#) and [action](#).

## Slavery in the Seafood Industry

Burmese men, women, and children are being sold to factories in Thailand and forced to peel shrimp that ends up in products sold by many U.S. retailers, restaurants, and pet stores. The Associated Press has released [an exposé](#) on the use of slave labor by Thai shrimp peeling factories. It turns out almost half of shrimp exports from Thailand are shipped to the U.S. to places such as Krogers, Wal Mart, Whole Foods, Dollar General, Petco, Olive Garden, and Red Lobster.

[Learn more.](#)

## Poverty Awareness Month

January is also [Poverty Awareness Month](#). Join Catholics across the U.S. in taking up Pope Francis' challenge to live in solidarity with those "trapped in the cycle of poverty" (9/24/15, Address to Congress). The [printable calendar](#) ([en Español](#)) is perfect to hang on a wall or door, while [longer daily reflections](#) ([en Español](#)) provide food for prayer and action for each day of the month. Sign up for daily emails during Poverty Awareness Month [here](#).



## Haiti on Its Own Terms

January 12, 2016 is the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the devastating earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 that struck Haiti, killing more than 160,000 and displacing close to 1.5 million people. While recovery and rebuilding for Haiti is ongoing, please take a moment to view [this beautiful photo journal](#) of Haiti recently published in National Geographic Young photographers reveal pride and beauty in a land where struggle is the norm. Learn about [Beyond Borders](#), one of the NGOs focusing on counter-trafficking in Haiti.

## March for Life

For decades, thousands of pro-lifers have [participated in marches and vigils](#) to stand up for the unborn. But the right to life is more than just the right to be born. Pope Francis denounced abortion as a symptom of today's throw-away culture, but he also cautioned that the church must find a balance. Being pro-life means a focus that is womb to tomb, from pre-natal care to elder-care throughout all stages and circumstances of life. It is important that we recognize and acknowledge that basic dignity, that presence of the Divine Mystery in each other and in all of creation.

## Peace and Non-Violence

### No One Left to Speak

January 14 is the anniversary of the birth of Martin Niemöller, German theologian and Lutheran pastor, an outspoken foe of Adolf Hitler and critic of so many German leaders complicit by their silence in the Nazi imprisonment, persecution and murder of millions of people. His quotation, [First they came for the Socialists](#), has been edited often to include more recent examples of persecution of African Americans, Muslims, and immigrants, but the core message is still relevant. We must be willing to stand up for anyone whose basic human rights are being denied.

### Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr – January 18

A champion for civil rights and human dignity, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was instrumental in securing the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Awarded with the Nobel Prize for Peace for his work, Dr. King is one of only three people who have a U.S. national holiday in their honor. During Pope Francis' [address to the U.S. Congress](#), the Pope highlighted Dr. King as one of the four Americans of good will who shaped fundamental values that will endure forever in the spirit of the American people. [Reflection resources](#).



### No Name-Calling Week – January 18-22

No Name-Calling Week was inspired by the popular young adult novel entitled *The Misfits* by James Howe. The book tells the story of four best friends trying to survive the seventh grade in the face of all too frequent taunts based on their weight, height, intelligence, and sexual orientation/gender expression. Given the nature of political and societal discourse these days, we thought it would be good to highlight this effort! Consider these [lesson plans](#) and articles ([Naming: Dignity and Meaning](#), [What's in a Name?](#), and [Time to End Anonymous Comments](#)) for reflection.

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The [Week of Prayer for Christian Unity](#), is an annual ecumenical celebration traditionally held from January 18 to 25. By coming together during this week, we join with Christians around the world in worship, reflection, study, and fellowship. This year, we rejoice in the opportunity to pray [with the Christians of Latvia](#). They call us to reflect on the mighty acts of God in our lives, and to find ways in which we can witness to these acts by working together for the unity of Christ's Church. Biblical reflections and prayers for the week, along with links to additional resources can be found [here](#).



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