



Shalom News North America

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

March 2016



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Integrity of Creation

Laudato Si' Quote for Reflection

One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. [...] Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right.... Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. (*Laudato Si'* 29-30)

World Water Day

Water and Jobs is the 2016 theme for World Water Day. Today, almost half of the world's workers - 1.5 billion people - work in water related sectors. Yet millions of people who work in water are often not recognized or protected by basic labor rights. Because women have long been identified as agents of change, [Women for Water Partnership](#) together with other UN agencies are committed to cultivating collective action on the water-gender sustainable development goals. [Learn more.](#)



Earth Hour – Will You Participate?

Can you spare an hour for Earth on Saturday, March 19, 8:30-9:30 PM in your local time zone? Earth Hour is a worldwide grassroots movement uniting people to share the opportunities and challenges of creating a sustainable world. The first thing you can do is turn off your lights for the designated hour. But, beyond that,

the goal is to encourage people to do more to take accountability for their ecological footprint and work for real solutions to environmental challenges. [Learn more, take action.](#)

Care for Creation – Let Your Voice Be Heard

On February 9, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a “stay” which halts the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) plan to address climate change through the Clean Power Plan (CPP) until court cases that consider the CPP are resolved. We invite you to join with the

Catholic Climate Covenant folks in urging your Senators to support a national standard to reduce carbon emissions. [Learn more, take action.](#) The Senate is considering the [Energy Policy](#)

[Modernization Act](#) of 2015. Endorsed by the USCCB, this program would help non-profit organizations make the buildings they own and operate more energy-efficient, reduce operating costs and shrink their carbon footprints. [Learn more/take action.](#)

Create a Climate of Change

In this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis encourages us to set out on a pilgrimage of conversion to become kinder, more generous people. This [Way of the Cross resource](#) focuses on the suffering caused by climate change. Humanity, along with all of creation, is on a critical journey as we are challenged by climate change. Will we set out on a path of mercy; adjusting our patterns of consumption to lessen our carbon footprint and give Mother Earth a chance to heal?

Human Dignity and Economic Justice

Sustainable Development Goal #1

Extreme poverty rates have been cut by more than half since 1990. While this is a remarkable achievement, one in five people in developing regions still live on less than \$1.25 a day, and there are millions more who make little more than this daily amount. Sustainable Development Goal #1 calls for the eradication of extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030. [Learn more.](#)

International Women’s Day

The UN theme for [International Women’s Day](#) (IWD) is [Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality](#). The focus is on things we can do to build momentum for the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and

accelerate the realization of gender parity. [Go here](#) to take a look at how women are affected by each of the SDGs, as well as how women and girls can — and will — be key to achieving each of these goals. [Prayer resource #1](#), [prayer resource #2](#).



Reflecting on Female Migrants and Refugees

As we commemorate International Women’s Day, we invite you to take some time to reflect on the challenges female migrants and refugees are facing these days. This [NY Times article](#) provides a sobering reflection of the challenging experiences routinely faced by female migrants and refugees. Caritas has [additional stories and](#)

[reflections](#) on the female face of migration for your consideration. [Prayer resource](#).

SSND at the Commission on the Status of Women



The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights and documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world. School Sisters of Notre Dame and students will attend the [60th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women](#) later this month. Be sure to check www.ssnd.org for regular updates.

Taking Steps to Stop Slave Labor

Did you know that for the last 85 years, the U.S. government has turned a blind eye to companies that import goods derived from slavery – so long as domestic production couldn't meet demand for those goods? Fortunately Congress is finally taking action to close this loophole in the Tariff Act of 1930. The UN estimates that some 21 million people are enslaved for profit worldwide, providing \$150 billion annually in illicit revenue. [Learn more](#). [Take action](#) to keep slave labor out of the seafood industry.

Fair Food

Wendy's is the only one of the five top fast food corporations who is not participating in the Fair Food Program initiated by Coalition of Immokalee Worker (CIW). Their lack of participation causes them to

continue to exploit the farmworkers who supply their tomatoes. From March 2-12, farmworkers and consumers will join forces in a [tour](#) to call Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program. Contact Wendy's Board Chairman [Nelson Peltz](#) and request that Wendy's join the Fair Food Program.

Farm Worker Awareness Week – March 24-31

The farm laborers responsible for the food we eat remain largely invisible and many continue to live and work in less than ideal conditions. Farm work is dangerous, subject to chemical and physical injuries, heat stress, and parasitic infections. Farm workers are not guaranteed the benefits of overtime, minimum wage, or unemployment insurance. Let us take time to give thanks and support farmers. Learn how the faith-based [National Farm Worker Ministry](#) supports farm workers as they organize for justice and empowerment. [A reflection on Cesar Chavez](#).

Racism

March 21-27 is designated as a week of Solidarity with Peoples Struggling Against Racism and Racial Discrimination. Racism has been part of American life since early colonial times manifested in discriminatory laws, social practices and criminal behavior directed toward a target group. Today, the Black Lives Matter movement and the current hostility toward Islam and Muslims remind us that racism still exists. We also recognize issues of [environmental racism](#) which continue to threaten the well-being of our Earth and our community. How will you stand in solidarity with those experiencing racism?



Peace and Non-Violence

The Right to the Truth

March 24 has been designated as the International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning gross human rights violations. It honors the memory of victims, pays tribute to those who struggle to promote and protect human rights, and recognizes the important work of people like [Blessed Oscar Romero](#), the Archbishop of El Salvador who opposed all forms of violence. Today many continue to struggle to discover the truth and expose abuses. We invite you to read [a selection of perspectives on truth and dignity](#) from those who have used their words to convey a powerful idea: truth is the foundation of justice. [Prayer resource](#).



Support the Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act

With coordination, flexibility, and training, the U.S. can help people threatened by violence before the killing starts – and help prevent wars. New legislation, the Atrocities and Genocide Prevention Act, would authorize a permanent, inter-agency Atrocities Prevention Board that will focus the U.S. government at the highest levels on the prevention of violent conflict. It would also authorize the Complex Crises Fund, a critical funding mechanism that has supported local peacebuilding efforts in Central African Republic and elsewhere. The legislation, [endorsed](#) by a variety of human rights, faith, and peace organizations, further requires training for foreign services officers, so they are better prepared to prevent and respond to mass atrocities. [Learn more](#), [take action](#).



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