



February 2015

Human Life and Dignity
Economic Justice
Integrity of Creation
Peace and Non-Violence



Human Life, Dignity, and Economic Justice

February is African American History Month

As we celebrate African American History Month, let us remember and pray

for those committed to
bringing a greater measure
of justice to this nation.

Through [this litany](#) you can recognize and give thanks for some of the lesser known women and men whose actions prepared the soil for the civil rights movement. We invite you to consider [this reflection](#) by Bishop Edward Braxton on the current racial divide in the U.S. and re-read and reflect on the U.S. Bishops' 1979 [Pastoral Letter on Racism](#). Consider also [these five obstacles](#) facing the African-American community today. Pray, listen, learn, think, and act.



Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General has [designated February 8](#) as an annual day of prayer and awareness against human trafficking. February 8th was selected because it is the Feast Day of [St. Josephine Bakhita](#) whom many call “The Patron Saint of Human Trafficking Victims.” We invite you to watch [this video](#) [reflection](#), download [this prayer service](#), sign [this pledge](#), and urge Congress to [take action](#).

Wealth Inequality – Unparalleled

In their latest report on the concentration of global wealth, Oxfam [reports](#) that the share of the world's wealth owned by the richest 1% increased from 44% in 2009 to 48% last year. By 2016, Oxfam expects the wealthiest 1% to own more than 50% of the world's wealth. Oxfam is calling on governments to adopt a seven-point plan to [tackle inequality](#), including



a clampdown on tax evasion by companies and the move towards a living wage for all workers. [Learn more, take action.](#)

Global Report on Out-of-School Children

Adolescents are twice as likely to be out of school as primary school-age children, according to a new joint [report](#) from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNICEF. The report hopes to serve as a catalyst for policies and practices that will reach the 121 million children and adolescents denied their right to education. Use [this interactive tool](#) to explore the data including how factors such as poverty, gender, and location can affect a child's chances of going to school.

Valentine's Day

Hearts and chocolates and roses – all very commercial symbols used to celebrate one's relationships with those dear to one's own heart. What is perhaps more important is how those relationships are nourished and celebrated before and after the big day because we know that “Love cannot wait”, that it must be lived out daily when and where there are no cards or chocolates or roses given. We must also be mindful of and responsive to the [justice issues and human faces](#) behind the products.



Chocolate at a Price – New Report Explores Poverty in Cocoa Trade

ILRF released a new report analyzing the causes behind continuing poverty among cocoa farmers in West Africa, and how that poverty perpetuates child labor and other labor rights abuses. [*The Fairness Gap: Farmer Incomes and Root Cause Solutions to Child Labor in the Cocoa Industry*](#) is the product of nearly two years of research and dialogue. The hope of the report is to foster a new phase of multi-stakeholder dialogue and advocacy to get at root cause solutions.

Integrity of Creation

Global Catholic Climate Movement Is Launched

The Global Catholic Climate Movement, an international collaboration of Catholic organizations, was launched on January 14 with a statement presented to Pope Francis during his visit to the Philippines. In its

[statement](#) calling for prayer and action among the world's Catholic population, the GCCM says, "Our collaboration echoes the global dimensions of the Catholic Church and a shared sense of responsibility to care for God's beautiful, life-giving creation... We are

certain that anthropogenic [human-made] climate change endangers God's creation and us all, particularly the poor, whose voices have already spoken of the impacts of an altered climate." [Learn more/get involved.](#)

Ocean Life Could Face Mass Extinction



A team of scientists, in a groundbreaking analysis of data from hundreds of sources, has concluded that humans are on the verge of causing unprecedented damage to the oceans and the

animals living in them.

"We may be sitting on a precipice of a major extinction event," said Douglas J. McCauley, an ecologist and an author of the [new research](#). Yet McCauley believes there is time to avert catastrophe since the oceans are still wild enough to bounce back to ecological health. [Learn more.](#)

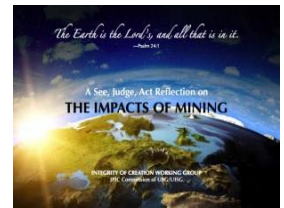
No "Fast Track" for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Right now the largest international trade deal in history – representing 792 million people and 40 percent of the

world economy – is being negotiated in secret. Congress is considering giving it "Fast Track" approval, which would prevent meaningful public debate and potential amendments. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a trade deal among 12 nations, including the U.S.. Critics believe it would offshore millions of jobs and expose us to imports of unsafe food by challenging our food safety rules on pesticides, labeling, or additives as "illegal trade barriers." Perhaps the most threatening aspect is that corporations could potentially sue governments for millions or billions of dollars claiming that environmental regulations, including climate policies, interfere with profits. [Learn more, take action.](#)

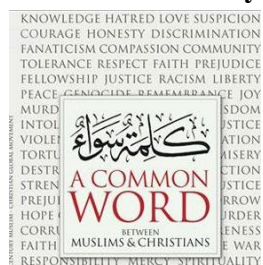
A See, Judge, Act Reflection on the Impacts of Mining

The Integrity of Creation Working Group of the [USG-UISG JPIC Commission](#) in Rome, offers practical suggestions to ensure a sustainable future for the Earth Community, as well as resources, experiences, and prayers. [Download resource.](#)



Peace and Non-Violence

Interfaith Harmony – February 1-7



World Interfaith Harmony Week is an effort to promote harmony between all peoples regardless of their faith. It is rooted in the work of [The Common Word Initiative](#), which calls for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialog

based on two common fundamental religious commandments: love of God and love of neighbor without compromising any of their own religious tenets. With so much negative emphasis on the brutal terrorist activities done in the name of Islam, this week calls us to focus more on putting our faith – based on love, compassion, and forgiveness – into practice.

"Those who teach justice shall be like the stars forever." (Daniel 12:3)

Justice and Peace calendars remind us of many historic and current events: the lives of outstanding promoters of justice; anniversaries; martyrs for their faith and the wellbeing of their sisters and brothers; along with writers, scholars, and poets who bring inspiration to our lives. [February's listing](#) includes twelve of these women and men. You may enjoy remembering these individuals with reflections on one of their quotes.



Lenten Mindfulness

In his [2015 Lenten message](#), Pope Francis warns us against a globalization of indifference. This Lent let us be particularly mindful of those in need throughout our global community. Consider these resources from [Development and Peace](#) and [Catholic Relief Services](#), as well as [this reflection](#) on how fasting can be a powerful tool for justice.

World Day of Social Justice

Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religions, culture or disability. The United Nations' commitment to this task is proclaimed annually on February 20 in the World Day of Social Justice. There is a wide disparity in how member states carry it out, just as there is a vast difference in how individuals perceive and demonstrate social justice. What barriers need to be removed in our own relationships with others? [Prayer resource.](#)

