

# Shalom News North America



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

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January 2023

Dear Friend,

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis emphasizes that the social and ecological challenges of our day are interrelated (integral ecology). As you read through this newsletter, and the social and ecological concerns it highlights, consider how these concerns are related to the [Laudato Si' Goals](#) and SSND becoming a [Laudato Si' Congregation](#).



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Shalom North America Contacts

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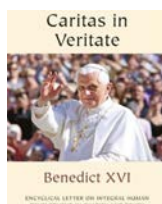
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## Inspirational Quote from Catholic Social Teaching



### *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth)

"Love - caritas - is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth." - Pope Benedict XVI

## Advocacy for Integral Ecology in Canada

Rooted in the *Canadian Religious Conference* (CRC), the recently formed *Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology* (ORCIE) works for a more just and inclusive social order and for an ecologically sustainable world. Given the SSND commitment to Integral Ecology and the need to make voices heard for policy changes by the government, SSND is exploring the possibility of joining 20 other religious congregations in Canada to strengthen our advocacy to the federal government regarding climate change, fossil fuels, etc. When possible, the ORCIE coalition collaborates on an international level with existing global networks and movements highlighting the need for systemic change. Learn more [here](#).



# Integrity of Creation



## UN Biodiversity Conference, COP15

The United Nations held the [COP15 biodiversity conference](#) on December 7- 19, 2022, in Montreal, to address the emergency of global species decline and extinction. How does this affect us? Half of the world's GDP is dependent on nature - think of all the jobs connected to that! The complex interactions of animal and plant species in the food web and with the earth's systems allow humans to thrive on the planet only if we protect them and the resources that they need. Read about the [five key drivers of the nature crisis](#). COP15 achieved an historic agreement to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, on par with the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. Learn more [here](#).



# Integrity of Creation

## Sustainable Development Goals

The year 2023 marks the halfway point in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adopted by UN Member States in 2015, the 2030 Agenda set a target date of 2030 to achieve the 17 Goals to transform our world. While the COVID-19 pandemic and other global crises have set us back, 2023 offers an opportunity to accelerate action to deliver progress for people and our planet. Read more [here](#). Review the 2022 Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart [here](#).





## Integrity of Creation

### Global Energy Inequity, Explained Using Refrigerators

Did you know that the average fridge in North America consumes more energy than an average person, in dozens of countries around the world, consumes for all purposes over an entire year? The issue isn't that North Americans should be going without air conditioners, let alone refrigerators, it's that the world needs to prioritize how to get much higher levels of energy to the poorest countries in the world. Energy access is a foundational component of development, yet many people across Africa and Asia don't have the energy they need to thrive, or even survive, in a warming world. Read more [here](#).



## Human Dignity



### January is Poverty Awareness Month (U.S.)

Pope Francis challenged all of us when he wrote in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "I want a Church which is poor and is for the poor." During this month, the U.S. Bishops and the Catholic community in the United States are calling all of us to take up Pope Francis' challenge to live in solidarity with the poor. We invite you to take time this month to become more aware of the challenges facing our sisters and brothers experiencing poverty these days and steps you can take to help make a difference. [Click here](#) to download a resource of reflections and action ideas. More resources for awareness and engagement can be found at <http://www.povertyusa.org/>.



## Human Dignity

### Human Trafficking Awareness Month (U.S.)

Since 2010, the National Human Trafficking Prevention

Month occurs in January of each year. This stems from the landmark [Trafficking Victims Protection Act \(TVPA\) of 2000](#). President Biden said, “Since human trafficking disproportionately impacts racial and ethnic minorities, women and girls, LGBTQI+ individuals, vulnerable migrants...” our mission to combat human trafficking must always be connected to our broader efforts to advance equity and justice across our society.” Here are [20 ways you can help fight human trafficking](#).



## Human Dignity



### U.S. Immigration Update

The 117th U.S. Congress adjourned [without passing any of the immigration bills](#) we were monitoring this past year including, the Dream and Promise Act, the Farm Workforce Modernization Act, and the Afghan Adjustment Act. In December, the U.S. Supreme Court prevented the Biden administration from ending Title 42 while the justices consider a request by a group of Republican-led states that want to continue the expulsions. Meanwhile thousands of people seeking asylum at the southern U.S border will continue to be turned away until Title 42 gets litigated - which will take months. Learn more [here](#).



## Human Dignity

### Martin Luther King Jr Day (1/16)

On Monday, January 16, we observe Martin Luther King Jr Day. We honor his leadership in the struggle to dismantle racism and to promote God's vision of justice, peace, and integrity of creation. As we embrace his struggle today, and as we remember his inspiring words and his life's witness, we invite you to gather with others to pray and share reflections around [this prayer service](#). MLK Jr Day is the only federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities. Explore opportunities to serve [here](#).







## Human Dignity

### Prayer Vigil for Life (1/19-1/20)

The National Prayer Vigil for Life is an all-night pro-life prayer vigil held on the eve of the March for Life each January. Pilgrims from across the nation pray through the night for an end to abortion and a greater respect for all human life. It is held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Vigil Program will be televised by [EWTN](#) and livestreamed on the [Basilica's webpage](#). Learn more [here](#).



## Human Dignity



### The International Day of Education (1/24)

The theme for the fifth [International Day of Education](#) is “to invest in people, prioritize education.” Building on the global momentum generated by the UN Transforming Education Summit in September 2022, this year’s Day will call for maintaining strong political mobilization around education. Education must be prioritized to accelerate progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals against the backdrop of a global recession, growing inequalities, and the climate crisis. Learn more [here](#). The SSND International Solidarity Reflection for January focuses on transforming education – [click here](#) to download it.

## Peace & Nonviolence

### Pope Francis' Christmas and World Day of Peace Messages

In his [Christmas greetings to Vatican Officials](#), Pope Francis said, “The culture of peace is not built up solely between peoples and nations. It begins in the heart of every one of us. . . We can and must make our own contribution to peace by striving to uproot from our hearts all hatred and resentment towards the brothers and sisters with whom we live. . . For every war to end, forgiveness is required. Otherwise, justice becomes vengeance, and love is seen only as a form of weakness.”



In his World Day of Peace Message for January 1, 2023, Pope Francis says, “We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavor to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves

seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common." He reminds us that "no one can be saved alone" and as "artisans of peace" together we can, "day by day", make this a good year. Click [here](#) for his full World Day of Peace message.

## Peace & Nonviolence



### Pope Francis, Nonviolence, and the Fullness of *Pacem in Terris*

In December, 75 theologians, church officials, and grassroots activists from 28 countries gathered in Rome, Italy, to reflect on Pope Francis' relentless work for nonviolent change throughout his 10-year papacy; to share their own experience of nonviolent change in the face of acute violence and injustice; and to explore next steps in advancing the spirituality, way of life, strategies, and universal ethic of nonviolence in the Church and the world.

The goal of the "Pope Francis, Nonviolence and the Fullness of *Pacem in Terris*" conference was to foster deeper understanding of active nonviolence in divesting global violence of its deadly power, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and in fostering the well-being of the whole Earth community. SSND helped support the conference which was organized by Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Union of Superiors General-Union of International Superiors General (USG-UISG), the international unions of superiors of women's and men's religious orders. [Learn more here](#).

## Peace and Nonviolence



### Faith in Democracy Prayer Vigil (1/5)

The events of January 6, 2021 continue to divide Americans and create concern about the health of our democracy as well as our ability to resolve political differences without violence. This Thursday (1/5) at 6 pm Eastern, our friends with the Franciscan Action Network and Light4America will host an [interfaith prayer vigil](#) to commemorate the anniversary by reflecting together and praying for peace. The vigil will be held in person on the U.S. Capitol grounds and will be live streamed for online viewing for those across the country. [Click here](#) to register to participate in the vigil.



## Peace and Nonviolence

### First Friday Prayer Vigil (1/6)

On the First Friday of each month, Catholic Mobilizing

Network holds a Virtual Prayer Vigil to lament upcoming executions and bear witness to the inviolable dignity of all human life. These virtual spaces offer a place to pray together as a faith community in response to the injustice of the death penalty. This month's First Friday Prayer Vigil will be held on January 6 at 1 pm (Central). Learn more [here](#).



## Quick Links

[Laudato Si' Action Platform](#)

[SSND Podcast - \*Called to Action\*](#)

[Education for Justice - SSND Link/Password](#)

[Exploring Intersections - Racism, Migration, and Climate](#)

[SSND Action Alerts](#)

[Global Catholic Climate Movement](#)

[SSND International Solidarity Reflections](#)

[Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility](#)

[Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#)

[SSND Shalom International Network](#)

[Justice for Immigrants](#)

[SSND at the UN](#)

[Catholic Climate Covenant](#)

[USCCB Action Center](#)

**The SSND Shalom Network witnesses to the Gospel with audacity and hope as we collaborate to build just relationships and respond to the urgent needs of our times.**



**Shalom News North America** is an e-publication of the Shalom North America Contacts (SNAC) of the School Sisters of Notre Dame - Barb Paleczny, Colleen Kammer, Ethel Howley, and Tim Dewane. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcomed. Email us at [tdewane@ssndcp.org](mailto:tdewane@ssndcp.org).

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