



# Shalom News North America

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



March 2020



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## Integrity of Creation

### Beloved Amazon

*Querida Amazonia* (Beloved Amazon) is Pope Francis' response to the Synod on the Amazon, a three-week gathering of bishops held last October to discuss the pastoral questions facing the church in the Amazon in light of environmental and social concerns facing the region. In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis calls for respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and taking action to protect the precious Amazonian ecosystem. Read [the document](#), [this reflection](#), download this helpful [study and prayer guide](#).



### World Water Day (3/22)

This year's focus for World Water Day is "Nature and Climate Change", exploring how water and climate change are inextricably linked. Extreme weather events are making water more scarce, more unpredictable, more polluted or all three. Action plans to tackle climate change need to be integrated across different sectors and coordinated across borders – [learn more](#). The Council of Canadians [extends an invitation](#) to screen *The Condor & The Eagle*, a film they hope not

only educates but helps us come together on the issue of the climate and water crisis.

### Earth Hour (3/28, 8:30-9:30 PM)

Earth Hour has become one of the world's largest grassroots movements for the environment. Held every year on the last Saturday of March from 8:30-9:30 PM local time, Earth Hour goes beyond the symbolic action of switching off lights to call attention to climate change and other Earth issues. It has become a catalyst for positive environmental impact, sparking global conversations and actions. [Learn more/participate](#).

### Planning for Earth Day (4/22)

The Catholic Climate Covenant's Earth Day 2020 program focuses on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Laudato Si'* and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. The program materials can be downloaded for free and include a [facilitator guide](#), [participant guide](#), and [editable flyer](#). The hope is that faith-filled commemoration of these anniversaries will help build momentum to engage Catholics in addressing the climate crisis in a more robust way.

## Human Dignity

### Labeling for Lent

Labor Trafficking is a big concern in the [seafood industry](#). To help raise awareness and urge reform, we join with U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking in promoting the Coalition of Catholic Organizations against Human Trafficking Labeling for Lent Campaign. Participation is easy. Simply send a letter or postcard to Sysco (a major wholesale company that provides food services to over 650,000 restaurants, schools, and health care facilities - many of which are Catholic) urging them to better inform their customers about their efforts to ensure their supply



chain is free of forced labor. [Learn more/take action](#); print out and share [this postcard](#).

### International Women's Day

On March 8, we celebrate [International Women's Day](#) – a day to remember and honor women's "achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political," and to use these inspiring achievements "to build support for women's rights and participation in the political and economic arenas." The theme this year is "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights." Click here for [a fun quiz on Women's Day history](#). Click here to learn about the [World Day of Prayer](#), global movement of Christian women of diverse

traditions who come together to participate in "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action."

### Mobilize for Dreamers

Last November the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and is expected to issue a ruling on the legality of the DACA program in late April-June. In anticipation of the DACA decision date, our friends with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition have prepared [a reflection resource for Lent](#) featuring stories of DACA recipients and prayers. The Justice for Immigrants campaign invites us to reach out to our Senators to urge support for Dreamers. Here are [talking points](#) and a [backgrounder](#) on DACA. Set-up a meeting with your legislator ([resource](#)) or use SSND's [Voter Voice tool](#) to send a message electronically.

### Oppose Deployment of Tactical Border Agents in Local Communities

The Trump Administration has announced plans to deploy specialized tactical border agents in local

communities across the country to assist ICE officers in carrying out enforcement actions. Our friends with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network strongly oppose this action fearing that dispatching tactical border patrol agents that are trained specifically for extremely violent



situations into densely populated, residential areas would terrorize communities and weaken public safety.

[Learn more/let your voice be heard.](#)

### Ending Racial Discrimination (3/21)

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed

annually on March 21. On that day, in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid "pass laws". Proclaiming the Day in 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination. Learn more about racism [globally](#), in [Canada](#), in the [U.S.](#) [Prayer resource.](#)

## Peace and Non-Violence

### Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

On March 5, 2020, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPN) Treaty will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its entry into force, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its ongoing extension. But challenges continue to grow as diplomats gather in New York from April 29-May 10 for the treaty's Review Conference. Under the treaty, the nuclear have-nots agreed to renounce nuclear weapons forever but, under Article 6 of the treaty, the nuclear quintet agreed to negotiate "in good faith" towards giving up their bombs. Recently the US Catholic Bishops issued [a new statement on nuclear disarmament](#). The statement referenced Pope Francis's visit to Japan, and affirmed his reminding of "the moral obligation to re-commit to the work of ridding the world of nuclear weapons and the threat that they pose." The statement also offered support for the NPN Treaty.

### Solidarity with South Sudan

The Solidarity with South Sudan initiative is a

cooperative of religious congregations (including SSND) that began in 2006 to help address critical educational, health and pastoral needs after decades of civil war. The initiative currently has 31 religious and three lay volunteers helping run programs focused on education, health, sustainable agriculture, trauma healing, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. [Click here](#) to review the latest update on their efforts.



### Voting: Responsibility & Challenge

Pope Francis has said that "politics is one of the highest forms of charity."

With election season upon us in the U.S., it is important to form our consciences according to the principles of our faith, and to engage consequently in political discourse and action. These resources are offered for your consideration as you participate in this great responsibility: [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) (USCCB); [Bishop McElroy on Voting with Faith and a Conscience](#); and this SSND reflection – [Voting: Responsibility and Challenge](#).



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