Shalom News North America



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

In This Issue

Laudato Si' & Lent

Common Home

Give it Up for Earth

Climate Action

Wildlife & Forests

Water Day

Women's Day

Immigration

Dismantling Racism

Slavery & Trafficking

Farmworkers

War in Ukraine

Happiness

Right to Truth

March 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 month's 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.

School Sisters of Notre Dame
Shalom North America Contacts

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Integrity of Creation

Laudato Si' Lenten Reflections

The foundation of the Laudato Si' Action Platform commitment made by SSND and countless other organizations is a commitment to participate in the healing of Earth, and to living in right-relationship with all in our planet's community of life. Sister Kathy Schmittgens and

Sister Lucille Coughlin, members of the SSND CP Laudato Si' Animation Team, have collaborated with our communicators to produce a beautiful Lenten reflection that connects *Laudato Si'* quotes with readings of the Gospel. Each week of Lent a different reflection will be shared via SSND social media and announcements. Click here to view the entire series.

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A Guide to Caring for our Living Planet

The new booklet, "Our Common Home: A Guide to Caring for Our Living Planet," connects the science of climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable resource use with the messages of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It is the product of a collaboration between the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Stockholm Environment Institute. Topics addressed in the guide include the climate crisis, biodiversity, water, air pollution, food production, sustainable consumption, environmental and social justice. Each topic summary includes a passage from *Laudato Si'* along with actions that can be taken to address each issue. The booklet is available in five languages and is free to download.



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Give it Up for Earth!



Give it Up for Earth! is a national faith-in-action campaign, February 22 to April 6, 2023, to raise awareness about climate change and mobilize people across Canada to reduce personal and household greenhouse gas emissions, engage in acts of solidarity, and collect signatures as a demonstration of support for increased federal government action. We call on the federal government to increase its emissions reductions target, increase support for gender-responsive food systems, and champion a comprehensive climate justice legislative package. Learn more. Click here to sign the open letter urging the Canadian federal government to take action. Click here to register for the webinar *Preserving Biodiversity: Creation Care from Faith to Action* on March 23 at 6 pm (Eastern).

Integrity of Creation

Climate Action Alert - Canada

For decades, polluting industries and landfill sites have ended up in Indigenous, Black, Brown and other racialized communities in Canada. These

“sacrifice zones” extend beyond Canada to communities in the Global South - usually poor and often Indigenous - where Canadian mining companies contaminate fresh water sources and contribute to well-documented human rights violations. Three federal private member bills tackle environmental racism in Canada and improve corporate accountability of Canadian extractive companies operating abroad:

- Bill C-226 to end environmental racism and advance environmental justice
- Bill C-262 for the adoption of mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation
- Bill C-263 to empower the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise

Click here to let your voice be heard and urge Members of Parliament to take action on these important bills.



Integrity of Creation



Climate Action Alert - U.S.

Recently, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it will be updating soot pollution standards. Soot pollution disproportionately burdens the health and safety of communities of color and low-wealth communities due to legacies of environmental injustice and racist policies like redlining. This is a dangerous and deadly pollutant that is produced by power plants, tailpipes on cars and trucks, and other industrial sources. The EPA’s proposed soot standard is a step in the right direction, but is insufficient to protect our communities’ health and our environment. Improved EPA standards could save nearly 20,000 lives each year. Click here to urge the EPA to set a strong soot pollution standard.

Integrity of Creation

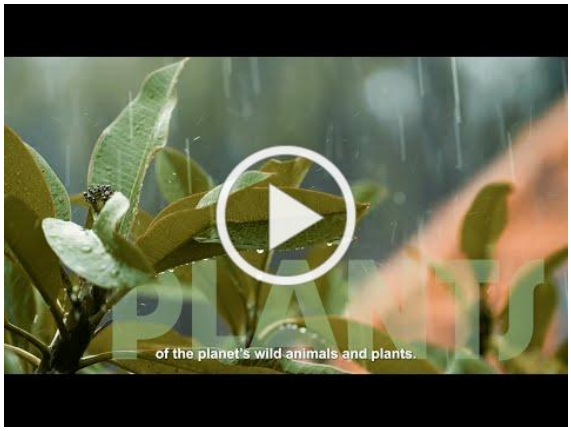
Wildlife Day (3/3) and Day of Forests (3/21)





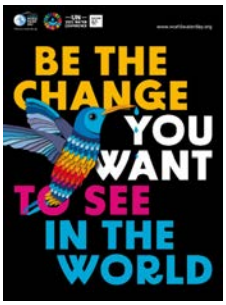
Since 2013, the UN has recognized March 3 as World Wildlife Day to celebrate animals and plants for their beauty, diversity, and the contributions they make to the health of our ecosystems and our well-being. The date of March 3 was chosen in recognition of the signing of CITES - the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The theme for this year's World Wildlife Day is "Partnerships for Conservation" in recognition of the 50th anniversary of CITES. Learn more.

The 2023 theme for the International Day of Forests (3/21) is "Forests and Health." Forests purify water, clean the air, capture carbon to fight climate change, provide food and life-saving medicines, and improve our well-being. Healthy forests lead to healthy people. Let us safeguard these precious natural resources. Learn more.





Integrity of Creation



World Water Day (3/22)

This year's World Water Day is about accelerating change to solve the water and sanitation crisis.Dysfunction throughout the water cycle undermines progress on all major global issues, from health to hunger, gender equality to jobs, education to industry, and disasters to peace. Learn more.

Be the Change is a global campaign that encourages people to take action in their lives to change how they use, consume and manage water. Check it out! Actions and pledges from individuals and communities alongside larger commitments from governments, companies, organizations, institutions, and coalitions will contribute to the Water Action Agenda at the upcoming UN 2023 World Water Conference. Learn more and register your commitment to action here.



Human Dignity

International Women's Day (3/8)

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is "Digit ALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality". Learn more. This theme is aligned with the

priority theme for the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 67) which is “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls”. CSW 67 will take place on March 6 -17 and will provide an opportunity to highlight the need to improve education and access to digital tools, particularly for women and girls. Digitalization is among the major shifts that are rapidly transforming society, allowing for unprecedented advances to improve social, economic and political outcomes for women and girls. Click here to learn more about CSW 67.Click here for the SSND March 2023 International Solidarity Reflection *The Strength of Women and Girls*.





Human Dignity

Immigration - Proposed Asylum Rule

The Biden Administration has issued a proposed rule to limit access to asylum for people who enter the U.S. without authorization through the southwest border if they did not seek asylum in a third country before arriving in the United States. The new proposed rule, slated to take effect in May and to expire after two years, would presume asylum ineligibility for those who enter illegally. Under current U.S. immigration law, migrants fleeing persecution can request asylum regardless of how they arrive on U.S. soil. Learn more here and consider this analysis. Catholic immigration advocates are deeply concerned about the impact the rule could have on vulnerable people seeking safety and asylum. Learn more. Let your voice be heard about this proposed rule -click here to take action.



Human Dignity

Dismantling Racism

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial

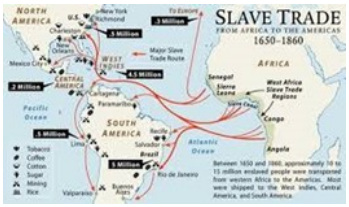


Discrimination is observed each year on March 21. It begins the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination (March 21-27). Both the Atlantic-Midwest and the Central Pacific Provinces have statements promoting dignity and equality for all. What further actions can we take to dismantle racism in our world?

One action we can take is to increase our awareness of important racial justice-related concepts such as implicit bias, privilege, whiteness, and systemic racism. To this end, SSND Sisters and Associates are invited to “Breaking Open the Sin of Racism”, a series of video and discussion sessions scheduled for five consecutive Mondays in Lent beginning on March 6. Each session will last an hour and begin at 7 pm (Eastern). To register for the series, simply email Sister Sharon Wall (swall@amssnd.org) and put "Lenten Racism Series" in the subject line.

Human Dignity

Slavery & Trafficking



The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed on March 25. The day recognizes and recalls the more than 15 million people who were brutalized for over 400 years as a result of a slave system. It is a reminder about the need to educate about the causes and consequences of this history and to communicate the ongoing dangers of racism and prejudice. We invite you to take time to reflect on the history of slavery, abolition, racism, and the Catholic Church, by reviewing the webinar recording below and making use of this discussion guide. Consider making use of this prayer resource. Despite the abolition of Transatlantic Slave Trade, human trafficking continues today in a variety of ways. That's why SSND helps sponsor the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking and their Stop Trafficking Newsletter. Learn more here.



Human Dignity

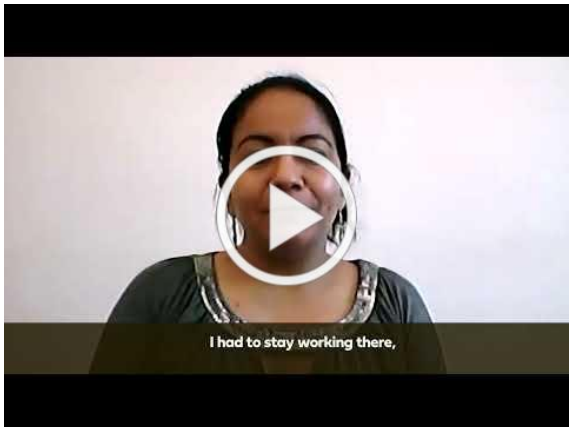


National Farmworker Awareness Week (3/25-31)

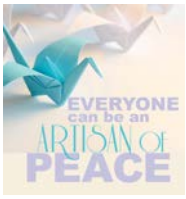
We honor the essential contributions that farm workers make to our food system. Nearly 2 million people work in our fields, nurseries, dairies, and feedlots, and 70% of them are immigrant and/or undocumented workers. In the $200 billion agriculture industry, farm workers receive low wages,

work long hours, risk their safety and health, and do not receive the same protections as other workers. “It is the great paradox of our food system: the very people who work to feed the U.S. struggle to feed their own families” (NFWM). The National Farm Workers Ministry (NFWM), influenced by American labor leader and civil rights activist, Cesar Chavez, provides a vehicle for people of faith to support the farm worker movement.





Peace and Nonviolence



The War in Ukraine - One Year and Still Going

One year ago, Russia launched a brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia’s illegal and unjustified assault has galvanized many around the world to uphold the universal values of human rights, dignity, and freedom. As the conflict extends into its second year, let us continue to stand in solidarity with those impacted by this war and push for lasting peace. Click here to join our Quaker friends in writing the U.S. Congress to take steps to promote a diplomatic solution to this devastating war. Click here to register for the NCR Global Sisters Report "Witness and Grace Conversation" - *Ukraine: A Year at War,* on March 2 at 3 pm (Eastern).

Peace and Nonviolence

Nuclear Weapons Concerns



In a speech marking the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia was suspending participation in New START, the last remaining nuclear arms control treaty between Russia and the United States. This comes on the heels of the recent announcement that the Doomsday Clock had already been set to 90 seconds to midnight – the closest to global catastrophe in the clock’s 76-year history. In response to this deeply troubling development, consider urging Congress to support House Resolution 77 to promote nuclear arms control and disarmament. Learn more/let your voice be heard.

Peace and Nonviolence

International Day of Happiness (3/20)

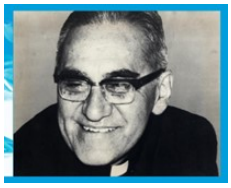
This might seem like a frivolous topic, but it's not. The UN General Assembly recognizes happiness as a goal and calls for “a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes the happiness and well-



being of all peoples." GDP is not enough; let's measure GDH – Gross Domestic Happiness. Read the World Happiness Report 2022, "a bright light in dark times." The 2023 report will be revealed on March 20 - click here to register for the report's online launch.

Peace and Nonviolence

Right to Truth Day (3/23)



The purpose of the International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is to honor the memory of victims of gross and systematic human rights violations and to promote the importance of the right to truth and justice. It also pays tribute to those who have devoted their lives to, and lost their lives in, the struggle to promote and protect human rights for all. The day is observed on March 24 in tribute toSaint Oscar Romero, who in 1980, was murdered for his defense of human rights and his criticism of the military government of El Salvador. Learn more.



Quick Links

Laudato Si' Action Platform

Education for Justice - SSND Link/Password

SSND Action Alerts

SSND International Solidarity Reflections

Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Justice for Immigrants

Catholic Climate Covenant

SSND Podcast - *Called to Action*

Exploring Intersections - Racism, Migration, and Climate

Laudato Si' Movement

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

SSND Shalom International Network

SSND at the UN

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 SSND, Colleen Kammer, Ethel Howley SSND, Pat Stortz, and Tim Dewane. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcomed. Email us



at tdewane@ssndcp.org.

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