



# Shalom News North America

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



January 2018



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## Integrity of Creation

### Proposed Repeal of the Clean Power Plan (CPP)

The Catholic Climate Covenant [urges the EPA to not revoke the CPP](#). Repealing the plan will leave our air, waters, and people, particularly the poor, vulnerable. Pope Francis said, "Climate change is a problem which can no longer be left to a future generation. When it comes to the care of our 'common home', we are living at a critical moment of history." S. Mary Anne Owens [urges people of faith](#) to let their voice be heard on this important issue. The EPA will accept comment on the [proposed repeal](#) of the Clean Power Plan until January 16. Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0355. [Learn more](#), [let your voice be heard](#).



Horizon rig explosion and oil spill. The 2010 accident resulted in 11 worker deaths, over 200 million gallons of oil spilled into the Gulf of Mexico and the deaths of thousands of dolphins, sea turtles and other sea creatures/wildlife. The roll back of safety measures is in response to a request from some in the oil and gas industry who believe the Obama Administration rules designed to prevent future catastrophes had gone too far and were inhibiting offshore production. [Learn more](#).

### Trump Administration Proposes Roll Back of Offshore Drilling Safety Measures

The Trump Administration is proposing to roll back key safety measures put in place after the deadly Deepwater

### Pope Francis on Sustainable Urban Communities, Encounter, and Solidarity

Pope Francis reminds us that we cannot simply work for the environment in our communities without concern for "the cry of the poor." He believes all life is interconnected and we must hear "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" if we want to build truly sustainable communities. [Reflection resource](#).

## Human Dignity

### January is Poverty Awareness Month

The U.S. is not using its considerable resources to assist the 40 million Americans who live in poverty, and inequality in the country is significantly higher than in much of the Western world, writes Philp Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. His report notes that the U.S. ranks poorly against other developed countries for child poverty, health, obesity, incarceration and access to water. [Learn more](#), read [A journey through a land of extreme poverty: welcome to America](#), and take time to [learn about the incredible wealth gap](#). The U.S. Bishops offer [these daily reflections](#) and [this calendar](#) as resources for your prayer, reflection, and action this month.



### National Migration Week (1/7-1/13)

For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the U.S. has celebrated National Migration Week, which is an opportunity for the Church to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including

immigrants, refugees, children, and victims and survivors of human trafficking. The theme for National Migration Week 2018, "Many Journeys, One Family," draws attention to the fact that each of our families has a migration story, some recent and others in the distant past. Regardless of where we are and where we came from, we remain part of the human family and are called to live in solidarity with one another. [Resources for reflection/action](#). Urge Congress to [take action](#).

### National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Every day, modern slavery can be recognized: young women are forced into prostitution and migrant workers exploited in the workforce. Thousands of people, mainly women and children, are exploited by criminals who use them for forced labor or the sex trade. No country is immune. Almost all play a part, either as a source of trafficked people, transit point or destination. According to UNICEF, 2 million children are estimated to be trafficking victims of sex trade each year. 20% of

traffic victims are children. The average age of a girl being forced into the US domestic sex slavery market is 13. The average cost of a slave around the world is \$90.

January has been designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month by [presidential proclamation](#). During this time, we encourage you to undertake efforts to raise awareness and educate communities on human trafficking. Resources for reflection and action can be found in this [USCCB Toolkit](#) and on the [Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking website](#).

### **Martin Niemöller, German Theologian and Lutheran Pastor (1/14)**

Best known for his statement “[First they came for...](#)”, a reflection about the complicity of Protestant church leaders who stood silent during the Holocaust, his story of conversion reminds us that, as we change our ways, we can change the world. His famous quote is often expanded today to include other victims – immigrants, Jews, Muslims, racial minorities – and to continue to haunt the silent people of our time as well.



### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (1/15)**

This is a federal holiday to celebrate his life and achievements. We do that best by putting his words into action. “A time comes when silence is betrayal... We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. For we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness so closely around us.” *Homily at the Riverside Church in New York City, 1967.* [Resources for reflection and prayer.](#)

### **Pro-Life Womb to Tomb**

The annual [Prayer Vigil](#) or March for Life will be held on the national level as well as on many state and local sites on January 19. Since this march is often held on or near the anniversary of [Roe vs. Wade](#), the controversial decision by the Supreme Court allowing abortion up until viability, the pro-life focus is too often limited in scope – life from conception to birth. What about life after birth, quality of life, affordable health care and child care, elder care, adequate food, shelter and medical care? May our prayer vigil for life be a constant vigil for quality of life for all.

## **Peace and Non-Violence**

### **World Day of Peace Message**

In his [2018 World Day of Peace message](#) Pope Francis calls us to view the phenomenon of mass global migration through a contemplative lens. He writes, “With a contemplative gaze, we are called to view the reality of global mass migration as recognition that we all belong to one family, and see, in the migrant and refugee person, God seeking to dwell among us. Those who see things this way will be able to recognize the seeds of peace that are sprouting all around and nurture their growth.” [Action/reflection guide](#), [photo reflection](#).



aggressive pursuit of mercantile gains, the colonizers codified brutal systems which traded human beings and their forced labor. [More information/resources.](#)

### **First Use of Nuclear Weapons**

The Trump Administration has threatened the use of nuclear weapons, particularly toward North Korea. An additional \$1 billion is in its FY2018 budget proposal to upgrade the arsenal (beyond the \$1 trillion cost estimated over the next 30 years). [Learn more](#) about U.S. efforts to “modernize” its nuclear weapons program here. Pope Francis has stated that “Weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, create nothing but a false sense of security. They cannot constitute the basis for peaceful coexistence between members of the human family.” Consider this [Catholic Social Thought and War](#) reflection resource. [Sign on as a “citizen co-sponsor”](#) to a one-sentence bill introduced by Rep. Adam Smith: “It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first.”

### **Prayer for Christian Unity (1/18 – 1/25)**

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples that “they may be one so that the world may believe” (see John 17.21). The prayer for 2018 was prepared by the Caribbean region and reflect their one time enslavement and God’s gift of liberation. The contemporary Caribbean is deeply marked by the dehumanizing project of colonial exploitation. In their



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