

Shalom News North America



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

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February/2021

Dear Friend,

Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. - *Laudato Si'*#19



May the resources in this e-newsletter help you do just that. [Click here](#) for a pdf version.



[School Sisters of Notre Dame](#)

Shalom North America Contacts



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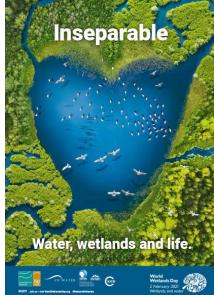
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Integrity of Creation

[World Wetlands Day \(2/2\)](#)

The focus for this year's World Wetlands Day is the importance of wetlands to the quantity and quality of freshwater on our planet. Water and wetlands are connected in an inseparable co-existence that is vital to life, our well-being and the health of our planet. Currently we use more



freshwater than nature can replenish, and we are destroying the ecosystem that water and all life depend on most – wetlands. We must do better. Download and share [this factsheet](#). Additional resources to build awareness and inspire action can be found [here](#).



Integrity of Creation

U.S. Climate Policy Changes

In three sweeping [executive actions](#), President Biden began to establish significant U.S. climate policy changes by rejoining the Paris climate accord, directing the federal government to freeze new oil and natural gas leases on federal lands, make climate a national security priority, recommit to science and embed environmental justice throughout the executive branch. Biden signed an executive order establishing a White House interagency council on environmental justice, created an office of health and climate equity in the Health and Human Services Department, and formed a separate environmental justice office in the Justice Department. The order also directs the government to spend 40 percent of its sustainability investments on disadvantaged communities. Read [this fact sheet](#) summary of executive actions taken to date and reactions from [faith groups](#).



Integrity of Creation

Realizing the Vision of *Laudato Si'*

A new pastoral guidebook offers up some practical steps for Catholics to work with other Christians and communities of



faith to better protect the environment and bring *Laudato Si'* to life. It provides an extensive compendium of prayers, liturgy suggestions, methods and topics for ecumenical or interreligious dialogue. [Learn more, download guidebook](#).

The recording of the January 21 webinar *Realizing the Vision of Laudato Si'*, about the *Laudato Si'* Action platform and how religious orders can join in the 7 year journey of ecological conversion, is now available for viewing on the Planet Hope YouTube channel in four languages: [EN](#) - [ES](#) - [FR](#) - [IT](#)

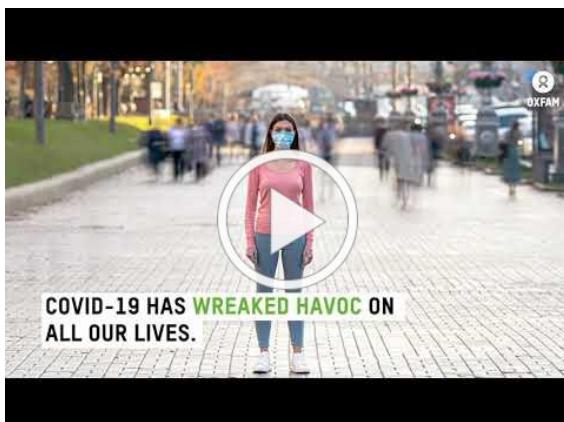
Human Life and Dignity

The Inequality Virus - Billionaires Thrive, the Poor Suffer

Oxfam International's "The Inequality Virus" report observes that the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to increase economic inequality in almost every country at once, the first time this has happened since records began over a century ago. "The virus has exposed, fed off and increased existing inequalities of wealth, gender and race" says the Oxfam report. The pandemic "has exposed our collective frailty and the inability of our deeply unequal economy to work for all." It could take more than a decade to reduce the number of people living in poverty back to pre-crisis levels according to Oxfam. Meanwhile, the wealth of 1,000 of the world's billionaires (mostly white men) has already returned to the record highs seen before the pandemic. Oxfam recommends higher taxes on wealth and corporations alongside stronger protections for workers as important steps to support a global recovery. [Learn more](#), read [report summary](#), [full report](#).



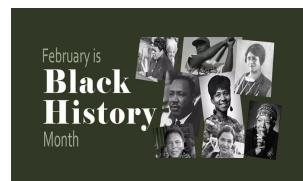
THE INEQUALITY VIRUS
Bringing together a world torn apart by coronavirus through a fair, just and sustainable economy



Human Life and Dignity

Black History Month

February is Black History Month in both Canada and the United States. The commemoration dates back to 1926, when Harvard-educated African American historian Carter G. Woodson proposed setting aside a time devoted to honour the accomplishments of African Americans and to heighten awareness of Black history in the United States. Celebrations of Black history began in Canada shortly thereafter. Learn about some upcoming online commemorations [in Canada](#) and in [the United States](#). Check out this [Black History Month](#) daily calendar of reflections and [this reflection](#) on Rosa Parks.





Human Life and Dignity



Addressing Systemic Racism

Bill C-17 is a government bill addresses systemic racism and affirms the rights of Indigenous people of Canada. [Learn more](#). In the United States, President Biden has signed four executive actions aimed at

advancing racial equity: directing the Department of Housing and Urban Development to redress racially discriminatory federal housing policies; directing the Department of Justice to end its use of private prisons; reaffirming the federal government's "commitment to tribal sovereignty and consultation"; and combating xenophobia against Asian American and Pacific Islanders.

[Learn more](#). [Prayer resource](#).



Human Life and Dignity

U.S. Immigration Policy Changes

The Biden Administration has used executive orders to reverse or modify a number of immigration-related policies of the previous administration. They focus on preserving DACA, halting border wall construction, reversing the so-called "Muslim" travel ban, reversing the exclusion of noncitizens for the census count, revoking the executive order that made all undocumented immigrants a priority for arrest, and ramping down the "remain in Mexico" program. [Learn more](#). In addition, comprehensive immigration reform legislation is being drafted that would provide pathways to citizenship for migrants currently in country (as of Jan 1), prioritize family unity, refine border security policies, and support efforts to address the root causes of forced migration. [Learn more](#). Additional executive actions, including those focused on reuniting children separated from parents and revising asylum restrictions and refugee admissions targets, are expected soon.





Human Life and Dignity



Human Trafficking and St. Josephine Bakhita

On February 8, the [Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita](#) (patron saint of human trafficking victims and survivors), the Catholic Church observes a World Day of Prayer, Reflection, and Action against Human Trafficking. We invite you to pray [this reflective prayer](#) in honor of Saint Bakhita, shared with us by U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. We further invite you to reflect on the links between racism and human trafficking by viewing a recording of our recent inspiring SSND webinar, [Human Trafficking and a Legacy of Racism](#).

Human Life and Dignity

Commission for Social Development

There are [3.6 billion people](#) without affordable access to the internet. Consequently, their access to information and opportunities in education, health, banking, jobs, etc., are all extraordinarily limited. Focusing on [digital technology and social development](#), the 59th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD59) will be held virtually February 8-17. [Learn more](#). During the CSocD59, the [NGO Committee for Social Development](#), which follows and echoes the work of the Commission, will hold a 5-day Virtual Civil Society Forum. The forum is free and open to all. [Learn more/register here](#).



Special thanks to SSND UN-NGO Representative S. Beatriz Martinez-Garcia for contributing this article. Learn more about the SSND UN-NGO ministry [here](#).

Human Life and Dignity



This day recognizes the critical contributions women and girls have made and must continue to offer in the fields of science and technology. To rise to the challenges of the 21st century, we need to harness our full potential which requires dismantling gender stereotypes. In 2020, the focus for promoting women and girls in science was threefold: 1) Improving green and inclusive economy regulatory and policy framework as a role for women; 2) Promoting innovative green investment in women and girls in science through public-private partnerships; 3) Advancing national-level women in science capacity development for a holistic inclusive and green action. [Learn more.](#)



Human Life and Dignity

Lent

In preparation for Lent, which begins on February 17, we reflect on [the words of Pope Francis](#) "Jesus' Pasch is not a past event; rather, through the power of the Holy Spirit it is ever present, enabling us to see and touch with faith the flesh of Christ in those who suffer. ... Putting the paschal mystery at the centre of our lives means feeling compassion towards the wounds of the crucified Christ present in the many innocent victims of wars, in attacks on life, from that of the unborn to that of the elderly, and various forms of violence. They are likewise present in environmental disasters, the unequal distribution of the earth's goods, human trafficking in all its forms, and the unbridled thirst for profit, which is a form of idolatry." [Click here](#) for a Lenten resource focused on integral ecology and the interconnection between immigration, climate change and water access, racism, and human trafficking.



Peace and Non-Violence



Doomsday Clock

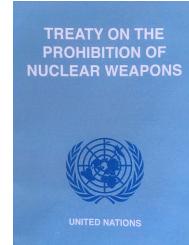
The hands of the Doomsday Clock remain at 100 seconds to midnight. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists initiated the clock in 1947 to help illustrate the looming threat to humanity posed by the potential for nuclear war. The current clock setting is a vivid illustration that national governments and international organizations are simply not doing enough to address the pandemic and the existential threats to civilization posed by nuclear weapons and climate change. [Learn more.](#)



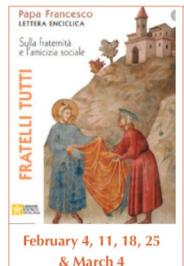
Peace and Non-Violence

Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (PNW), the first international treaty to comprehensively ban nuclear weapons, entered into force on January 22. The School Sisters of Notre Dame have endorsed [this interfaith statement](#), which supports the PNW Treaty as an important step toward nuclear disarmament and recognizes the legacy of the hibakusha, atomic bomb survivors whose courage and perseverance serve as inspiration in the quest for a world free from nuclear weapons. The SSND Shalom International Coordinator is a signatory on [this Catholic Leaders Statement](#) which echoes Pope Francis' support for nuclear disarmament and urges all governments to sign and ratify the treaty. Review [this SSND corporate stance on Gospel Nonviolence and Just Peace](#) that advocates for the use of diplomacy and dialogue to abolish nuclear weapons and prevent war.



Peace and Non-Violence



Building Bridges and Reconciliation

The JPIC Commission of the Union of International Superiors General/Union of Superiors General (UISG/USG) is offering a five-part webinar inspired by *Fratelli Tutti*, “Building bridges and reconciliation”, on Thursday mornings at 7 am (Central) beginning February 4. Sessions will consider the culture of encounter and dialogue in Catholic educational institutions, in creative initiatives, in nonviolent conflict resolutions, in the family and communities, and in collaborative relationships between women and men. Go [here](#) to register (2/2 deadline) and to download the program.

“We want to be a Church that serves...to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation.”—*Fratelli Tutti* (FT) 276

Peace and Non-Violence

Nonviolence Video Series

Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has put forward a series of four videos to help explain four components of nonviolence. Follow these links to view the videos on [Defining Nonviolence](#), [Understanding Nonviolence](#), [Planning for Nonviolence](#), and [Nonviolence in Action](#).



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**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 - Arlene Flaherty, Ethel Howley, Jeanne Wingenter, Kathleen Bonnette, Rose Mary Sander, and Tim Dewane. Your comments, suggestions, and feedback are always welcomed. Email us at tdewane@ssndcp.org.

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