



# Shalom News North America

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

December 2018



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## Integrity of Creation

### U.S. Climate Assessment Warning

Unchecked climate change will cost the U.S. hundreds of billions of dollars and damage human health according to the latest National Climate Assessment released last week. With warnings about the effects on crumbling infrastructure, falling crop yields and decreasing labor productivity, the report sounds an alarm that climate change will soon cascade into every aspect of American life. [Read more, full report.](#) A [separate report](#) issued last week from the U.S. Geological Survey found the extracting and burning of fossil fuels from federal lands made up nearly a quarter of all carbon dioxide emissions in the United States between 2005 and 2014.

### COP 24

The 24th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held December 3-14 in Katowice, Poland. This is the 24<sup>th</sup> in a [series of yearly conferences](#) with representatives from more than 190 different countries to assess progress in dealing with



climate change and to establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their [greenhouse gas](#) emissions. The challenge is to come up with clear guidelines, especially to meet the goal of capping global warming temperature well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to get countries to agree to uphold them. [Learn more.](#) Review and sign the [People's Demands for Climate Justice Petition](#) urging immediate steps to address the climate crisis. Consider this [care of creation Advent devotional](#).

### Oppose the Rollback of Mercury Air Toxics Standards

The Trump administration is preparing to roll back the 2011 Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS) rule. The current rule helps avert 11,000 premature deaths every year and prevents 130,000 asthma attacks and 4,700 heart attacks annually. Among other things, this rule protects children and developing fetuses by keeping this terrible poison from harming their developing brains. [Learn more, urge Congress](#) to oppose the rollback.

## Human Dignity

### USCCB Statement Against Racism

After witnessing the deterioration of the public discourse and episodes of violence and animosity with racial and xenophobic overtones that have emerged in American society, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has released a formal statement, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*. The pastoral letter asks us to recall that we are all equally made in the image of God and, because we all bear that image, a deep individual conversion of heart, which then multiplies, is needed to confront racism's root causes and the injustice it produces. [Learn more, read full statement.](#)

### Farm Bill

Leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees continue to hammer out the details of a final Farm Bill. This is a critical moment in the process and your voice is needed to help get the bill across the finish line. [Urge Congress](#) to take action now and pass a

bill that protects critical nutrition programs that serve millions of low income people across the country.

### International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (12/2)

Slavery is not an [historical relic](#). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) more than 40 million people worldwide are [victims of modern slavery](#) subjected to forced labor, child labor, and/or human trafficking. Essentially, it refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. Learn about [child labor in Mica mines](#) and the link between [child sex trafficking and the child welfare system](#). Take action to [urge Congress to pass legislation](#) to empower financial institutions to fight human trafficking. [Solidarity reflection.](#)

### New Global Education Report

The 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report *Building Bridges, not Walls* finds that the number of

migrant and refugee school-age children around the world today has grown by 26% since 2000. While the right of these children to quality education is increasingly recognized on paper, it is challenged daily in classrooms and schoolyards and denied outright by a few governments. The Report highlights countries' achievements and shortcomings in ensuring the right of migrant and refugee children to benefit from quality education and reviews progress on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) - related education goals. [Full report, executive summary.](#)

### Human Rights Day (12/10)

This [Human Rights Day](#) we commemorate the [70th anniversary](#) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), “a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” The UDHR is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages. [Catholic social teaching](#) (CST) was influential in the development of the UDHR. Together they (CST and UDHR) provide a firm foundation for human rights advocacy throughout the world. Take the [human rights pledge](#), download this [Prayer for Human Rights Day](#).

### Solidarity with Asylum Seekers

The Trump administration released an executive order which would make it much harder for anyone to gain asylum in the United States - regardless of the violence



and persecution they are fleeing. It will endanger the lives of migrants fleeing untenable situations in their home countries in search of safety and asylum in the United States. Asylum rights are human rights. Blocking vulnerable people fleeing violence and persecution from accessing protection is a violation of international law and it is also immoral, cruel, and unnecessary. [Learn more, take action.](#)

### International Migrants Day (12/18)

Catholic social teaching maintains that human beings have the right to migrate to a “political community where [they hope they] can more fittingly provide a future for [themselves] and [their] dependents. Wherefore, as far as the common good permits, it is the duty of that state to accept such immigrants and to help to integrate them into itself as new members” (*Pacem in Terris*). On [International Migrants Day](#) let us express our deep gratitude for the gifts the presence of immigrants infuses into our communities, and renew our determination to work for justice for all. Please [join us in praying a novena](#) (12/16-12/24). Those in the U.S. can help migrants [by urging Congress to preserve lifesaving foreign aid](#) and [speaking up against proposed administration rules](#) that would penalize immigrants for accessing essential housing, health care, and anti-hunger programs. Canadians can [take action here](#). Consider making use of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s [Advent devotional Walking Toward Hope](#) as well as [this holiday survival guide](#) for talking to your friends and family about refugees and immigrants.

## Peace and Non-Violence

### U.S. to Withdraw from Nuclear Forces Treaty

President Trump recently announced his intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in the near future. Pax Christi USA noted their opposition to this action (in part) because the treaty is the best instrument for stopping Russia’s deployment and development of intermediate nuclear weapons and because withdrawal from the INF Treaty is likely to spark a renewed nuclear arms race. [Learn more, let your voice be heard.](#)

### National Vigil to #EndGunViolence

December 14, 2018 marks the [6-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy](#). By this December, over 600,000 Americans will be killed or injured by

guns since the Sandy Hook. In the U.S., we experience significantly more mass shootings than any other country. Studies show that more gun ownership is the only variable that explains the excessive gun violence in the United States. LCWR has reminded us that “this is not about protecting the second amendment. It is about protecting the most precious resource we have, the gift of life.” We urge you to join the gun violence prevention community in their collective effort to continue to shine a light on the devastating epidemic of gun violence in our nation until Congress takes meaningful action to reduce gun deaths and injuries in our nation. Consider [attending or hosting](#) a local vigil. Resource for [reflection/action](#), send a [postcard to Congress](#).

