



Shalom News North America

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



May 2020



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Integrity of Creation

Pollution and COVID-19

A [new study](#) has found that the COVID-19 mortality rate is directly correlated to the amount of air pollution in an area. This is likely because air pollution causes many of the underlying health issues that increase the severity of COVID-19. It reveals more than the [connection between environmental and public health](#), however—it also calls attention to the [racial and economic injustices](#) that have led to the concentration of many people of color in industrial areas with poor air quality, where the jobs available tend to be low-income.

For the Love of Creation

Even before the emergence of COVID-19, we knew that we were entering into a crucial decade for climate action. Recognizing and respecting our interconnectedness with all life is critical for ecological

and economic integrity, right relations with Indigenous peoples, and holistic recovery from the pandemic. *For the Love of Creation* aims to engage people and groups throughout Canada in a climate conversation centered on the themes of theological reflection, engagement, and advocacy. [Learn more.](#)

Laudato Si' Week

In commemoration of the five-year anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls us to reflect on this question: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who will come after us, to children who are growing up?" Motivated by this question, he invites us to participate in [Laudato Si' Week](#) from May 16-24. [Learn more.](#) How will you respond to this invitation? Check out these [SSND resources](#) as well as these additional resources for [engaging with Laudato Si'](#).

Human Dignity

Race and COVID-19

The Center for Disease Control has found that 33% of people hospitalized with COVID-19 are African American, yet only 13% of the U.S. population is African American. Among the many states reporting racial data on COVID-19, African Americans account for 34% of COVID deaths, according to research from John Hopkins University. The pace at which African Americans are dying has transformed this public health crisis into a lesson in racial and class inequality.

[Consider this reflection.](#)

Violence Against Women and COVID-19



Globally, 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence in the previous 12 months. Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of

COVID-19, violence against women and girls, and particularly domestic violence, has intensified. The number is likely to increase as security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions. Read this [issue brief](#), this [infographic](#), to learn more and be inspired to take action.

Refugees, Migrants, and COVID-19

While much has been done to help slow the spread and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, we know more must be done to ensure that everyone gets the support they need. Join the USCCB's Justice for Immigrants campaign in urging Congress to make sure the next COVID-19 relief package includes vital support for migrants, refugees, and others. [Learn more, take action.](#) Catholic organizations from Central America, Mexico, and the United States (including SSND) have signed on to a statement offering a "framework for action to protect migrants and refugees and help all of our communities survive this [coronavirus] crisis and rebuild with justice and equity." [Learn more, read statement.](#)

Farmworkers and COVID-19

Farmworkers are valuable and vulnerable. They all too often live in overcrowded housing units, travel to and from the fields in packed vans and buses, and frequently aren't provided with the proper personal protective gear to prevent infection. Join the [U.S. Catholic Bishops](#), the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and others in calling on local, state, and federal government officials to protect farmworkers from the COVID-19 pandemic. [Learn more/take action.](#)

Basic Education and COVID-19

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, the number of displaced persons in the world had reached historic highs, making access to education a frequent challenge. According to UNESCO, over 1.5 billion children (90% of enrolled learners), are currently out of school because of COVID-19. The importance of education increases in times of crisis, as schools are seen as the heart of the community, a symbol of a more hopeful future, and the source of education, meals, and refuge. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies states that “funding for education response should be given equal priority with water, food, shelter and health responses to ensure education provision...during emergencies.” [Learn more](#). Please consider taking steps to support educators locally and globally.



Global Poverty and COVID-19

As the corona virus crisis expands globally, the World Bank and IMF have [agreed to some initial debt relief measures](#). Six months of debt of the 25 poorest countries has been cancelled and 77 of the world’s poorest countries’ debt collection will stop for 6 months, interest free. All this is expected to bolster their health care system with \$25 billion. More than 70% of those who live in extreme poverty on our planet call these countries home. UN agencies have recently warned that COVID-19 could lead to famine for hundreds of millions of people. They have called for new debt relief processes and urged expanding debt relief and aid to more countries. [Learn more](#), [let your voice be heard](#). Also urge Congress to [take action](#).

Peace and Non-Violence

The Catholic Worker

During the month of May we celebrate the anniversary of The Catholic Worker. Inspired by the radical vision of the Gospel, Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin created a movement that brought poverty and injustice to visibility but also inspired a global peace movement. Please consider watching this 57-minute [new film about Dorothy Day](#) and the Catholic Worker movement.



Living Together in Peace (5/16)

The UN General-Assembly, in its [resolution 72/130](#), declared May 16th the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity. [Learn more](#). For more resources see: [Global Citizens](#) , [A Blended World](#) and [Unity in Diversity](#).

Global Military Spending

Global military expenditures are estimated to have been \$1.917 billion in 2019, according to the recently released [Global Military Expenditures Report](#). The five biggest spenders in 2019 were the U.S., China, India, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, which together accounted for 62% of all global military spending. U.S. military spending grew by 5.3 per cent to \$732 billion in 2019, accounting for 38% of all global military expenditures. A diverse group of think-tanks, non-profits, faith-based

organizations, and advocacy groups based in the U.S. [issued a statement](#) lamenting the exorbitant amount of money directed to military expenditures instead of other critical needs. [Video message](#). View [infographic on military vs health care spending](#). [Learn more/take action](#).

Catholic Social Thought and COVID-19

As we endure this crisis and prepare for the future, it is important to keep the principles of our faith at the heart of our responses. In the Catholic tradition, there are three interconnected principles that should guide us toward justice and right relationships: Life and Dignity, which emphasizes the inherent dignity of every person and provides the basis for all other values; solidarity, which is not “a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of others [but] a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good”; and subsidiarity, which affirms individual and communal responsibility, emphasizing that responses to needs should be determined at the lowest level of governance competent to handle the situation. For more on how these principles can be applied to the pandemic and the reopening of society, check out Georgetown University’s [Catholic Social Thought and the Coronavirus](#) and [Life and Dignity, Justice and Solidarity](#) webinar recordings.



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