



Shalom News North America

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

May 2017



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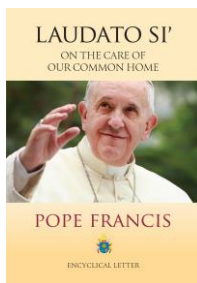
Integrity of Creation

Soil and Water Stewardship Week

Every spring, the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) promotes [Stewardship Week](#), running from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. The 3,000 conservation districts that make up NACD manage soil and water conservation programs in virtually every U.S. community. Stewardship Week is a great opportunity for individuals and groups to learn more about the importance of soil and water conservation – and make the connections between food and a healthy earth. This year's [planning guide](#) provides reflections on how "healthy soils are full of life – connecting food back to the soil" and includes passages from Scripture, music suggestions, and a litany for group prayer.

Laudato Si' One Year Later – May 24

Have you read it? How often? What touched your heart? What changed your attitude? Did #52 awaken a broader world view? Did #86 widen your sense of the presence of God in others? #207 – the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace? Or #229 – We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared



responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. Well worth another read!! Also check out [Artistic Reflection: Reflecting with *Laudato Si'*](#), [Creative Voice: The Awe-Inspired Economics of Pope Francis by David Kane](#), and [Reflection: CST in Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*](#).

Reflecting on *Laudato Si'* and Taking Action on Dakota Pipeline

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis raised the question: how have we done lately in caring for our home, planet Earth? This question was on the minds of many SSNDs of the Atlantic-Midwest Province when their recent Assembly speaker reminded sisters that since everything is interconnected, the impact of the Dakota Access Pipeline ultimately relates to their water supply and rivers as well. Inspired to act, a letter was drafted and delivered to Wells Fargo that expressed concern over their role in financing both the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines. In addition, the letter indicated that SSND does "not support our money being used to invest in projects that violate the rights of Indigenous people and further the threat of climate change. [We urge you to divest.](#)"

Human Dignity

Circle of Protection

Catholic Charities President and CEO, S. Donna Markham, OP, joined Bishop Dewane, the USCCB Domestic Social Development Chairman, in a [letter](#) to members of Congress urging them to "draw a 'circle of protection' around the many programs that serve the poor and those on the peripheries. It is imperative that you oppose proposed damaging cuts or structural changes to domestic anti-poverty programs that would undermine assistance to people in need." Pope Francis reminds us, "among our tasks as witnesses to the love of Christ is that of giving a voice to the cry of the poor, so that they are not abandoned to the laws of an economy that seems at times to treat people as mere consumers." [Learn more, let your voice be heard.](#)



One Percent Does a World of Good

Join *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* in calling on our legislators to oppose the Administration's proposed cuts to poverty-focused international assistance. It's

only 1% of our nation's budget, yet it saves millions of lives. Forced displacement is at an all-time high of more than 65 million people worldwide. We need increased support for humanitarian assistance, not a reduction in spending. Moreover, long-term development helps to reduce the root causes of migration such as violence, poverty and climate change. [Learn more/take action.](#)

Pope Francis' Surprise TED Talk

Pope Francis made a surprise video address to a recent TED Conference, calling on the powerful to exhibit more solidarity, humility and tenderness toward others. During his 18-minute talk, the Pope wove together Bible passages (including the parable of the Good Samaritan) and reflections on his own life to challenge influential people to help those in need, and turn away from a "culture of waste" that puts products ahead of people. "How wonderful would it be if solidarity — this beautiful and, at times, inconvenient word, were not simply reduced to social work, and

became, instead, the default." [Video with English translation.](#)

Clothing Brands Should Go Transparent

There's an encouraging trend among some global apparel companies to adopt supply chain transparency measures. It starts with these companies publishing the names, addresses, and other important information about the factories manufacturing their branded products. This is a powerful tool for promoting garment worker safety and rights. Join the effort to help protect garment workers by calling on leading corporations to sign the transparency pledge. [Learn more/take action.](#)

World Fair Trade Day – May 13

World Fair Trade Day gives each of us the opportunity to reflect on the power we have as consumers to effect the lives of those who work in the supply chains of the products we purchase. Founded on [principles](#) designed to fight against poverty, exploitation, and climate change, Fair Trade supports farmers and craftspeople in developing countries who are economically and socially marginalized and helps create greater equity in the international trading system. It is our split second decisions we make in the stores that affect people throughout the world. Take time to view this [video](#) and ask yourself, how you can be an "agent for change" in the life of others around the world.



Human Trafficking's Toll on Homeless Youth

A new study has found that nearly one-fifth of homeless youth in the U.S. and Canada are victims of human trafficking. Of 911 homeless young adults interviewed between February 2014 and March 2017, about 20 percent reported being trafficked for sex, labor or both. The majority, 15 percent, were trafficked for sex, 7.4 percent were trafficked for labor, and 3 percent were trafficked for both. The findings, based on the largest-ever combined sample of homeless youth in the U.S. and Canada, are the result of a joint project of the University of Pennsylvania and Loyola University New Orleans. [Learn more, review the study.](#)

National Missing Children's Day

National Missing Children's Day is designed to highlight the problem of child abduction. It falls on May 25, the date in 1979 that six-year-old New Yorker Ethan Patz disappeared on his way to school. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children annually holds events on and around National Missing Children's Day to raise awareness of the threat of child abduction, inform families about ways to keep their children safe and support victims' families. The center's initiative "Take 25" encourages parents, guardians and educators to take 25 minutes to talk to children about safety. [Learn more, take action.](#)

Peace and Non-Violence

The Challenge of Peace and the Mother of all Bombs

On May 3, we commemorate the 34th anniversary of [The Challenge of Peace](#), a pastoral letter by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Its basic message, that "the whole world must summon the moral courage to say no to weapons of mass destruction, no to an arms race which robs the poor and vulnerable", stands in stark contrast to the decision to drop "[the mother of all bombs](#)" on a network of fortified tunnels used by ISIS in Afghanistan. Military officials said that the 21,600 pound bomb, capable of destroying an area equivalent to nine city blocks, was "the right weapon against the right target." Clearly the challenge of peace is still before us.

Instruments of Reconciliation – Encourage Your Bishop to Support Active Nonviolence

[Instruments of Reconciliation](#) is a new campaign to amplify active nonviolence in the Catholic Church. Catholics are asked to choose one of three dates during May to share their hope for greater teaching and commitment to active nonviolence with their bishop and to invite him to affirm active nonviolence as the "nucleus of the Christian revolution"



by 1) sharing and speaking about Pope Francis' [World Day of Peace message](#) broadly within their diocese, seminaries, and other ministries and 2) concretely committing to an initiative to scale-up practices of active nonviolence. As Pope Benedict wrote, "For Christians, nonviolence is not merely tactical behavior but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is so convinced of God's love and power that he or she is not afraid to tackle evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. Love of one's enemy constitutes the nucleus of the 'Christian revolution.'" [Learn more](#), join in this effort – [here is a sample letter](#), then [report your action](#).

Suffering in South Sudan (Shalom International)

We are asking special prayers for the people of South Sudan and for our Sisters Barbara Paleczny and Peg Malone who are currently working there with Solidarity with South Sudan. The situation is critical as they struggle with famine in addition to the violence that has been increasing. One story that speaks to the famine is [here](#).

