

# Shalom News North America



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

## In This Issue

Integral Ecology

Wetlands

Methane Rule

Black History Month

Human Trafficking

Cars and Forced Labor

Immigration

Women & Girls in Science

SDG 4 Education

Interfaith Harmony

Gun Violence

Doomsday Clock

First Friday Prayer Vigil

Nonviolence

**February 2023**

Dear Friend,

In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis emphasizes that the social and ecological challenges of our day are interrelated (integral ecology). As you read through this newsletter, and the social and ecological concerns it highlights, consider how these concerns are related to the [Laudato Si Goals](#) and SSND becoming a [Laudato Si Congregation](#).



[School Sisters of Notre Dame](#)

Shalom North America Contacts

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## Integrity of Creation

### [Integral Ecology](#)

The School Sisters of Notre Dame are a [Laudato Si' community](#). This leads us to become more and more at home with integrating our very lives and relationships as

peoples who are one with all creation. Integral Ecology takes us to the heart of our charism, to be one, to love and to let God be love for our Earth community. It is prophetic, denouncing evils of environmental destruction and leading us to live what we desire and dream. [Click here](#) to download and read more of the SSND International Solidarity Reflection *Integral Ecology*.

## Integrity of Creation



### World Wetlands Day (2/2)

The aim of World Wetlands Day is to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and planet. This year's theme is "It's time for wetland restoration." Nearly 90% of the world's wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing wetlands three times faster than forests. Yet, wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies, and more. It is urgent that we raise national and global awareness about wetlands in order to reverse their rapid loss and encourage actions to conserve and restore them. [Learn more](#). Canadians can use [this link](#) to urge Parliament and Premier Doug Ford to take action.



## Integrity of Creation

### Urge EPA to Strengthen the Methane Rule

In November 2022, U.S. President Biden and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed an [updated rule](#) to cut methane and other harmful pollutants from oil and gas operations across the country. [Learn more](#). Now through February 13, there is a public comment period which allows people and faith communities the opportunity to voice their support for cutting methane and to urge EPA to finalize and implement the rule quickly. Interfaith Power and Light has developed an easy-to-use tool for sending comments. Please make it your own by editing the text in the comment box. [Click here to leave your comment](#)

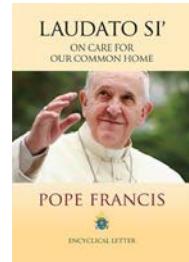




## Integrity of Creation

### Climate Crisis: Finding Hope through a Trinitarian View of Creation

People are increasingly worried about their future, indeed, the future of all life on Earth. Why should we be concerned? How can we take meaningful action? Contemplative ecology, based on Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, offers a way to rediscover the mystery of the Trinity in Creation and become agents of hope-filled change. Join Fr. John McCarthy, SJ, a researcher with advanced degrees in Theology and a PhD in Boreal Forest Ecology, as he introduces this concept in a two-part webinar series on Feb 22 and March 1 at 7 pm (Eastern). Fr. McCarthy will explore how our faith can inform our relationship with the natural world and suggest ways to rebuild, restore, and renew our planet. [Learn more/register here.](#)



## Human Dignity



### Black History Month

February is Black History Month in both the USA and Canada. The theme for 2023 in the USA is "Black Resistance" as chosen by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History ([ASALH](#)). African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression and discrimination in many ways. The "Father of Black History," [Carter G Woodson](#) (1875-1950), the son of former slaves, resisted suppression when he overcame obstacles to obtain a good education and a PhD in history from Harvard University. He encouraged similar resistance in others when in 1926 he promoted the first Black History Week in the USA, which later became Black History Month in 1970. [Click here](#) to download a Black History Month Calendar that profiles 28 individuals including former SSND Shawnee Daniels-Sykes. (*Thank you Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood for assembling and sharing this resource!*)

The 2023 theme in Canada is "Ours to Tell." The [announcement](#) was made on January 21, the day on which Canadians commemorate the life and legacy of Lincoln MacCauley Alexander, the first Black Canadian to be a Member of Parliament, a Cabinet minister and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. An advocate for racial equality, he believed in the power of education as an agent of social change. Read more about his life [here](#). In February, Canadians will recognize the many contributions of Black Canadians, like Lincoln Alexander. [Learn more.](#)

## Human Trafficking Prayer and Awareness

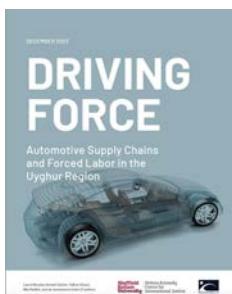
February 8 is the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese Sister who experienced and overcame human trafficking. For this reason, the Unions of Superiors and Superiors General of Religious Institutes chose to set it apart as the Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. This year's theme is ["Journeying in dignity"](#). Join the global Catholic community in prayer on February 8 using [this prayer card](#) or [this prayer service](#). You can [click here](#) to register for the (2/7) webinar *St. Josephine Bakhita - A Saint for Victims and Survivors of Human Trafficking*.



National Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada will be observed on February 22. In 2021, federal Members of Parliament unanimously agreed on the motion to adopt the day, coinciding with the 2007 declaration to condemn all forms of human trafficking and slavery. Learn more [here](#).



## Human Dignity



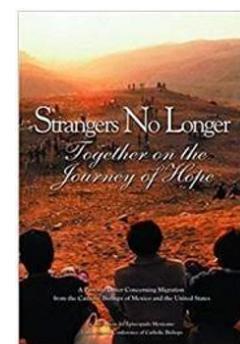
### Is Your Car Driving Uyghur Forced Labor?

If your car was manufactured after 2018, it was made with Uyghur forced labor. The [Driving Force: Automotive Supply Chains and Forced Labor in the Uyghur Region](#) report found that every single part in your car (there are over 30,000) is at risk of being made with Uyghur forced labor. Join the Investor Alliance for Human Rights on February 14 at 11 am (Eastern) for a webinar that will discuss how the auto industry has become reliant on Uyghur forced labor and what can be done to reverse this reliance. [Click here](#) to learn more/register.

## Human Dignity

### Immigration Pastoral Issued 20 Years Ago

In 2003, the bishops of the United States and Mexico issued a joint pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, that presented a Catholic framework for responding to the ongoing migration phenomenon in their respective countries. The pastoral letter addressed the need to manage migration between the two countries more humanely and emphasized the importance of providing pastoral care to newcomers. The letter also underscored a



part of the Church's identity that is frequently affirmed by Pope Francis: we are a Church that transcends borders, in which nobody is seen as disposable, and all are welcome.

Twenty years after its publication, the need for a systemic reform of the U.S. immigration system has only become more apparent. To that end, the bishops are inviting Catholics and all people of good will to take time this year to (re)read and reflect on [Strangers No Longer](#). A summary of the pastoral letter and its primary themes is available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). How are you/we called to respond?

## Human Dignity

### Women & Girls in Science Day (2/11)

The aim of the [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#) (2/11) is to accelerate gender equity and improve access to and participation in science for women and girls. This year, the focus is on the role of women and girls and science in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely [SDG 6](#) (clean water & sanitation), [SDG 7](#) (affordable & clean energy), [SDG 9](#) (industry, innovation, & infrastructure), [SDG 11](#) (sustainable cities & communities) and [SDG 17](#) (means of implementation). Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution not only to economic development of the world, but to progress across all the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well. [Learn more](#).



## Human Dignity



### SDG 4 (Quality Education) Scorecard

The focus of Sustainable Development Goal 4 is quality education - to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The Education 2030 Framework for Action called on countries to set intermediate benchmarks for SDG 4 indicators. In an inclusive approach, countries were assisted in setting values for seven SDG 4 benchmark indicators on pre-primary education, school attendance, completion and learning, trained teachers, gender equity and public expenditure during the first and the second phases of the process of setting benchmark values. On January 24, the first online, interactive SDG 4 Scorecard was released to mark the International Day of Education. The Scorecard assesses how likely it is that

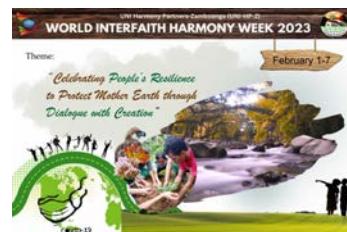
countries will achieve their benchmarks by 2025 and 2030. [Click here](#) to view interactive SDG 4 Scorecard.

## Peace & Nonviolence

### Interfaith Harmony Week (2/1 - 2/7)

This year's theme for the World Interfaith Harmony Week is *Celebrating People's Resilience to Protect Mother Earth through Dialogue and Creation*.

Interfaith Harmony Week was established by the UN General Assembly to point out that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace. [Click here](#) to learn more. [Click here](#) to read about Pope Francis' interreligious call for "dialogue at all levels" to seek solutions for repairing the broken relationship between humanity and nature.



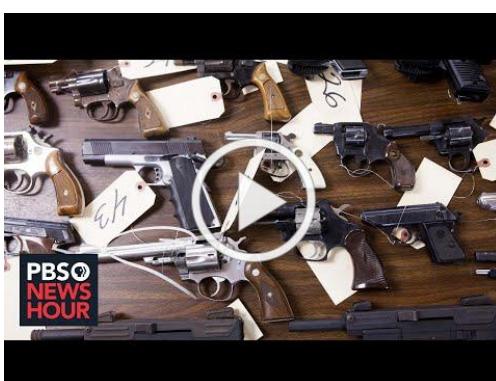
## Peace & Nonviolence



### Gun Violence Survivors Week (2/1 - 2/7)

Since the beginning of the new year, there have been more than 50 mass shootings in the United States according to the [Gun Violence Archive](#). As we commemorate National Gun Violence Survivors

Week (Feb 1-7), let us take stock of the terrible human toll of America's gun violence crisis and recommit ourselves to supporting survivors with action. Consider joining one of [three virtual community conversations](#) on Zoom, [read and share stories](#) about those impacted by gun violence, or urge Congress to [take action](#). Do you know why National Gun Violence Survivors Week is observed in the first week of February? Because by this point in the year the United States will have experienced more gun deaths than their peer countries will experience in the entire calendar year. America's gun death rate is 13 times greater than that of its peer countries. [Learn more](#).



## Peace and Nonviolence



### Doomsday Clock at 90 Seconds to Midnight

The world is closer to catastrophe than ever: the Doomsday Clock, the metaphorical measure of challenges to humanity, has been set to 90 seconds before midnight. The science and security board of the

Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists said the move — the closest to widespread calamity humanity has ever been judged to be "largely, though not exclusively" due to the war in Ukraine. The new Clock time was also influenced by

continuing threats posed by the climate crisis and the breakdown of global norms and institutions needed to mitigate risks associated with advancing technologies and biological threats such as COVID-19.

Of the new update, Mary Robinson, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, said: "The Doomsday Clock is sounding an alarm for the whole of humanity. We are on the brink of a precipice. But our leaders are not acting at sufficient speed or scale to secure a peaceful and livable planet. From cutting carbon emissions to strengthening arms control treaties and investing in pandemic preparedness, we know what needs to be done. The science is clear, but the political will is lacking." [Learn more.](#)



## Peace and Nonviolence

### Join Eileen Reilly SSND for the First Friday Prayer Vigil

On the First Friday of each month, Catholic Mobilizing Network holds a Virtual Prayer Vigil to lament upcoming executions and bear witness to the inviolable dignity of all human life. These virtual spaces offer a place to pray together as a faith community in response to the injustice of the death penalty. This month's First Friday Prayer Vigil will be led by Eileen Reilly SSND on February 3 at 1 pm (Central). [Click here](#) to register.



## Peace and Nonviolence



### Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Resources

A few months back, Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the Casa Esther Catholic Worker Community in Wisconsin, organized a rich and inspiring five-part series on nonviolence. Topics included: The Spirituality and Role of Nonviolence, Exploring the Power of Nonviolence, the Christian Foundations of Nonviolence, Embracing Nonviolence, and Transforming the Church by Practicing Nonviolence. Good news! The recordings of these wonderful sessions are now available to all of us, along with study guides, reflection questions, and other curricular resources – all for free. [Click here](#) to review and download these fabulous and inspiring resources.

## Quick Links

[Education for Justice - SSND](#)  
[Link/Password](#)

[SSND Action Alerts](#)

[SSND International Solidarity](#)  
[Reflections](#)

[Catholic Sisters Against Human](#)  
[Trafficking](#)

[Justice for Immigrants](#)

[Catholic Climate Covenant](#)

[Exploring Intersections - Racism,](#)  
[Migration, and Climate](#)

[Global Catholic Climate Movement](#)

[Interfaith Center on Corporate](#)  
[Responsibility](#)

[SSND Shalom International Network](#)

[SSND at the UN](#)

[USCCB Action Center](#)

**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 - Barb Paleczny, Colleen Kammer, Ethel Howley, Pat Stortz, and Tim Dewane. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcomed. Email us at [tdewane@ssndcp.org](mailto:tdewane@ssndcp.org).

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