



## Shalom News North America

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



December 2019



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### Integrity of Creation

#### Mother Earth and Resource Extraction

On November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, KAIROS launched the first phase of *Mother Earth and Resource Extraction: Women Defending Land and Water* – a digital resource hub developed for and in consultation with women land and water defenders at the forefront of efforts to protect the environment in Canada and across the globe. [Learn more.](#)



#### Climate Strikes (11/29)

On November 29, people around the world will stand up for climate justice and demand transformative action to address the climate crisis. This is the latest moment in the climate strikes started by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg. This mobilization has a target—the UN climate talks that begin just three days later. November 29 is also the 40th anniversary of St. Francis being named the patron saint of ecology. Whether it's a public prayer or a moment of silence in your school or workplace, your action matters. [Learn more/take action.](#)

#### COP25 UN Climate Conference

The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP25, will be held December 2-13 in Madrid, Spain. These annual climate change conferences assess progress in dealing with climate change, and since 1990s, establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Given the increasing urgency of these issues, let us keep all involved in our prayers. [Learn more.](#)

#### Oppose U.S. Withdrawal from Paris Agreement

On November 4, the Trump Administration began the formal process to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement. Climate change is one of the principal challenges of our time and U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement is a critical step in the wrong direction. LCWR, the U.S. Bishops, and countless others strongly oppose this withdrawal. Please urge Washington to stand up for life and oppose U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement. [Learn more/take action.](#)

### Human Dignity

#### Challenging Safe Third Party Agreement

The Canadian Council of Churches, the Canadian Council for Refugees, and Amnesty International, alongside with impacted individuals have taken to court to challenge the designation of the U.S. as a safe third country for refugees. Under the Safe Third Country Agreement, refugee seekers who crossed the border to Canada through the US are denied access to refugee protection and are sent back to the US subjecting them to different levels of persecution, including potential detention and deportation due to its flawed and weak refugee protection system. Plaintiffs argue that the Safe Third Party Agreement violates Canadian law, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. [Learn more.](#)



#### Welcoming Strangers

December holds many opportunities to honor migrants and reflect on our commitment to “welcoming strangers.” SSND has developed a prayer service honoring the [Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe \(Dec.](#)

[12\)](#). We also have created a [Novena celebrating Las Posadas](#), a Mexican religious tradition celebrated Dec. 16-24 that commemorates Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem and their struggle to find refuge there. Join us in praying for immigrants and refugees, and for our hearts to be opened to receiving the grace offered to us by their presence.

#### Wealth Test for Immigrants

The Trump Administration has published a proposed new rule that would drastically raise the costs of vital immigration benefits while simultaneously slashing the availability of fee waivers for low-income and vulnerable immigrants. Among the proposals is a new \$50 fee to seek asylum. If implemented, the U.S. would become only the fourth nation in the world to charge people who are fleeing for their lives, seeking asylum. The proposed rule would also increase application fees for naturalization, lawful permanent residency, DACA, and several other applications. It would also transfer \$207 million to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for enforcement purposes. [Learn more/take action.](#)

## National Migration Week 2020

“Promoting a Church and a World for All” is the theme for National Migration Week in the U.S. which will be celebrated January 5-11, 2020. It is a call to stand in solidarity with and care for those who are excluded and marginalized, including migrants, DACA and TPS holders, refugees, and those seeking asylum. The USCCB has produced a toolkit of resources to promote participation in National Migration Week – [download it for free here](#).

## Important New Human Trafficking Resources

The International Labor Organization has partnered with UNICEF, IOM, and OECD to produce the landmark report [Ending Child Labour, Forced Labour and Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains](#). You can find the [executive summary here](#). Shared Hope International, has released its ninth annual Protected

Innocence Challenge Report. Published as report cards for each state, the 2019 report reveals continued improvement in the bipartisan nationwide effort to protect juvenile sex trafficking survivors and to hold buyers and traffickers accountable. [Learn more, take action](#).

## The Online Trafficking of Child Sexual Abuse

In 1998, there were over 3,000 reports of child sexual abuse imagery. Just over a decade later, yearly reports soared past 100,000. In 2014, that number surpassed 1 million for the first time. Last year, there were 18.4 million, more than one-third of the total ever reported. Those reports included over 45 million images and videos flagged as child sexual abuse. Click [here](#) to read the NYT special report about what the United States Government has not been doing about it.

## Peace and Non-Violence

### Preventing Genocide, Remembering Victims

In 2015, the UN General Assembly established December 9 as a day to remember the victims of genocide and to prevent such crimes from happening again. UN Secretary-General António Guterres says, “At a time of rising anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry and other forms of hatred, racism and xenophobia, let us reaffirm our commitment to upholding the equality and dignity of all.” [Learn more](#).

### Human Rights Day (12/10)

On December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Borrowing from Catholic Social Teaching principles, the Declaration sets out a broad range of fundamental rights and freedoms for all. It is [the most translated document](#) around the globe – available in over 500 languages. While it is not a binding document, it has inspired over 60 human rights instruments that today make a common standard of human rights. How will you commemorate [Human Rights Day](#)?

### End Gun Violence

This December, [people around the country](#) will gather to honor and remember those who have lost their lives to gun violence. It’s important for us as a broader faith community to hold these lives in the light and show solidarity in the face of persistent gun violence. By engaging in the issue at our houses of worship and holding vigils we can help keep this issue front of mind and not become numb to this violence or

accept it as a new normal. Check out this [toolkit of resources](#), and consider [urging Congress to take action](#).

### Capital Punishment

This summer, U.S. President Trump ordered Attorney General William Barr to set five federal execution dates. Due to [various court orders](#), all five have been stayed until further notice. These stays should be considered temporary, as the Justice Department may seek to appeal the decision. The Catholic Church does not support the use of capital punishment – [read why](#). There hasn’t been a federal execution in 16 years – please consider [taking action](#) to help keep it that way.

### Nuclear Weapons

“In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of evermore destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven,” Pope Francis said while visiting Nagasaki on Sunday (11/24). “We must never grow weary of working to support the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, including the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons,” Francis stated. “The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral,” said Pope Francis. “We will be judged on this.” Earlier this fall, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement condemning nuclear weapons and urging Canada to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. [Learn more](#).



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