

Shalom News North America



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

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February 2024

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 month's 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](#).



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Shalom North America Contacts

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God's Creation Needs You

The “God’s Creation Needs You!” video series tells the stories of six Catholic communities across the United States caring for our common home through climate action, advocacy, farming, community organizing, service to others, solar energy, education, prayer, and a focus on environmental justice. All the videos are around three to five minutes long and can be shared individually as well as collectively. [Click here](#) to view the videos.



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 “Wetlands and Human Wellbeing.” The theme spotlights how all aspects of human wellbeing are tied to the health of the world’s wetlands and underscores the critical need for human stewardship. Nearly 90% of the world’s wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s, and we are losing them three times faster than forests. Learn more and explore a wide array of resources for awareness building and action [here](#).



Integrity of Creation

Urge Canada to Invest in Social & Ecological Justice

In a time of war and climate crisis, women peacebuilders and environmental stewards need our support more than ever. They are laying the groundwork for sustainable peace and climate adaptation. Unfortunately, Canada cut its international assistance by 15% in 2023, bringing Canada’s percentage allocation of gross national income to less than half that of the international standard of 0.7%. As the Canadian government [consults Canadians on Budget 2024](#), now is the



time to let your voice be heard and urge support for women peacebuilders and environmental stewards via an increase in Canada's international assistance. [Click here](#) to learn more and take action.

Integrity of Creation



World Pulses Day (2/10)

Celebrate pulses! Pulses include dried beans, lentils, and peas. From hummus to baked navy beans to Indian dal, pulses are an important part of our diets and of sustainable food production. High in protein and soluble fiber, low in fat, they are good for us; their nitrogen-fixing properties can improve soil fertility; they help farmers maintain household food security and economic stability. [Learn more.](#)



Integrity of Creation

SSND and Laudato Si' Lenten Series

In the spirit of *Laudato Si'*, experience how diverse people in the United States – Indigenous, African American, Latino, refugees – interact with and are shaped by the land, both historically and presently. What does a man climbing a tree reveal about the impacts of racism? How is our relationship with nature both enriching and a cause for concern? The Lenten series will utilize the PBS program, *America Outdoors with Baratunde Thurston*. [Click here to watch a trailer of the PBS series](#) Dates are Mondays at 7 pm ET (6 pm CT), February 25 – March 26. RSVP to Sister Sharon Wall, swall@amssnd.org.



Integrity of Creation

Consider a Carbon Fast for Lent

Have you considered a carbon fast for Lent? It's a great way to take small, medium, or large steps to cut your carbon footprint and, hopefully, form habits that will last a lifetime. Together, we will be challenged to live more lightly on the earth, reducing our impact on the natural world and our global neighbors. Those who sign-up will receive an email each week of Lent featuring a different activity or challenge. [Click here](#) to learn more and sign-up to participate.



Integrity of Creation

COP28: Transformational Multilateralism?

Isn't it amazing to have the Office of Religious

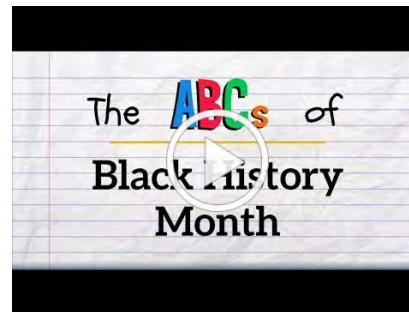


Congregations for Integral Ecology (Canada), the Canadian Religious Conference, and the International Union of Superiors General (Rome) collaborating on a [presentation and dialogue about COP28](#) on February 21 at 11 am ET (10 am CT)? The session will address such topics as: How do the international negotiations to address climate change work? Are they focused on concrete and cohesive policies to protect our Common Home? What's next and how can religious congregations be a part of the push for integral ecology? No registration is required to participate in this webinar. On February 21, use this link: <https://crc-canada.org.zoom.us/j/87280661554>.

Human Dignity

February is Black History Month

Black History Month is nationally recognized in February as a month dedicated to exploring the stories and accomplishments of African Americans throughout U.S. history in order to celebrate their rich cultural heritage, triumphs, and adversities that are an indelible part of our country's history. Black History Month began as a week back in 1926, thanks to the efforts of one man: Carter G. Woodson. A scholar and teacher, Woodson was the second Black American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard among many other academic achievements. Woodson believed that Black history was largely ignored in education, saying that African American contributions were overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history textbooks and the teachers who use them. He aimed to change that. [Learn more](#). You can find a listing of national and local Black History Month events [here](#).



Human Dignity



SSND *Called to Action* - Racial Justice

Season 4 of the SSND Podcast *Called to Action* focuses on the issue of racial justice. In Episode One, Sister Barbara Pfarr highlights three paths for sustained engagement and accountability – individual, communal, and systemic. Episode Two features Sister Jan Berberich discussing Catholic Social Teaching and racial justice, drawing upon her 35 years of teaching at Notre Dame High School in St. Louis. [Learn more and listen here](#).

Human Dignity

Human Rights and Managing the Border

The Biden administration and members of Congress

are reportedly negotiating a deal to pass funding for Ukraine and Israel in exchange for extreme changes to U.S. immigration and asylum systems. While these policies would certainly impact migrants who arrive at the US border, it is unclear whether they would deter people from making the journey in the first place. [Click here](#) to learn more about these policy proposals and to read about an alternative approach that would be more humane and likely more effective over the long-term.



Let us urge the Biden administration and Congress to support foreign aid and border policies that promote human life and dignity, advance the common good, and help ensure security for all – without sacrificing vital humanitarian protections. [Click here](#) to take action. Read [this article](#) to learn how our S. Judy Bourg and others are providing care to those at the border.

Human Dignity



Commission for Social Development

The 62nd session of Commission for Social Development (CSocD62) will take place at the United Nations in New York, February 5 – 14. Its purpose is to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication. Learn more [here](#). NGOs can address Member States and UN Commissions through written statements, such as [this Civil Society Declaration 2024](#) prepared by the NGO Committee on Social Development. Our congregation has endorsed this declaration. If you would like to do so as an individual – [click here](#). The declaration is open for individual and organizational signatures/endorsements until February 2.

Human Dignity



Human Trafficking and St. Josephine Bakhita

In February, two days focus on human trafficking: February 8, which is both the Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita and the 10th International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking; and February 22, Human Trafficking Awareness Day in Canada. Click here for [prayer resources](#). A livestreamed

interfaith prayer service will take place on the evening of February 8th at 7 PM Eastern. [Click here](#) to register for the prayer service livestream.

In June 2023, Canadian artist Timothy P. Schmalz's sculpture ["Let the Oppressed Go Free"](#), which depicts St. Josephine Bakhita freeing human trafficking victims, was installed at the Church of St. Francis in Schio, Italy, the town where St. Bakhita lived and died. A replica is at Regis College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Click the video links below to learn more.



Peace and Nonviolence

World Interfaith Harmony Week

In 2010, the UN General Assembly designated the first week of February as Interfaith Harmony Week. Mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace. Interfaith Harmony Week encourages peaceful coexistence among practitioners of various religious beliefs in an age of increasing political and social differences. We are reminded that despite our differences, we are connected by acts of love and devotion. Common values of love, faith, and kindness easily outweigh our differences. [Learn more.](#)



Peace and Nonviolence



Israel/Gaza

The International Court of Justice has issued a ruling urging Israel to take action to protect civilian life in Gaza. Judges at the International Court of Justice stopped short of ordering Israel to suspend its military campaign in Gaza, but they issued a series of provisional measures instructing Israel to prevent the incitement of genocide and to ease the humanitarian plight of Gazans. The ruling also underscores the urgent need for the world to engage in peaceful resolution and not turn a blind eye to the ongoing suffering in the region. [Learn more.](#)

On January 17, Cardinal Robert McElroy and Archbishop John Wester, issued [this statement](#) joining a growing chorus of religious leaders calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Those in the U.S. can use our [SSND Voter Voice tool](#) to urge President Biden and members of Congress to do all they can to stop the bloodshed and move all involved to a just and lasting peace.

Peace and Nonviolence

Justice and Mercy Poetry Contest

Catholic Mobilizing Network is inviting young people, ages 18-30, to write poems on the injustice of the death penalty through the lens of their faith. This contest opens February 1 and serves not only as a way to encourage our



nation's future leaders to harness the power of their voice to advocate against this inhumane system, but also an opportunity to make way for Jesus' reconciling vision of love, forgiveness, and mercy. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Peace and Nonviolence



Nuns Against Gun Violence Lenten Fast

The continuous toll of death, grief and trauma on individuals, families, and communities compel us to change our society to protect life. Nuns Against Gun Violence [invite you](#) to participate in a fast against gun violence during Lent. The fast will be a prayer to God and an opportunity to publicly appeal to our civic communities for action to reduce gun violence. To communicate your support for this effort, download and complete [this form](#) or complete the form online [here](#). Check out the Nuns Against Gun Violence [website](#) in the coming days for prayer resources and information about a Zoom community service on Ash Wednesday, February 14 at 1pm ET/Noon CT.

Peace and Nonviolence

Doomsday Clock 2024

Why is the Doomsday Clock, the metaphorical measure of challenges to humanity, still set at 90 seconds to midnight? According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "Humanity continues to face an unprecedented level of danger. . . . Leaders and citizens around the world should take this statement as a stark warning and respond urgently, as if today were the most dangerous moment in modern history. Because it may well be." [Click here](#) to read more.



Peace and Nonviolence



SSND Virtual Prayer Room for Peace

"Where there is peace, there is God; where God, there is every good." – Blessed M. Theresa Gerhardinger.

Every Friday, sisters, associates, and friends can enter a peaceful space to unite for the needs of the world. We invite all to enter the room, both for our own restoration and for the power of our united prayer. **The Friday prayer room is open 10 am – 10 pm Eastern (9 am – 9 pm Central).** Use [this link](#) to enter the virtual prayer space. You can also enter the prayer space using the link found on the [SSND.org](#) and the [SSND Atlantic-Midwest](#) websites.

Quick Links

[Laudato Si' Action Platform](#)

[SSND Laudato Si' Reflections](#)

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

[SSND Podcast - *Called to Action*](#)

[SSND Action Alerts](#)

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

[SSND International Solidarity Reflections](#)

[Laudato Si' Movement](#)

[Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#)

[Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility](#)

[Justice for Immigrants](#)

[SSND Shalom International Network](#)

[Catholic Climate Covenant](#)

[SSND at the UN](#)

[Catholic Mobilizing Network](#)

[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 SSND, Colleen Kammer, Ethel Howley SSND, Pat Stortz, and Tim Dewane. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcomed. Email us at tdewane@ssndcp.org.

Please only print this e-publication if necessary.

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