



# Shalom News North America

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



April 2017



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## Integrity of Creation

### Holy Week and Easter

As we approach one of the most sacred series of events in the Christian church, we offer two resources for your reflection – [The Crucified Christ in our Midst](#), a video produced by Education for Justice, and [The Way of the Cross](#) led by Pope Francis with meditations by Lebanese young people. May Easter remind us of the ongoing presence of Jesus in our world today through all efforts for justice, peace and restoring of right relationship with all creation.

### Executive Order Puts Achieving Climate Pledge in Jeopardy

President Trump has rolled back key Obama-era greenhouse gas regulations – drawing [rebuttal from several Catholic groups](#) and environmentalists throughout the country. The order itself did not address the Paris climate accord, but if fully enacted, puts achieving the U.S. pledge in serious doubt. See [these graphic images](#) illustrating this concern. Recognizing that (as Pope Francis reminds us) climate change is “one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day,” we urge you to [contact your legislators](#) to express your concerns with President Trump's executive order and to urge them to take leadership on climate action



and block any proposals to cut the budgets for the EPA and climate science research. If you are represented by a Republican in the House of Representatives, consider [inviting him/her](#) to join the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus (or thank those who are already members).

### April 22 is Earth Day

Our planet is truly a magnificent place. The Earth is an incredibly complex and vibrant ecosystem, where living organisms interact with each other and their environment to create the ideal conditions for life. We have it all: it's warm but not too warm, lots of water but

again, not too much. It's perfect. And it's in trouble. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis warns “The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.” How can we preserve earth's integrity for future generations? Here's

what you can do: [Re-read and reflect](#) on *Laudato Si'*, ) explore more deeply Pope Francis' call to “show Mercy to our Common Home” by participating in the Global Catholic Climate Movement's [#Mercy2Earth campaign](#), [pray](#), take [these simple steps](#). You can also consider joining in the [People's Climate March](#) (or one of the [local sister marches](#)). Earth Day [resources](#).

## Human Dignity

### Famine Crisis

The world's largest humanitarian crisis in 70 years has been declared in three African countries on the brink of famine, just as President Donald Trump proposes to [cut foreign aid](#) by almost a third. A cut like this would be devastating to the world's poorest. 106 faith leaders recently united to send a letter to congressional leaders urging “support for the International Affairs Budget that every day brings hope to poor, hungry, vulnerable and displaced men, women and children around the world.” With so many global conflicts, countries on the brink of famine, and a worldwide refugee crisis in full bloom, [now is not the time to cut foreign aid](#). International aid makes up less than 1% of the federal budget — yet it provides lifesaving assistance to tens of millions of people in need. Please [write](#) or call (1-888-869-8931) your members of Congress and urge them not to cut foreign aid.



### Catholic Leaders Appeal for Support of Refugees

Over 4,000 priests, religious brothers and sisters (including many SSNDs) and deacons recently shared a statement with President Trump and other political leaders urging support for refugees, specifically calling upon “our elected officials to ensure that refugees of all

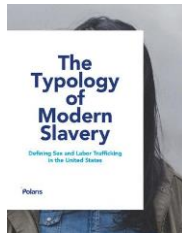
ethnic and religious backgrounds have equal access to the U.S. resettlement program.” The statement explained that, “Our Catholic community will continue to stand with refugees and other marginalized migrant populations. We will continue to advocate for the recognition and protection of the human dignity of all. And we will recommit to work with our government in order to ensure that our resettlement program is both secure and accessible to the vulnerable refugees in need of our compassion, welcome, and support.” Read the full statement [here](#). The Trump Administration's actions have led to a number of asylum seekers to journey north to Canada. [Learn more](#) about this situation and what Canadians think of it.

## Help Extend Hope for Immigrants and Refugees

In his 2016 Easter Message, Pope Francis invited us “not to forget those men and women seeking a better future, an ever more numerous throng of migrants and refugees – including many children – fleeing from war, hunger, poverty and social injustice.” In these uncertain times for immigrants and refugees in our communities, we have both the end of Lent and the rebirth of hope that Easter brings which we can use to inspire us in speaking up for immigrants and refugees and their families. The [Justice for Immigrants Campaign](#) urges us to contact our elected officials while they are in their home districts during their Easter break (4/8-4/23). Follow [this link](#) for talking points and an Easter reflection on migration, take e-action [here](#).

## Typology of Modern Slavery

Polaris Project has analyzed more than 32,000 cases of human trafficking over the past nine years and has identified 25 unique types of trafficking that exist in the United States. Each type has unique strategies for recruiting and controlling victims, and concealing the crime. We invite you to take some time to review this remarkable work – [summary](#), [full report](#). Reflect on the various types of trafficking. May it inspire you to



further prayer and other action, such as [contacting your members of Congress](#) to urge their support for important bipartisan legislation which would provide healthcare professionals at all levels training on how to identify and appropriately treat human trafficking victims.

## International Day for Street Children – April 12

Find out why 2017 is a once in a generation opportunity for Street Children. Read [Children 2017](#). Also view the infographic [Global Challenge](#). Canada celebrates 150 years, but it still is not party time for Indigenous children. See: [Indigenous Children](#).

## Education for All

The Basic Education Coalition (BEC) submitted its fiscal year 2018 appropriations request for international basic education to congressional appropriators this month. This year, [BEC urged Congress](#) to approve a basic education funding level of \$925 million, with at least \$800 million provided for bilateral assistance programs. BEC is supporting a congressional sign-on letter urging appropriators to support international basic education in FY18. This letter is being spearheaded by Congressmen Dave Reichert (R-WA) and Mike Quigley (D-IL). Consider urging your members of Congress to support this letter.

## Peace and Non-Violence

### Pope Francis Urges Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

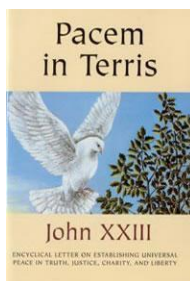
In his message to the [UN Conference on prohibiting nuclear weapons](#), Pope Francis said that the strategy of nuclear deterrence was not an effective response to today's threats to peace and security: terrorism, cybersecurity, environmental problems and poverty. "Peace must be built on justice, on integral human development, on respect for fundamental human rights, on the protection of creation, on the participation of all in public life, on trust between peoples, on the support of peaceful institutions, on access to education and health, on dialogue and solidarity." [Read more](#). The U.S., [Canada](#), Britain, and France are among almost 40 countries boycotting the conference. [Learn more](#).

### International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action – April 4

The UN General Assembly in December of 2005 [declared](#) that April 4 of each year shall be observed as the “International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.” The theme for this year is [Need driven, People Centered](#). In over 60 countries and territories, the dangers of landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war impacts the lives of millions of people. [Learn more](#).

### Peace on Earth

On April 11 we make the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [Pacem in Terris](#) in which Pope John XXIII contends that peace needs to be “founded on truth, built according to justice, vivified and integrated by charity and put into practice in freedom.” This month we also celebrate the 1 year anniversary of the [Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference](#) which affirmed pro-action, nonviolent approaches to peace-making at all levels and asserted that “only by considering all as brothers and sisters can humanity overcome wars and conflicts”. Individuals and organizations are welcome to endorse the conference outcome statement [here](#).



### Helen Prejean and the Death Penalty

As we celebrate the birthday (4/21) of S. Helen Prejean, leading American advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, we recall the [Good Friday Appeal to End the Death Penalty](#) statement in 1999 by the U.S. Catholic Bishops in which they speak of committing to “a persistent and principled witness against the death penalty, against a culture of death, and for the Gospel of Life.” How do we see that witness today? When will we ever learn that “the antidote to violence is love, not more violence.”

