



Shalom News North America

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



July-Aug 2019



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Integrity of Creation

'Climate Apartheid' to Push 120 Million into Poverty

A recently published report estimates that more than 120 million people could slip into poverty within the next decade because of climate change. "We risk a 'climate apartheid' scenario where the wealthy pay to escape overheating, hunger and conflict while the rest of the world is left to suffer," said Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. "Even the unrealistic best-case scenario of 1.5 (degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) of warming by 2100 will see extreme temperatures in many regions and leave disadvantaged populations with food insecurity, lost incomes, and worse health," the report said. [Learn more](#). [Ideas/resources for taking action](#).



California Bishops – Protect Our Common Home

On June 18, the California Conference of Catholic Bishops issued their own pastoral statement on threats to the state's environment. [God Calls Us All to Care for Our Common Home](#) is a resource "to animate and energize the implementation in California of

what *Laudato Si'* calls us to do, and to offer a dynamic teaching and evangelization tool for our Catholic faith community and beyond, especially for young people."

Prepare for Season of Creation (9/1 – 10/4)

The Vatican has issued a letter encouraging pastors and communities to [celebrate the Season of Creation](#). This year's Season of Creation theme is the "the web of life" and it will highlight biodiversity. You can learn more and find resources at [SeasonofCreation.org](#).

Human Dignity

2019 Trafficking in Persons Report

The 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report highlights the national nature of trafficking: in 77% of the cases, victims are trafficked within their own countries of residence, rather than across borders. Victims of sex trafficking were more likely to be trafficked across borders while victims of forced labor were typically exploited within their own countries. According to the report, the top three nations of origin for victims of human trafficking in 2018 were Mexico, the U.S. and the Philippines. [Summary and critical commentary, full report](#).



Causes and Vulnerabilities that Contribute to Human Trafficking

At the public release of the Trafficking in Persons Report, S. Gabriella Bottani SMC, the coordinator of [Talitha Kum](#), was recognized by the U.S. State Department for the network's anti-trafficking efforts. In her comments at the report's public release, S. Gabriella identified three "causes and vulnerabilities that contribute to human trafficking": 1) unequal power structure in society, especially related to women, children, and indigenous; 2) inadequate migration policies that leave people vulnerable in an increasingly

interconnected world; 3) an economic model that exploits human and environmental resources for the profit of the few in contrast with the exploitation of the many. [Watch her full comments here](#). July 30 is the World Day Against Human Trafficking. What will you do to commemorate the day? [Learn more, resources](#).

UN Says Nearly 71 Million Displaced Worldwide

We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record. An unprecedented 70.8 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 25.9 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also millions of stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement. In a world where nearly 1 person is forcibly displaced every two seconds as a result of conflict or persecution, certainly we can do more. [Learn more, take action](#).

UN Human Rights Chief 'appalled' at Condition of Migrant Facilities in U.S.

The U.N. high commissioner for human rights Michelle Bachelet on Monday said she is appalled by conditions in which the U.S. is holding migrants and refugees, [as](#)

[reported by The Hill](#). "I am deeply shocked that children are forced to sleep on the floor in overcrowded facilities, without access to adequate healthcare or food, and with poor sanitation conditions," Bachelet said in a statement, "This should never happen anywhere." The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General [released a report last week](#), outlining "dangerous overcrowding" and "prolonged detention of children and adults" at border facilities in Texas. [Learn more, take action by joining in the July 12 Lights for Liberty vigils. Contemplative prayer resource.](#)

Celebrating Civil Rights, the Dream of MLK and Lamenting Racism

July 2 marked the 55th anniversary of signing into law of the Civil Rights Act in the United States. The act gave federal law enforcement agencies the power to prevent racial discrimination in employment, voting, and the use of public facilities. [Learn more](#). On August 28 we will commemorate the 56th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's "[I Have a Dream](#)" speech in Washington DC. Although we have come a long way in the ongoing struggle to dismantle racial prejudice, we are far from accomplishing racial justice. [Read more. Prayer, reflection resources.](#)



World Indigenous People's Day (8/9)

"On this annual observance, let us commit to fully realizing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including the rights to self-determination and to traditional lands, territories and resources," said [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#). "Indigenous Peoples are culturally distinct societies and communities. The land on which they live and the natural resources on which they depend are inextricably linked to their identities, cultures, livelihoods, as well as their physical and spiritual well-being." [Learn more](#). After two years of intensive research and interviews across Canada, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has completed its investigation and published the results. Kairos Canada, a tireless voice for Indigenous Rights offers us [this reflection](#) on the inquiry closure.

World Not on Track for SDG #4 Education Goal

New [UN projections](#) indicate that without a shift from 'business as usual', the world will miss its goal of a quality education for all by 2030 ([SDG 4](#)). If current trends continue, in 2030, when all children should be in school, one in six aged 6-17 will still be excluded. Many children are still dropping out too: by 2030, only six in ten young people will be completing secondary education. There is a real risk that the world will fail to deliver on its education promises without a rapid acceleration of progress. [Learn more](#).

Peace and Non-Violence

Youth Voices Matter

People who say youth voices don't matter because they are too young don't like what the youth say and use age as a distraction from engaging discussion. [So says Greta Thunberg](#), Swedish activist who, at age 15, began public protesting about the need for immediate action to combat climate change. [Malala Yousafzai](#) stresses the importance of books and pens instead of guns and challenges youth, especially girls, to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential. A good reminder and a challenge for all of us to consider. It's time we took a seat 'at your table'.

Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki (8/6, 8/9)

On August 6 and August 9, we will observe the 74th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Saint Pope John Paul II once said that "to remember Hiroshima is to abhor nuclear war. To remember Hiroshima is to commit oneself to peace." [Consider this reflection, Blessing the Bombs](#) by the

Catholic chaplain who served as a priest for the airman who dropped the bombs. [Fact sheet with reflection, prayer in remembrance, sign the Hibakusha Appeal](#) to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Global Peace Index

The [Global Peace Index](#), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace, is the world's leading measure of global peacefulness. It uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources and measures the state of peace using three thematic domains: the level of societal safety and security, the extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization. Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world. All three regions of the Americas recorded a deterioration in peacefulness in 2019 with increasing political instability, exemplified by the violent unrest seen in Nicaragua and Venezuela, and growing political polarization in Brazil and the United States.

