



Shalom News North America

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

February 2019



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Integrity of Creation

Doomsday Clock at Two Minutes to Midnight

Citing nuclear weapons and climate change as two existential risks that leave the world dangerously close to an apocalypse, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists is keeping the Doomsday Clock set at two minutes to midnight calling the threats against humankind “a new abnormal.” The only other time the Bulletin has judged the world as being this close to catastrophe was 1953, in the early volatile stages of the cold war. ‘We are like passengers on the Titanic, ignoring the iceberg ahead’ in face of nuclear arms and climate change threats, warned Jerry Brown, the former governor of California and the current executive chairman of the Bulletin. [Learn more.](#)



Carbon Tax Canada

The Government of Canada has worked with provinces and territories for two years, giving them the flexibility

to design their own climate plans that included putting a price on carbon pollution. A price on pollution gives people the incentive to make cleaner choices and gives businesses incentives to find clean solutions. [Learn more.](#)

Green New Deal

Too many of our leaders have come to believe that saving the planet will ruin the economy. The Green New Deal, an idea championed by newly elected representative Alexandria Octavio-Cortez, is an economic stimulus program that aims to address both economic inequality and climate change. Inspired by the New Deal programs that helped us out of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Green New Deal aims to provide similar relief and create an economy that is more sustainable and just. [Learn more.](#)

Human Dignity

February is Black History Month

During Black History Month we celebrate the role people of African descent have played in shaping the development of the [U.S.](#) and [Canada](#). Consider [this reflection](#) and [this prayer service](#). We also invite you to reflect on Catholic Social Thought and racial solidarity using [this Education for Justice resource](#) and the new US Catholic Bishops anti-racism resource [Open Wide Our Hearts](#).

Remembering Rosa Parks

Rosa Parks was born on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama. She became renowned for her refusal to change bus seats to allow a white person to sit. This action helped spark the Montgomery bus boycott that ultimately led to a Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. Rosa Parks lived a simple life as she aged, donating any speaker fees to civil rights causes. In recognition of the role she played in the civil rights movement, Rosa was given the honor of being the first non-government official to lie in state in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. [Reflecting on Rosa Parks](#), [prayer resource](#).



Vatican Human Trafficking Resource

The Vatican recently published *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*, a guidebook intended “to provide a reading of human trafficking and an understanding that motivate and sustain the much-needed long-term struggle.” The Vatican “invites everyone to engage vigorously in learning, communication, and action about preventing and healing human trafficking, nourished by reflection, prayer, and the teachings of Pope Francis.” [Learn more](#), review [resource](#), share [promotional flyer](#).

International Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking (2/8)

Designated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General, the International Day of Prayer for Victims of Human Trafficking invites us to advocacy and remembrance for victims and survivors of forced labor and commercial sex trafficking. February 8 was chosen for this day because it is the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, herself a human trafficking survivor. [Prayer resource](#).

Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita (2/8)

On February 8 we celebrate the feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of human trafficking survivors. St. Josephine was born near Darfur, Sudan in 1869 and abducted by slave traders at the age of 7. Her childhood – if it can be called that – was gruesome, but she retained an openness to beauty and life, nevertheless. After being sold to a family in Italy, she encountered the Canossian Sisters, who taught her the Catholic faith. She joined their order upon the approval of her petition for freedom. At her canonization, St. Pope John Paul II said that in St. Josephine Bakhita, “We find a shining advocate of genuine emancipation. The history of her life inspires not passive acceptance but the firm resolve to work effectively to free girls and women from oppression and violence, and to return them to their dignity in the full exercise of their rights.” [Learn more](#), [prayer card](#), [Novena](#) to St. Bakhita.



Refugee Resettlement Update

As of January 18, 2019, 6,130 refugees have been admitted to the U.S. in FY2019. In addition, 2,117 Afghans and 52 Iraqis were granted Special Immigrant Visas (SIV). Both admission rates are well below the

pace needed to reach this year's refugee target of 30,000 refugee admissions and the admission of an additional 10,000 Afghan and Iraqi SIVs. While Canada plans on [welcoming more refugees and other immigrants](#), the Trump Administration [recently announced](#) its intentions to block some asylum seekers from entering the U.S. from Mexico. [Reflection resource](#).

International Day of Women and Girls in Science (2/11)

“What can you do with a world class education in science, technology, engineering, and math?” asks one SSND student. An alum says, “I believe I am where I am today because my high school provided the foundation to grow and pursue my dreams disregarding gender stereotypes about women in science/math.” A significant gender gap has persisted throughout the years at all levels of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines all over the world. Even though women have made tremendous progresses towards increasing their participation in higher education, they are still underrepresented in these fields. [Learn more](#), read [this reflection](#) on women and girls in science, watch [this video](#).

Peace and Non-Violence

Peace Builders

Peace-building sounds lofty and is often seen as the responsibility of world leaders and armed actors, but quite often it is manifested in the [tireless work of women](#) caught in a conflict's cross-fire. The important role of women is recognized in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy – which was approved last year. While the Policy identifies women and peace building as an action area, it has yet to be fully funded. [Learn more](#), [send a message to your member of Parliament](#) asking for an increase in international assistance and an increase in funding to women peace builders.

Pax Christi International has recently published a guide for peace and human rights advocacy work. [Download this free advocacy guide](#).

World Day for Social Justice (2/20)

Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful

and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. How can you model and promote social justice? [Toolbox of resources](#).



Stand Up to Bullying Day (2/22)

Started on February 22 in 2008, when over 200 schools, workplaces and organizations, representing more than 125,000 students and staff committed to take a stand against bullying by signing and wearing a pink pledge shirt as a visible, public symbol, this commemoration has spread worldwide. While the pink shirt is an obvious reminder of the need for nonviolent interactions, how else might each of us today commit to respond to verbal, physical or social bullying?

