



Shalom News North America

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



February 2012

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Economic Justice

Abundance and Insufficiency

It seems rather ironic that Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) leads us into Lent. Perhaps we need the contrast of “pigging out” to help us better understand fasting and hunger! Perhaps we need the experience and realization of the abundance we have so that we might be more attuned to the insufficiency experienced by so many others. S. Joan Chittister says, “When we fast, we become voluntarily poor and so understand better the needs of the poor. . . . We know why we are hungry. . . but why are they hungry? Where is the food they should be eating? And what can we do to fill them now?”

We invite you to reflect on Isaiah 58:6-7. Consider how your Lenten fasting might bring about new life in you and others.

Dom Helder Camara (1909-99), South American bishop, writer, and visionary is perhaps best remembered for saying, “When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked why the poor have no food, they called me a Communist.” As



people of faith, we are called to feed the poor, but as the voice of justice, we are also called to keep asking why.

Get Child Labor Out Of Chocolate

Valentine’s Day often evokes an image of a heart-shaped box of chocolates. But as the 2010 documentary “The Dark Side of Chocolate” showed, all too often you will find illegal child labor behind those chocolates. The U.S. State Department’s *2010 Trafficking in Persons* report describes children on the cocoa plantations being traded as labor. A 2010 report from Tulane University reports that most child slaves on cocoa plantations remain “unreached.” How can you help get child labor out of chocolate? Take a look at Green America’s *Chocolate Scorecard*. It ranks the chocolate companies and gives you the story behind the many certification labels, including Fair Trade, Fair for Life (the best choice), Rainforest Alliance, UTZ, Organic, and others. You can find the *Chocolate Scorecard* and other resources for action [here](#).

Human Dignity

Women Religious, Trafficking, and the Super Bowl

Picking up from efforts to stem sex trafficking at the 2010 Winter Olympics and World Cup competitions, women's religious communities, this time from Indiana and Michigan, are working to stop sex trafficking at this year's Super Bowl through community outreach and prayer. The orders are members of the Coalition for Corporate Responsibility for Indiana and Michigan. Working in cooperation with local law enforcement and others, they contacted all 220 hotels within a 50-mile radius of Indianapolis with important information about preventing human trafficking. They supplemented their efforts with community prayer, using the *Prayer for an End to Human Trafficking* composed by our very own Gen Cassani, SSND! Read more [here](#).

Faith Traditions and Social Justice

[World Interfaith Harmony Week](#) (February 1-7, 2012) recognizes the need for dialogue among different faiths

and religions and their contribution for peace in the world.

Have you ever considered how various faith traditions view concepts associated with work, social justice, and peace? Are there common spiritual values that could provide a framework for addressing global challenges? These and other questions are addressed in a new ILO handbook, *Convergences: Decent Work and Social Justice in Religious Traditions*. Developed in a spirit of interreligious dialogue, the handbook includes contributions from the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). [Click here](#) for the handbook.

Speaking of social justice, did you know February 20 has been adopted by the UN as the *World Day of Social Justice*? More information and a special prayer service can be found [here](#).

Commission on the Status of Women

The [fifty-sixth session](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at the UN in New York February 27 to March 9. Representatives from [Member States](#), UN agencies, and [NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) from all regions of the world will attend the session.

This year, the SSND delegation attending the commission will include—Roxanne Schares, SSND, Eileen Reilly, SSND, Judy Bourg, SSND, Maureen Fleming, SSND, Julie Gilbert-Brady, and Julie Tatlock. Empowerment of rural women, financing, and engaging young women and men to advance gender equality are topics expected to be addressed in this session.



Day of the Girl Child Will be October 11

The United Nations has formally adopted October 11 as *International Day of the Girl Child*, an historic milestone for girls' rights. Plan Canada, one chapter of an International NGO, helped lead the call for the new commemorative day as a global movement to end gender inequality, promote girls' rights and lift millions of girls – and everyone around them – out of poverty. The *International Day of the Girl Child* is an important way to address girls' rights and accelerate the investment and recognition girls deserve as citizens and as powerful agents of social change. The movement was supported by young girls and boys worldwide with the support and leadership of the Canadian government. Read more [here](#).

Integrity of Creation

Keystone XL Rejected – Arctic Ocean Endangered

As you know, President Obama has rejected—for now—a permit for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. Please consider [thanking the President](#) for his decision.

The U.S. federal government recently released a proposed five-year program for oil and gas leasing that could open up pristine new areas to oil drilling in the Arctic Ocean, in an area known as the Polar Bear Seas, offshore of Alaska. These ocean waters provide vital habitat for extraordinary wildlife and millions of migratory birds. Do you think this is a good idea? The Department of the Interior is accepting comments about this plan until February 8. Let your voice be heard! [Click here](#) for a sample letter you can modify and send.

Ban Ki-moon Seeks Sustainable Energy Commitment

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for increased investment in wind, solar, hydroelectric, and other sustainable energy sources as a key piece of global poverty reduction when he spoke at the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. He asked, “Why should energy poverty condemn billions to darkness, to missed opportunities for education and prosperity?” In an earlier [New York Times](#) piece, Ban wrote, “The obstacles are not so much technical as human. We need to raise sustainable energy to the top of the global agenda and focus our attention, ingenuity, resources and investments to make it a reality.” Ban’s comments highlight the [2012 International Year of Sustainable Energy](#) and the



approaching [Rio+20 Summit](#) on sustainable development.

Webinar: Sustainability and Catholic Mission

On Wednesday, February 8, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change will partner with Loyola University New Orleans and offer *Catholics and the Climate: Fostering Mission-Based Sustainability*. This one-hour free webinar begins at 8 pm (CST). Most Reverend William S. Skylstad, Bishop Emeritus of Spokane, Honorary Chairperson of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and Past President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, will address the link between environmental sustainability and the mission for Catholic institutions. For more information about the webinar and how to register, [click here](#).

Climate Change Resource Guide for Religious Communities

[Religions for Peace](#) has released a new resource: *Action and Advocacy for Climate Change: A Resource Guide for Religious Communities*. The purpose of the guide is to facilitate multi-religious cooperation for climate change action. It is intended for religious leaders and communities, prayer and study groups, women’s, men’s and youth groups, faith-based organizations, service providers, religious institutions, and individuals. It contains information on how to advocate for climate change action, as well as ideas for local conversation, and examples of faith communities already responding to climate change. [Click here](#) to download the guide.

