



# Shalom News North America

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

December 2014



[Human Life and Dignity](#)  
[Economic Justice](#)  
[Integrity of Creation](#)  
[Peace and Non-Violence](#)



## Human Life, Dignity, and Economic Justice

### Ferguson – Resources for Reflection and Action

In light of the ongoing protests, conversations, debates, and emotional outpourings associated with Ferguson and the issues that underlie it, we wanted to share some [resources](#) that might help support teaching and learning during this time of challenge. May we all be open to learning lessons from this tragic event that lead to [personal and societal growth](#) and a greater respect for the dignity of all.

### Presente! Martyrs of El Salvador: Jean Donovan, Maura Clark, Ita Ford, and Dorothy Kazel

On December 2, 1980, four American Churchwomen were abducted, raped, and killed in El Salvador. Their story as well as the story of cover-ups, betrayal, and the current status of those who ordered their murder can be found at [Killed in El Salvador: An American Story](#).



### No More Slavery?

December 2 is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. But as two recently released reports indicate, there are more people enslaved today than at any other time in human history. According to the [2014 Global Slavery Index](#), 35.8 million people are currently trapped in modern-day slavery. That is some 20% more people enslaved across the world than previously thought. Modern slavery contributes to the production of at least 122 goods from 58 countries. The [Global Report on Trafficking](#) reports that one in three known victims of human trafficking is a child – a 5% increase compared to the 2007-2010 period. Girls make up two out of every three child victims, and together with women, account for 70% of overall trafficking victims worldwide. [Learn more/take action](#).

### Justice for Immigrants and the Sanctuary Movement

Recently we SSND Shalom Contacts had the opportunity to join with some of our SSND colleagues in a most inspiring [border immersion experience](#). While learning more about the realities that influence a migrant's decision to cross the border, we also gained additional perspectives on immigration from civic leaders, border patrol agents, attorneys, faith leaders, business leaders, and ranchers.

While in Tucson, we had an opportunity to meet a young immigrant mother who has been granted sanctuary from deportation by a Protestant Church community. [Learn more about Rosa](#) and how you can support [justice for immigrants](#).

### Human Rights Day – December 10

The School Sisters of Notre Dame invite all to join us in commemorating [International Human Rights Day](#) on December 10. This year's theme, "Human Rights 365," expresses the conviction that every day is Human Rights Day and that each one of us, everywhere, at all times, is entitled to the full range of human rights. Resources for reflection and action can be found [here](#).

### Las Posadas Advent Novena

The Advent Novena known as [Las Posadas](#) (shelters) recalls the biblical quest to find lodging in Bethlehem. Beginning December 16, each evening features a procession carrying images of Joseph and Mary, singing and praying, calling on chosen homes, only to be denied access. On December 24, doors are opened to the guests who gather before the Nativity scene to pray and celebrate together. This novena weaves together prayerful vigilance, the virtue of hospitality, and social justice: a reminder to us of the many homeless in [Canada](#), the [U.S.](#), and throughout our world.

### I Belong – Help End Global Statelessness

Did you know a baby is born stateless every 10 minutes? The UN refugee agency recently launched the [I Belong](#) global campaign aimed at ending the devastating legal limbo of statelessness, which affects millions of people around the world. "Statelessness can mean a life without education, without medical care or legal employment . . . a life without the ability to move freely, without prospects or hope," the Open Letter said. In support/ recognition of [International Migrants](#) (12/18) and [Human Solidarity](#) (12/20) days, please consider [learning more/taking action](#) on behalf of the stateless.



### Consumas or Christmas?

Consumas is a term that, for some people, replaces Christmas. It is the annual shopping/consumption frenzy beginning even before Thanksgiving when some

people fall prey to the promise of saving lots of money and finding the perfect gifts and what we are told we all need to be happy and live better. To paraphrase an old Slim Whitman song, “Where is the Christ in Consumas?”

Consider some alternatives at [Buy Nothing Christmas](#) or [Feed the Children](#) or [Heifer](#) gift catalog. Also check out an [Advent Prayer on Consumerism](#) and the Advent resource [Economy of Right Relationship](#).

## Integrity of Creation

### The Big Climate Deal: What It Is and What It Isn't

Just weeks after the largest climate mobilization ever, the world's two biggest polluters -- the United States and China -- announced their [most ambitious climate action](#) yet. Noted environmentalist Bill McKibben has a 10-point assessment of this agreement: 1) It is historic. For the first time a developing nation has agreed to eventually limit its emissions, which has become a necessity for advancing international climate negotiations. 2) It isn't binding...[read more](#).

### Advent Prayer: Light for Lima

On December 7 the second Sunday of Advent, interfaith communities around the world will be holding vigils in anticipation of the forthcoming global climate talks in Lima, Peru. The Lima meeting is critically important to the sustainability of our planet. Join in the vigil! [Here is a prayer resource](#) for your use. The Lights for Lima Campaign is also asking faith communities to consider purchasing one solar powered lamp. For every solar lamp ordered two will be sent to a rural community in Africa. [Learn more](#).



### Holy Innocents – December 28

Matthew's Gospel tells the story of Herod who in response to a report of a newborn king of the Jews, ordered “the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under.” The killing of *Holy Innocents* continues today through abortion, genocide, and other actions that take the lives of our most vulnerable. Let us take this day to reflect and consider ways we can help [protect and support the development](#) of our society's most vulnerable members.

### U.S. Contributes to Green Climate Fund

President Obama recently announced that the U.S. would contribute \$3 billion to the Green Climate Fund, an international fund created to help the world's poorest countries deal with the effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods, storms, and other extreme weather. This was followed by 21 more countries pledging \$9.3 billion. As climate change advances, poor communities are hardest hit. That's why the Green Climate Fund is so important and why support from wealthy countries is critical. [Learn more](#).

### Winter Solstice

Our celebration of the Winter Solstice on December 21 reminds us that our planet and sun are participants in a sacred cycle of light and darkness. As citizens of the living Earth, in partnership with our life-sustaining sun, we – and all inhabitants of the Earth community – are part of a great cosmic dance that is a revelation of the divine. Edward Hays invites us, as pilgrims of the cosmos, to “celebrate this change of seasons in the annual pilgrimage around our great daystar, the sun” with wonder, hope, and joy.

## Peace and Non-Violence

### National Gun Violence Sabbath

December 11-14, join [Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence](#), the [Newtown Foundation](#), and places of worship across the nation to remember those who have lost their lives to gunfire, to pray for those whose lives have been forever changed because of the loss of a loved one, and to educate one another on proven strategies to reduce gun violence.

Learn more about gun violence in the [U.S.](#) and [Canada](#). What can you do to [support this effort](#) and help reduce gun violence?



### Pope Francis' 2015 World Peace Day Message

For the 2015 World Day of Peace, Pope Francis challenges us to recognize every person as a brother or sister with God-given dignity. Such recognition, he says, will lead to peace. When we recognize the dignity of others, we will feel compelled to work for an end to all that exploits and enslaves them, such as human trafficking, trade in migrants and prostitutes, exploitation, slave labor, and the enslavement of women and children. To address these assaults on the dignity of our exploited and enslaved brothers and sisters, we must assist victims and address the problems and issues that create conditions ripe for exploitation. [Learn more](#), [take action](#).

