



Justice Journal

*Climate Economics Human Trafficking
Immigration Peace and Security*



Wishing you
a **BLESSED** and
MERRY
Christmas
and a **HAPPY** and
HEALTHY
New Year

With gratitude for the work of justice that we have participated in and with hope for another year of bringing God's light more fully into this world, I pray for a deepening of our commitment, creativity, and consistency in the *doing* and *being* justice each and every day.

Peace, Didi

Climate Justice: Paris 2015

Visit the OPSCC website to read about the experiences of Paris 2015 and the outcomes of the U.N. Convention on Climate Change!

The work of Climate Justice continues with new agreements and goals as the Community of Life meets the challenge of restoring balance to the Earth systems and developing deeper respect for the life of this planet and all who live on it.

Human Trafficking

Slavery has been outlawed throughout the world. Yet today, there are more than 29 million people living in slavery, the greatest number in history. Here in the United States, approximately 15,000 people are trafficked for labor or sexual exploitation each year. In many countries, generations have been held in bondage, and will continue to be held as slaves, because of old debts that are impossible to pay. In other countries, children are sold into work arrangements that evolve into sexual exploitation in addition to the forced labor.

We think of these situations as far removed from us. Well...they are not! Manufactured products are often made by the sweat and suffering of someone in a labor arrangement that is dangerous, deceitful, and forced. The sad truth is...if you own or use manufactured products then you participate in slavery. It is virtually impossible at this time to be totally removed from labor exploitation.

And it is not just manufactured goods, agri-business in many countries runs on child labor and slave labor. The foods you eat, especially the ones that come from countries other than the U.S., has been planted, grown, harvested, packed, and shipped by those who do not receive a fair wage, who work as many as 20 hours a day, and faces the threat of physical harm or sexual violation.

One of the ways we can begin to understand how we participate and to what degree we participate is to take the slave footprint survey. The website is www.slaveryfootprint.org. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and it is time well spent! You will build an understanding of the complexity of slavery, how far reaching it is in our world, how connected it is to almost every other justice issue and how we benefit and drive slavery today.

Here are three actions you can take:

Learn about retailers and what they do to reduce their slavery footprint at www.slaveryfootprint.org.

Shop retailers who make an effort to know and be transparent about their involvement in slavery.

Encourage retailers who do not take responsibility for knowing the impact of their industry to begin to do so.

Simplify your life.

Educate others.

SUPER BOWL 50
FEB. 7TH 2016
LEVI'S STADIUM
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

150% increase in ads offering sex services, some involving minors, have been seen at the last two Super Bowls

Peace and Security of All Life

Immigration/Migration

We are witnessing the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. More than 4 million Syrians have fled violence in their homeland and 12 million more are displaced internally. Syrian refugees are fleeing exactly the kind of terror that we have witnessed in these past few weeks. More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives, many more have lost family, home, and community. (Paragraph 3)

We reject the false choice currently being proffered by some in Washington, state capitols across the country, and on the campaign trail. We need not choose between the gospel call to welcome the stranger and our legitimate need for security. The protection that we rightly promise the world's refugees must not be denied to Syrians fleeing for their lives. The US refugee resettlement program has rigorous and multilayered security screenings to ensure that those we admit as refugees pose no threat to our security. (Paragraph 5)

The present situation presents us with great challenges and many hard decisions. As Pope Francis reminded us just a few short weeks ago in his address to Congress,

Let us remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Mt 7:12). This Rule points us in a clear direction. Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us. (Paragraph 6)

As women religious, as citizens of the United States, we choose to stand for life and hope. We will not give in to fear. We will not allow others to divide us by race or creed or nationality and we will not turn our back on our Syrian sisters and brothers in their hour of greatest need. (Paragraph 7)

LCWR Statement, Let Us Welcome the Syrian Refugee"
November 17, 2015

This statement written and released by the LCWR on November 17, 2015 is a clear, strong statement of the welcoming position that we need to hold as the country and the world reacts to the crisis. It is clear that we are called to welcome, support, assist, offer protection to the people who have been displaced, living in terror, and walking day by day in the unknown. How it is going to be done, how it will impact host countries economies, how it exposes us to acts of terrorism, and how the sheer size of the problem can be responded to is the great unknown.

A group of OPSCC members have met several times to talk about how we can respond. Participants have reached out to local Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, the Syrian Orthodox faith community. In each case the answer was very much the same...we are waiting to see what develops, the process is long, cumbersome and now sidetracked. We reached out to the Good Shepherd Sisters and other religious communities and have found ways to give financial support to those working with the refugees and displaced persons from Syria (in much the same way we have supported our sisters in Iraq.) The committee is searching for a ways to help beyond financial donations. In the coming months we will continue to explore ways we can help...so, if you have any ideas...

Love...not hate...is what dwells among us and needs to be expressed by us in response to the needs of refugees. It is what we do each and every day in our ministries...let's look for ways we can express our love and solidarity with the people of Syria.

Economic Justice

There is this...

In 2013, the numbers for child homelessness went from 1 in 50 (1.5 million) to 1 in 30 (2.5 million). In January 2013, there were more than fifty-seven thousand homeless veterans. (<http://kairoscenter.org/Christmas-and-homelessness/>)

In 2014, 48.8 million Americans—including 16.2 million children— live in households that lack the means to get enough nutritious food on a regular basis. As a result, they struggle with hunger at some time during the year. (Source: USDA Household Food Security in the United States)

10.5 million kids eligible for free or reduced-price school breakfast do not get it. (Source: Food Research and Action Center, School Breakfast Scorecard)

And then there is this...

In 2013, total retail industry sales in the United States amounted to about 3.08 trillion U.S. dollars and 3.19 trillion U.S. dollars in 2014.

As of 2013, the top 3% of households owned almost 54% of all privately held wealth ; the next 7% of households own 21% of privately held wealth and the remaining 90% of the population holds 25% of privately held wealth. These statistics indicate that in the United States, wealth is highly concentrated in relatively few hands. (Source: Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finances 2014)

The financial inequality in the United States continues to grow . How does this find expression in the systems (political, educational, healthcare, religious) that define our society? What is the impact on our humanity and how we understand common good, community, and care of the earth?

What is the word I need to carry to others about the financial inequality that exists around us?

We have supported the following actions during the past month:

- ◆ Port Ambrose Liquid Natural Gas Plant: Letter to Governor Cuomo opposing the construction
- ◆ Co-sponsor Senate Bill 2145, Middle East Refugee Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act: Letter in support to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand
- ◆ Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath: Letter in support of more restrictive gun laws to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand; petition addressed to President Obama in support of more restrictive gun laws
- ◆ Child Labor Human Rights Violations: Letter asking Lindt Chocolates to certify that the cocoa suppliers are not involved in child labor/slavery.
- ◆ Human Trafficking Awareness: Letter to the NFL encouraging greater involvement in anti-human trafficking efforts around the Superbowl.



A New Year's Prayer For 2016



Opening Prayer

Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for all that you have allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hard things, which have reminded us how much we need you and rely on your presence filling us every single day.

Scripture Readings

“The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, God’s mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”
(Lamentations 3:22-23).

“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old.
Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert”
(Isaiah 43:18-19).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, she is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

Quiet and Shared Reflection

For what are you grateful?

What have been the challenges and joys of this past year?

What is the grace that you need for 2016?

Prayers for the Needs of the Community of Life

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, may we be lovers of truth, may the fruits of your spirit be evident in our lives - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Shine your light in us, through us, over us.

May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us.
May we reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

To you be glory and honor, in this New Year 2016, and forever. Amen.