



Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
January, 2016

Happy New Year to all!



UK's Catholic Bishops Pastoral [Refugee Crisis: Open Your Hearts](#) has been released. Catholics in England and Wales are urged to respond to the refugee crisis with prayer, practical action and advocacy. Whether it's

donating time, skills or money, you can make a valuable contribution to the humanitarian effort.

A series of suggested actions on how you can help are offered:

If you are an individual wishing to host, [please sign up to host refugees here](#):

Room for Refugees offers temporary (free) shelter in people's homes to people from refugee communities who have no recourse to public funds or emergency housing. We prioritise safe hosting.

Also:

In London: Housing Justice www.housingjustice.org.uk; Outside London: No Accommodation Network www.naccomm.org.uk

Write to your MP

NJPN has a sample letter to send to your MP about ensuring that the Syrian refugee programme in the UK is properly funded and expressing concern at it being funded from the overseas aid budget.

Read the text [here](#) or contact admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

[Petitions in support of Calais migrants](#)

Negotiations work!

2015 saw two international agreements reached that will make peace more attainable.

Most recently the COP meetings in Paris produced an [agreement](#) for the international community to work together to keep the warming of Earth to 2° C, while hoping to keep the temperature even lower. Critics will argue that the agreement is not binding enough, nor does it include reparations. But all nations were able to come to an agreement, and this is huge. Additionally, a fund will be set up to help poorer nations. Furthermore, nature itself is acknowledged as part of the solution expanding and saving forests are particularly helpful in storing carbon, rather than releasing it to the atmosphere. While President Obama is credited with good leadership,

he also made it clear that subjects like reparations to poorer countries affected by rising waters would not be discussed.

The second agreement to be celebrated in 2015 is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA.) The P5 +1 (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) negotiations with Iran also worked out a deal that while it has fallen from the headlines, appears to be in the process of full implementation. Few believed an agreement could be reached (if you read popular press reports), but the work of disarming Iran of its nuclear weapon capability is underway. Current crisis between Saudi Arabia and Iran could jeopardize progress, but let us pray the agreement stands and progress continues.

The agreement makes it imperative that both the US & UK live up to the spirit of the nuclear nonproliferation agreement and begin to reduce the stockpiles of nuclear weapons by the nations who possess them. (see Stop Trident, below)

For your Calendars



January is Trafficking Awareness month

Monday, January 11th is Human Trafficking Awareness Day in the U.S.

A [Human Trafficking Awareness prayer service](#) is available from IPJC. They also provide materials to help you set up a Human Trafficking Vigil.

[Polaris Project](#)

Polaris Project is a leading organization in the global fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Named after the North Star "Polaris" that guided slaves to freedom along the Underground Railroad, Polaris

Project is transforming the way that individuals and communities respond to human trafficking, in the US and globally. By successfully pushing for stronger federal and state laws, operating the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline (see above), conducting trainings, and providing vital services to victims of trafficking, Polaris Project creates long-term solutions that move our society closer to a world without slavery. Use the hotline number to report any suspicions about human trafficking: 888-373-7888.

[UK Human Trafficking Centre](#)

The UKHTC is part of the [Organised Crime Command](#) in the NCA. It works in a coordinated way within the UK and internationally. Our work to combat human trafficking involves a wide range of partners and stakeholders. We protect the public, target the traffickers and reduce the harm caused by human trafficking.

The UKHTC's partners include police forces, the Home Office and other government departments, the UK Border Force, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, international agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and many charitable and voluntary expert groups.

For more information on [human trafficking](#) see the crime threats section. For more information on the NCA's fight against organised crime visit the [Organised Crime Command](#) page.

Close Guantanamo

January 11 is also the 14th anniversary of the opening of Guantanamo prison in Cuba by the U.S. military. Friends from Witness Against Torture, many from various Catholic Worker communities, are gathered in Washington DC from January 4 through January 12 to protest the continued imprisonment of the 105 men remaining in Guantanamo prison, 49 of who have been cleared for release. Some have been cleared for release for many years but remain in prison, held without charge or trial.



All are welcome to join the demonstrators in prayer and fasting especially on January 11 (most participate in a liquid-only fast during the entire duration of their time together.) If you would like to receive daily updates

on their activities, send an email with "fast updates" in the subject line to witnesstorture@gmail.com.

Support for these demonstrators is one small way to show our solidarity with Muslim brothers and sisters across the globe.



January 15 is Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday. It will be celebrated in the USA as a national holiday on Monday January 18. Why not consider reading something that Dr. King wrote on nonviolence? You can read or listen to *Beyond Vietnam: a Time to Break the Silence* [here](#). You can see how contemporary this speech could be by changing the word communist to terrorist.

January 31 is the birthday of Thomas Merton. Merton was especially sensitive to the threat that nuclear weapons posed for the continued existence of humanity. Perhaps you might honor his memory this day write a letter or note to one of your legislators opposing the plan to spend hundreds of billions (£ or \$) upgrading the nuclear capabilities of either nation.



February 17, at 2 PM Molloy College will present a lecture entitled "Catholics, Climate and Capitalism." Cardinal Peter Turkson, collaborator on the Encyclical letter, *Laudato Si* will be the presenter. For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact Molloy College's Office of Advancement at 516-323-4600, or event@molloy.edu.



27 February, 2016 there will be a Stop Trident demonstration in London. You can [sign up on Facebook](#), and you are encouraged to invite friends.

Join the demonstration to say "No" to government plans to buy a new system at a cost of over £100 billion. Parliament will be voting on this in 2016. So this is urgent.

The majority of the British people, including the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and other parliamentary party leaders, oppose nuclear weapons. They are weapons of mass destruction that can kill millions. They don't keep us safe and they divert resources from essential spending.

More information on the event can be found [here](#).

May 7th to 15th, 2016, with partners in 12 countries, 350.org is announcing a moment of global escalation against the fossil fuel industry. It's called **Break Free from Fossil Fuels**, and it will be unlike any project they've ever joined before: not a day of action, not a single march echoed around the globe, but coordinated, major actions of thousands of people taking on iconic fossil fuel projects and companies across the globe.

[Click here to join the Break Free mobilization right now.](#)

Stop the Tesoro-Savage oil-by-rail export terminal

In late December, Congress lifted a decades old ban on exporting US crude oil to foreign countries. The oil businesses hope to be able to export oil the US no longer needs. One area to be affected is the Pacific Northwest where plans are in the works to build an oil export terminal on the coast that would allow exports to China.

In the spirit of the COP agreement, it is desirable, if not necessary, to keep fossil fuels in the ground in order to achieve the goal of limiting global warming to 2° C. Use [this link](#) to voice your objection to lifting the export oil ban.

The plan to transport highly volatile crude oil by rail cars from North Dakota to the Northwest coast poses inherent dangers from oil spills and explosions.

ICE Raiding the Homes of Immigrant Refugees

The LCWR issued a Resolution to Action for the Fall of 2015 entitled, "[We are Called to End Family Detention](#)". This is excellent background material for you to be able to voice opposition to the current actions of Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) that authorizes raids on the homes of immigrants who fled the violence in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras and who fled to the United States in 2014-15. The raids began on January 1, 2016. ICE hopes to deport all of these families back to the countries from which they fled the violence. You can read a story about the ICE raids from the Guardian [here](#).



Closing Thoughts

In his [Peace Day Message for Jan 1, 2016](#), Pope Francis notes a danger of being well informed about crises in this world of ours:

Some people are well-informed; they listen to the radio, read the newspapers or watch television, but they do so mechanically and without engagement. They are vaguely aware of the tragedies afflicting humanity, but they have no sense of involvement or compassion. Theirs is the attitude of those who know, but keep their gaze, their thoughts and their actions focused on themselves. Sadly, it must be said that today's information explosion does not of itself lead to an increased concern for other people's problems, which demands openness and a sense of solidarity.



It is my hope that these NewsNotes will not add to the glut of information but encourage and enable simple actions that will connect the reader with the sufferings of people in our global neighborhood. There is always something we can do, even as individuals, to make this world a better place, and to speak Peace, especially when the language of hate seduces the media.

Peace and all good,

Frank

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