



DECEMBER 2023 MONTHLY DIGEST

A resource to animate education, prayer, advocacy, and action among the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Philadelphia, our Associates, and Partners in Mission

Catholic Social Teaching and Migration: Spotlight on Caritas Internationalis

Below you will find information from Caritas Relief Services which advocates on behalf of migrants, immigrants, and refugees. Caritas addresses the issues around migration directly and works to advise and protect all migrants- men, women, and children. As we prepare for Advent, let us remember the journey of the Holy Family and their journey of hope.

Caritas Internationalis addresses the issues around migration directly. It works to advise and protect all migrants – men, women and children – to prevent trafficking and abuse. Caritas advocates for the rights of domestic workers – who are often migrants – and for proper legal protection for all people who move to find work and security.

In advocating on behalf of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, it is important to understand that the Catholic position is based on Catholic social teaching, which is derived from the Gospels and the words of Christ; statements and encyclicals of the Popes; and statements and pastoral letters of bishops around the world, including the bishops of the United States.

Caritas recognizes the bravery and strong spirit of people who want to build better lives for themselves and their families. But it wants migration to be an informed choice and campaigns for migrants to be properly protected by law. Caritas believes in a positive view of migration – migrants should be welcomed as they bring many benefits to their host countries not just those they left behind.

For more information use the links below:

[Caritas Updates on Migration and Human Trafficking](#)
[Caritas works in Immigration and Human Trafficking](#)

ISSUE UPDATE: EXPANSION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT

The cost of everything – from fuel to food – is the highest it's been in 40 years in the United States. Families are in urgent need of economic stability. To address this, restoring the expanded, monthly refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

is the most immediate, impactful, and direct solution to help families navigate the challenges of an uncertain economy.

The previously enacted expanded CTC successfully [reduced child poverty](#), infused [tens of billions of dollars](#) into local economies, and immediately decreased food insecurity [by nearly one-third](#). If reinstated, the expanded CTC and EITC could provide rapid relief to 36 million families with kids and 17 million individuals without children within weeks.

Without an expansion of the Child Tax Credit (and with the expiration of various other relief measures), child poverty is likely to return to about the same level as it was pre-pandemic — pushing millions of children back into poverty.

The stakes are high. Policymakers can expand the Child Tax Credit, or they can fail to act and see the Rescue Plan's historic gains against child poverty evaporate. During year-end deliberations, they should choose on a bipartisan basis to expand the Child Tax Credit for children in families with low incomes. It is crucial that Congress acts swiftly to ensure these 10 million children and their families have access to funds to provide for their basic needs during uncertain economic times. Urge Congress now to restore the expanded, monthly refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This is the most immediate, meaningful, and direct way to eradicate systemic poverty for children, their families, and vulnerable communities. Pray, act, and write to Congress today!

Send your message to Congress [here](#).

ADVOCACY & ACTION: Support immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees

The New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia has begun a program that walks with immigrants to support them in navigating resources for their diverse needs. Accompaniment is a demonstration of solidarity that puts their values into practice. NSM recognizes the interconnectedness of oppression and understands that fighting for justice for others contributes to collective growth.

WHY ACCOMPANIMENT?

Immigrants leave their lives and all they know behind to enter a country that is not welcoming and unknown. Once immigrants arrive in the US, they are faced with language barriers, lack of work, racism, and many other hardships. We find that most immigrants face the deep reality that everything is unknown and harsh and that they have lost the connection with their communities and systems of support. The goal of our program is to be an open ear to support, orient, and connect people to resources and help lift up and build their skills to navigate hardships with confidence with the goal of resolving their problems. Our hope and goal is that in the future, the same people who knock on NSM's doors for help become helpers and promoters of resources to their neighbors.

Accompaniment Committee Program Information:

The committee comprises citizens' allies and different immigrant communities working to support their friends and neighbors dealing with immigration issues. The goal of this committee is to engage volunteers to help with particular casework, help and show up to actions and support us to coordinate volunteers when we need to show up to courts or ICE check-ins.

Are you interested in joining this committee? Please send New Sanctuary Movement a message to our accompaniment line so we can orient you on a one-on-one conversation. (267) 225-8816 to [learn more about the accompaniment program](#) [CLICK HERE](#)

FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns Advent Reflection Guide 2023: Preparing the Way for Migrants and Refugees.

The Advent Season begins Dec. 3, 2023. Advent is a season to prepare the way of the Lord. We commemorate the incarnation and the coming of our savior to parents on the move due to a census, in a family that had to flee to Egypt.

The **2023 Advent Reflection Guide: Preparing the Way** from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns contains reflections, questions, prayers, and actions based on each week's Gospel reading and the experience of Maryknoll missionaries who have lived and worked with migrants and refugees from around the world.

We invite you to use this guide individually or in small groups to reflect upon your life patterns, to pray more deeply, and renew your spirit to face the realities of our world. This guide includes reflection on the weekly Scripture readings by Maryknoll missionaries, along with prayers, examples of Maryknoll missionary experiences, and suggested steps for "faith in action." We hope this guide helps individuals and communities reflect on how they can prepare their hearts to receive the hope of the Christ child this Christmas.

Download the [2023 Advent Reflection Guide: Preparing the Way](#)

Advent 2023 with Laudate Deum: A Pilgrimage of Reconciliation with the World that is Our Home: Advent 2023 with Laudate Deum

The Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth has put together a great resource for Christian communities and individuals (and others) to use during the coming Advent season. The Advent resource incorporates Pope Francis' encyclical Laudate Deum, which follows up on the pontiff's encyclical Laudato Si.

For more information use the link below:

[A Pilgrimage of Reconciliation](#)

DECEMBER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRAYER, EDUCATION, AND ACTION

December 6 - SSJ Ministry Highlights: Join the SSJ Associates and friends on Zoom on December 6th to learn more about the Center for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, including a brief history of the Sisters' framework for Gospel inspired action for justice, an explanation of the newly re-imagined Commission for Justice, current advocacy topics, and ways to be involved with these efforts.

To register: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JPICMinistryHighlight>

December 7 - Virtual Reflection with Br. Mickey McGrath on the Black Madonna. Since the earliest days of the Church, Black Madonna's have been a source of devotion, inspiration and conversion of hearts. Using his own art and stories from his multi-award-winning book, *Madonna's of Color*, Brother Mickey will provide a virtual tour on December 7th of some of the most beloved images of Mary from across time, cultures and traditions. Offered by Cranaleith Spirituality Center, register [here](#).

December 8 - Restorative Justice Workshop: On December 8th, the Catholic Mobilizing Network is offering a virtual introductory workshop on restorative justice to learn basic concepts and practices related to the application of restorative justice in ministry. This 3.5-hour workshop is ideal for individuals who are new to [restorative justice](#) and restorative practices. Click [here](#) to register. (There is a suggested donation.)

December 13 – Advent Prayer Service 11:45-12:00 in the Medaille Room at the SSJ Motherhouse, focused on prayer for displaced persons and migrants.

December 20- SSJ Federation Dear Neighbor Series: The U.S. Federation will continue to host its monthly Dear Neighbor Series. This session is a 30-minute Zoom session and is a wonderful opportunity to hear direction from the Federation staff and ask questions. The topic for December 20, 2023, is Leadership Council.

There is no cost for the session and the link to register is below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0sduGppj8oHtdidLeAEd8Agtr7JBAGVs10#/registration>