



# J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



*November 2013*

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## Gift-giving

The notion of "gift" is rising again with Thanks-giving and the Christmas season. Pope Francis offers us an image of seeing and embracing the gift of all people. Immigration discourse brings fasters to the U.S. Capitol, MLK's issues of racism and militarism get attention, as well as an appeal from religious in the Philippines. May we know deeply the reality of gift and how to live as gifts each day and especially in

situations of conflict, so we avoid the possessiveness that harms and destroys life.

## *Pope Francis Embraces Gift*

Read in the *Huffington Post* for [more details on the encounter shown below](#) and in *Vatican Insider* for [the person's reaction](#).



## *Immigration*

Although some republicans are co-sponsoring bi-partisan immigration bills, the House of Representatives as a whole and Speaker John Boehner (Catholic) continues to stall on immigration reform. We are challenged to re-imagine how to diminish the pillars of support that are holding up this status quo.



**Fast 4 Families:** From Nov. 12-Dec. 12 in front of the U.S. Capitol there are rotating fasters only drinking liquids with a daily prayer service. **CMSM and LCWR will offer the prayer service on Dec. 5th. Please consider joining us in prayer and fasting for that day.** To become a sponsor, learn about local actions, and [discover more details](#).

### **CCA/GEO**

These are the two major private prison and detention center corporations, which profit from 400,000 deportations a year and may increase their profits if a number of present immigration bills pass. However, here is [an amazing tool](#) to see candidates and organizations that CCA and GEO fund as well as their top lobbying issues/bills disclosed, even though they often try to deny their impact on immigration discourse and policy.

It seems pretty clear that CCA and GEO fund mostly candidates (in this case Republicans) who are supportive of increasing private detention centers and for border enforcement based immigration reform.

Scholar Gene Sharp names [six sources of power](#) (p. 4, 16-17) that a nonviolent movement must often address or diminish from an unjust system or regime in order to transform the system. **The six sources** are human resources, supporters with special skills/knowledge, intangible (mission, values/habits, religion), authority/legitimacy, capacity to enforce sanctions, and access to or control of material resources. CCA and GEO represent key material resources that uphold and perpetuate our unjust immigration system. Thus, as we imagine and strategize about how to transform this system, illuminating the role CCA and GEO play, and challenging their power is one key element of a strategy that transforms the system.

**Consider your religious community or personal investments:** Do you have money in these organizations? Are your investment managers engaged in shareholder advocacy, *which contributes to changing the corporation's influence on immigration discourse and policy*? If not, is divestment with a corresponding public statement something to consider? How should we respond?

## *Corporations and Political Spending*

Urge the SEC to require that publicly traded corporations disclose their political spending. The Supreme Court's Citizens United ruling has opened the floodgate to corporate money in our political spending. Repealing it via a constitutional amendment will take years, but there's something we can do in the meantime that will go a long way.

The Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) is the federal agency with the job of protecting investors from corporate abuse. It is well within its authority to require that publicly traded corporations disclose their political spending—but it is more likely to happen with public pressure. End the shroud of secrecy. [Urge the SEC to require that publicly traded corporations disclose their political spending.](#)

## *Racism in Church, Society*

### **The One Church | One Body Pledge**

After moving conversations with many church leaders about recent and tragic events concerning race in America, Sojourners has produced the "One Church/One Body" pledge. The pledge calls for the multi-racial body of Christ to stand up and be who we are at a critical time in America's race relations, to commit to reforming our criminal justice system, and to protect voting rights of minorities. This is an historic moment and we believe the church needs to stand up and lead. So we are inviting a broad and multi-racial community of Christian leaders to sign this pledge. We have a strong group of multi-racial church leaders committed to this pledge as a way to provide leadership at a crucial time. We ask that you join us in helping to get the pledge out to your networks, especially pastors. Clergy are especially needed to provide leadership on the ground in parishes all over the country.

You are able to [sign the "One Church/One Body" pledge](#) online.

## *Militarism and the Church?*

Recently some Catholic parishes participated in the national collection for the Archdiocese of Military Services. This has generated quite a debate. The editors of National Catholic Reporter offer some challenging questions for our prayerful reflection under the title "[Questioning our Assent to Militarism.](#)" Fr. Tim Taugher, the pastor at St. Francis of Assisi parish in NY discerned an alternative response to the call for such a collection by writing a letter to his bishop. Here are some excerpts for prayerful reflection:

*"It is very apparent why this weekend has been selected for the collection as to coincide with Veterans' Day. For us, in our Catholic faith, the day also is the feast of St. Martin of Tours. His story of conversion centuries ago is still a challenge for us today as Catholics. Two themes stand out: the encounter with Christ in the form of the poor, and the conviction that the way of Christ is the way of nonviolence. Upon his conversion, he saw his military life as totally being incompatible with the Gospel and with life in Christ. This insight prompted Martin to present himself to his military commander to request a discharge from the army. "I am a soldier of Christ, and it is not lawful for me to fight," he said...*

...We have to ask ourselves as Church leaders, "How are we to preach the Gospel of peace in a time of endless wars? How are we to preach the Gospel of nonviolence in a country immersed in rampant militarism?" These questions challenge us as a Church to the spiritual and moral leadership we need to give our people and nation." [Read the full letter.](#)

### **Pentagon Spending**

A Senate committee again uplifts the injustice of patterns in Pentagon spending... "The Pentagon has been paying hundreds of millions of tax dollars a year to people and companies that don't deserve it, but its financial management shortcomings are so severe that it's made little progress in halting the errors or even measuring their magnitude, according to a report released by a Senate committee Thursday." [Read the full article.](#)

### **Global Peace Index**

A great resource for education and advocacy, the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) released the 2013 edition of its annual Global Peace Index (GPI), and its second annual report on the Positive Peace Index (PPI), which attempts to monitor positive measures of what makes a society peaceful.

The **GPI measures the "absence of violence and absence of the fear of violence"** using socio-economic and statistical indicators of interior and exterior conflict as well as the degree of social security and militarization. The PPI compliments it by attempting to broaden our understanding of international peace by monitoring "formal and informal institutions that move a society away from violence and towards peace," such as the quality of business environment, the corruption level of the government, the availability of education, and the flow of information and resources.

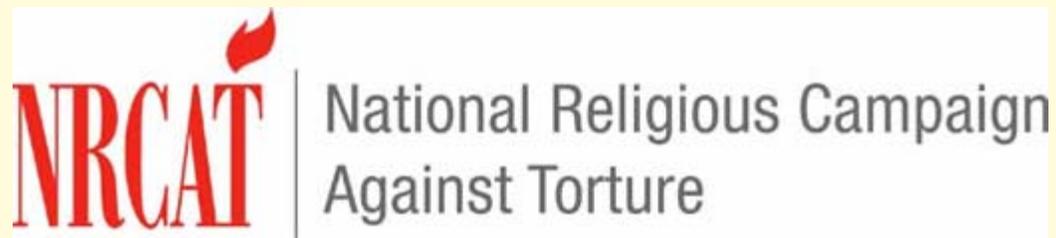
Together, these reports provide us with a comprehensive picture of global peace.

### **Key Findings of the Global Peace Index:**

**The United States ranked 99th in the GPI, largely due to our high level of internment and the availability of guns.** Iceland, Denmark, and New Zealand claimed the top three spots, while Syria, Somalia, and Afghanistan, 160-162 respectively, ranked last. Read the full report and [explore the Interactive GPI Global Map.](#)

## ***Human Rights Day and NRCAT***

*December 10, 2013*



### **Two New Resources**

NRCAT has two new resources available to help educate and mobilize denominations, congregations, campus ministries, and faith groups on torture issues. Please help us by promoting the resources. To assist you, we have prepared sample newsletter blurbs and promotional language for social media. Please share this information with your communications staff.

#### **1. Human Rights Day Toolkit**

The 2013 NRCAT Human Rights Day (Dec. 10) Toolkit: "[Confronting Solitary Confinement in an Age of Mass Incarceration](#)" is available for download.

## 2. Videos

NRCAT "No Doubt it was Torture" and "There is Nothing \_\_\_\_\_About Torture" Videos  
NRCAT has released six films to highlight key findings of the bipartisan Task Force on Detainee Treatment, sponsored by The Constitution Project. The Task Force issued a 600-page report that concluded that the United States, without a doubt, engaged in torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of detainees.

The videos include an 11-minute film, "[No Doubt. It Was Torture.](#)" which is accompanied by a discussion guide and designed to provide a platform for faith communities to discuss the issue of torture in the post 9/11 era.

In addition, there are five short films that follow the formula: "There's Nothing \_\_\_\_\_ About Torture;" the blank is filled with the following adjectives, depending on the content of each particular film: glamorous, healthy, honorable, legal, faithful.

[Read this NRCAT document](#) for more details.

## *Global Hunger Campaign*

**December 10, 2013**

Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services, two U.S. members of *Caritas Internationalis*, are joining forces to support *Caritas'* campaign 'One Human Family, Food for All.' The campaign's focus will raise awareness and encourage action that addresses U.S. and international hunger. **Please join us in prayer at noon, local time, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2013, for the campaign kickoff.** [Pledge your prayerful participation](#) online.

## *Catholic Social Ministry Gathering February 2-5, 2014*

**Register Now for the 2014 Catholic Social  
Ministry Gathering!**

*Becoming "a Church that is Poor and for the Poor"*  
February 2-5, 2014, Omni Shoreham Hotel,  
Washington, DC



Connect with Catholic social ministry professionals from around the country. Exciting plenary presentations, briefings, workshops, and strategy sessions will focus on pressing domestic and international social concerns and our response as Church. Speakers will include John L. Allen Jr., senior correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter* and Rev. James Martin SJ, Editor-at-Large of *America* magazine and author of numerous books.

Act now to be part of our special initiatives developing [diverse leaders](#) and [young leaders](#) in Catholic social ministry.

**Join the discussion and be part of the solution.**

To register or for more information visit: [www.CatholicSocialMinistryGathering.org](http://www.CatholicSocialMinistryGathering.org).

## *Philippines Appeal*



The Redemptorists have written [a letter of appeal](#) for assistance to millions of Filipinos. "By now, you know about the impact of the Super Typhoon Haiyan (locally called "Yolanda") as it made landfall in the central and southern islands of the Philippines last Friday, November 8, 2013. The devastation is massive and the consequences tragic for the millions of Filipino people." Read [an article from the Manila Standard](#) about the situation.



### *Columbans Link Typhoon to Climate Change*

"The Columban Missionary Society believes so, linked to its own experience in 16 countries and after listening to the vast majority of the world's climate scientists who have predicted increasingly severe weather linked to a warming planet. The strength of tropical storms such as Haiyan is connected to sea temperatures, for as the oceans warm with climate change, there is extra energy in the system. Pacific ocean waters are warming faster than expected, and there is a broad scientific consensus that typhoons are now increasing in strength. All this is bad news for the Philippine archipelago of islands, which has just been hit by the strongest storm ever to hit land, and which may face another typhoon within days." Learn

more by [reading their full statement](#).

## *UN Successes*

### *Four Cheers for the UN*

by Jeffrey Sachs

It is worth taking a moment to cheer the United Nations for its outstanding successes this past week. The UN is the global home of diplomacy, the art of maintaining peace and co-operation in a world all too ready to head to war. Sometimes it succeeds; often it is brushed aside, by great and small powers alike. Four times last week the UN proved its enduring worth.

The first, of course, was Syria. While the American people deserve the top credit for rejecting President Barack Obama's initial proposals to bomb Syria, and Vladimir Putin deserves the second spot for proposing a peaceful resolution in which Damascus relinquishes its chemical weapons, the UN deserves ample kudos for providing the framework in which the US-Russian diplomatic deal over the country will be consummated and even extended into a more durable peace.

The second UN success was Iran.... Presidents Obama and Hassan Rouhani wisely seized the moment last week to begin thawing relations that have been frozen in hate and mistrust for more than three decades.

The third success was in global development.... Last week marked the UN General Assembly's final review of the MDG effort, and governments left New York with new tools in their poverty-fighting arsenal, such as the scaling up of smartphone strategies for health and education.

The fourth success, albeit provisional, was in environmental sustainability, an arena of persistent failure to date.... At the UN last week, the member states adopted an important agreement to carry the Sustainable Development Goals to a successful launch in 2015, ostensibly to cover the period to 2030.

Read the [full article here](#).

### *J/P Ministry Tip: Fair Trade*



As Thanksgiving and the Christmas season approaches, let's center on the gift of our lives and the Gift of Christ.

As many in our culture often express this gratitude through sharing gifts with others, I encourage you to educate and provide opportunities for your religious communities and ministries to be exposed to the issue of fair trade. Catholic Relief Services has [great resources on the fair trade issue](#) and the people it impacts.

- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference*

CMSM



*of bishops and other major groups in church and society;  
· provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

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It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations,  
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