December 2014

Introduction
With hope for your enjoying of Advent. Below you’ll find a brief review of our collective advocacy accomplishments this year, the CIA torture report, update on Syria/Iraq, immigration details on the executive order, upcoming human trafficking events, Church leadership shifting on nuclear deterrence, and Christmas homily tips, etc. May you sense the warmth of Christmas and “God with us!”

Accomplishments This Year

Below are some of the accomplishments your advocacy through CMSM and other coalition partners have enjoyed this past year.

Thank you all for your participation, especially Bro. Brian McLauchlin’s (SVD) volunteer work at CMSM and Fr. Neil Pezzulo’s (Glenmary) leadership as chair of CMSM’s Justice and Peace Committee!

1. Immigration: CMSM advocacy and mobilization helped lead to an executive order by the President to ease the fears of 5 million immigrants. CMSM took a lead with some other partners in the faith community to highlight and mobilize around the role of for-profit prisons and the bed quota. CMSM helped to increase attention to root causes in the faith community and the US government. We also initiated an immersion trip to the border in AZ.

2. Middle East: CMSM has taken a lead with some other partners in the faith community to advocate for better, more effective, healthier, and humanizing ways to engage ISIS with alternatives to violence. We also were invited to two television interviews regarding our advocacy.
3. **Torture**: CMSM participated in religious coalition efforts toward the release of the report on CIA torture.

4. **Economic Justice**: CMSM helped to protect funding for poverty focused development aid in our foreign assistance budget.

5. **Pentagon Spending**: CMSM helped develop a workshop on this topic for USCCB’s annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering coming up in February and participated in a highly attended webinar for the broader religious community.

6. **Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping and Protection**: CMSM helped educate and advocate the US Government, key NGO’s, Catholic Relief Services, and the USCCB about this emerging and proven practice. Our efforts helped lead to what we believe to be the first US Government funding for this practice ever, as we transform the way we engage conflict. They funded the Nonviolent Peaceforce in South Sudan. Our efforts also helped link Nonviolent Peaceforce and Cure Violence toward their application and reception of a $2 million grant from the European Union to provide trainings for Syrian civil society actors.

7. **Ecumenical Advocacy Days**: CMSM joined the leadership team to help organize this conference and develop the just peace theme. We organized workshops on restorative justice, unarmed civilian protection in S. Sudan, and local peace teams. We also spoke at the Catholic session on the potential shift from “just war” to a “just peace” approach to conflict.

8. **Armed Drones**: CMSM helped develop a workshop on drones for the USCCB’s Catholic Social Ministry Gathering last February and we have been helping to organize the Interfaith Drones Conference coming up in January.

9. We also provided education and engagement on other issues such as climate change, extractive industries, human trafficking, Central African Republic, South Sudan, restorative justice, criminal justice, money in politics, abortion, fracking, the US Catholic Mission Conference, and Campaign Nonviolence (linking poverty, war, and climate change).

---

**CIA Torture Exposed**

The Senate Intelligence Committee finally released the [CIA Torture Report](https://www.cia.gov/cia/reports/torture_report.pdf), which we have been advocating for in partnership with the National Religious Campaign against Torture. It includes at least 54 other countries cooperating with this program. Over $80 million was paid to two psychologist contractors.

**Habits of de-humanization** drawing us away from Christ show up as torture, war, militarization of police...In a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing last week on our latest war, one Senator from WY wanted to make sure Sec. Kerry didn’t support showing "respect and empathy" toward our "enemies." Kerry assured him "we didn’t do this."

BUT, isn’t that exactly what we, especially as Christians, should be doing, otherwise we end up here: torture, war, and militarization of police, etc.?

**Maryknoll’s Response:**

(Excerpts) "Maryknoll missioners often have served in communities alongside torture survivors, and several have experienced dehumanizing torture themselves. We acknowledge the suffering of those who were the victims of this torture program and their families, we apologize for our complacency, and we denounce the use of torture as barbaric and wrong."
The Senate report exposes how our government abandoned moral standards and dishonored our national values of accountability, compassion, justice and human rights. We allowed a government agency to kidnap and torture individuals in secret prisons, built in foreign countries and, as the report shows, paid for with bribes given to foreign officials.” Read Maryknoll’s Full Response here.

**ADVOCATE:** National Religious Campaign against Torture provided talking points for letters to the editor at this critical time in public debate.

---

**Syria / Iraq**

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently passed a new Authorization of Military Force for "ISIL and associated forces" by a 10-8 vote. Yet, the bill was not taken up on the Senate floor, so it will likely be addressed anew in early 2015. On the SFRC, Senator Markey from MA looks to be a helpful ally toward advancing a diplomatic solution. Senator Murphy from CT also had some helpful insights about our double standard regarding humanitarian aid.

Sadly, one senator on the committee from WY wanted to make sure Sec. Kerry didn’t support showing "respect and empathy" toward our "enemies" as Hillary Clinton hinted at in a recent speech. Sec. of State Kerry assured him "we don’t to those we’re fighting.” BUT, isn’t that exactly what we, especially as Christians, should be doing, otherwise we end up developing habits that lead here: torture, war, and militarization of police, etc.?

---

Bishop Francis Kalaba (above) of the Chaldean Eparchy of Saint Thomas the Apostle said when speaking of the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, "**We are called the Church of Martyrs**…. That’s our pain and our saving grace. Our faith isn’t a theory. It’s not a set of teachings. It’s a person and we’re called to be like him. When I look at this evil, I want to be Rambo. But that won’t do any good. We carry the cross for a reason."

Pope Francis in Turkey commented on Syria and Iraq by criticizing the military emphasis and saying: "What is required is a concerted commitment on the part of all, based on mutual trust, which can pave the way to lasting peace, and enable resources to be directed, not to weaponry, but to the other noble battles worthy of man."

**Webinar:** Phyllis Bennis of the Institute of Policy Studies on understanding the U.S.- ISIS crisis. [Click here](#).
Key Argument to consider: Armed military action undermines sustainable political solutions. Many leaders push the argument that there is "no military solution, but armed military action is necessary to get to a political solution." However, what we tend to see is that a significant armed military component actually undermines sustainable political solutions. Most recently we've seen this in Libya, with the ongoing militia violence, torture, etc.; Iraq, with our failed attempt at political reconciliation "after" our war; Syria, with the failure of negotiations after our support for the violent revolution. A recent book called "Why Civilian Resistance Works," co-authored by a former U.S. Dept. of State official, researched nonviolent and violent revolutions over the past 100 years. They found that NV revolutions were TWICE as successful in terms of political objectives, but more importantly at least TEN times more likely to lead to a durable democracy five years after regime change; i.e., a sustainable political solution.

Immigration

OFM Letter
Provincials from the U.S. OFM-Franciscan Provinces sent this letter to the President and Congressional leadership on the Executive Order. Thank you for the witness!

Details on Executive Action

1. FAQs about the new Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) and the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programs
2. Top Ten List on How to Prepare for Administrative Relief

Private prison corporation accidentally tear-gassed children The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), which is the same for-profit prison corporation opening a controversial new detention center for refugee families this week in Dilley, Texas, accidentally tear-gassed children last week at a South Texas middle school near another one of its prisons. Read full article here.

Sanctuary Webinar

If you have questions about the Sanctuary movement including legal concerns, please see The New Sanctuary Movement: A Faith Response to Continuing Deportations available here.

World Day of Migrants and Refugees: Jan. 18th

We recently received a message from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People about this celebration. The theme is "Church without Frontiers, Mother to All." The Holy Father's message is posted here in multiple languages.

Human Trafficking

International Day of Prayer

The Vatican announced that the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Travelers designated February 8 as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. Please remember to promote the
day within your networks! It will be celebrated in all dioceses and parishes in the world, in the groups and schools on the Feast Day of Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese slave, freed, who became a Canossian nun, and was declared a Saint in 2000. The initiative is promoted by the Pontifical Council of Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the International Union of Superiors General. USCCB will be hosting a Mass at the Basilica in Washington, DC.

World Day of Peace Message
Please see the Pope’s Message for the World Day of Peace: "No Longer Slaves, but Brothers and Sisters." Armed conflicts are listed as one of the deeper causes of today’s "slavery."

ADVOCATE: Register for the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering to learn more about advocacy on human trafficking and other urgent issues.

Pope on Criminal Justice Systems

"Out of Control: Pope Denounces Criminal Justice Systems"

by Alex Mikulich, Ph.D.
Jesuit Social Research Institute

"The criminal justice system is out of control," proclaimed Pope Francis to the International Association of Penal Law on October 23, 2014. Francis laments how societies have become overly punitive, thereby losing the capacity to practice the "primacy of life and the dignity of the human person." Sadly, Louisiana is a prime example of a criminal justice system out of control, as the state "locks up more of its people than anywhere in the world." News media headlined the Pope’s call for the abolition of the death penalty and his declaration that the "life sentence was taken out of the Vatican’s Criminal Code" because a "life sentence is just a death penalty in disguise."

A perverse economic system makes Louisiana’s penal system nearly uncontrollable. A majority of Louisiana’s inmates are housed in for-profit facilities, a $182 million industry that relies on a constant flow of inmates for profit. Most private-prison entrepreneurs are also sheriffs, who take most of the $24.39 "per diem" the state pays per inmate per day to buy more vehicles and build profit. Almost none of the per diem is spent for rehabilitation programs." Read the full article here.

ADVOCATE: The Viatorians point to this petition you can sign which will be presented to
IL officials calling for the end of solitary confinement in IL prisons, jails and detention centers. More details [click here].

**ADVOCATE:** Register for Ecumenical Advocacy Days on "Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation," Apr. 17-20, 2015 in DC.

---

**Solidarity with South Sudan**

“This past year has been a very difficult one for South Sudan. The violence that exploded last December has led the country to a civil war. More than 7 million people are facing the threat of hunger. Solidarity works to accompany and empower the people, being present especially during this time of crisis, when our sisters and brothers are suffering the tragic consequences of war, tribalism and the political leaders ‘battle for power.” Read the full Christmas letter [here](#).

---

**Money in Politics**

The Franciscan Action Network encourages us to support the Congress to pass a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United and related cases and curtail the influence of big money in politics. This is part of actions building up to the 5th Anniversary of Citizens United on Jan. 21, 2015.

**ADVOCATE:** Sign their petition [here](#).

---

**Church Leaders Shift: Abolish Nukes Now!**

"The Catholic Church seemed to throw its support behind what is, in Europe at least, an accelerating movement demanding the abolition of nuclear weapons during the first day of the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons on Dec. 8. "Rather than providing security...reliance on a strategy of nuclear deterrence has created a less secure world." Instead, the Holy See argues, the current deterrence regime works "more as an incentive for countries to break out of the non-proliferation regime and develop nuclear arsenals of their own."

Just as bad, Vatican officials added, are the troubling allocations of national resources which
will persist under current nuclear weapons policies. The United States has recently announced plans to spend billions on the modernization of its nuclear force, resources, Vatican officials say, that would do far more common good if they were invested in resolving social inequities." Read the full article here.

Two Bishops Dialog with Lay Peace Advocates

"On the evening of Nov. 11, at historic St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Baltimore, Archbishop Joseph Tobin (Redemptorist) of Indianapolis and Bishop John Michael Botean, head of the Romanian Catholic Eparchy (diocese) of St. George in Canton, Ohio, broke bread with about 20 Catholic peace activists and dialogued about how the Catholic Church could shift from a "just war" to a "just peace" doctrine and spirituality." Eli McCarthy facilitated the exploratory discussion with a presentation on the theological developments of "just peace." Read the full article here.

JP Ministry Tips: Christmas Homilies

This Christmas we all know that many people will join in celebrating Mass. Give Glory to God for this opportunity! Based on the various readings for Christmas, here are some homily tips: Emphasize the deep reality of Jesus being "God with Us" as the full intimacy of God’s love and companionship. Emphasize Jesus as the most crystalized revelation of God’s way for our lives.

As the "Prince of Peace...whose dominion is forever peaceful" (Is. 9. 1-6), we too are invited and challenged to live as peacemakers. This is to love as he loves us, including his nonviolent love of strangers and enemies. You might apply this to family conflicts, urban conflicts with police, U.S. torture (see above), immigrants, war in Syria/Iraq (see above), care for creation, etc.

· assists major superiors in their role as leaders;
· promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;
· provides a corporate influence in church and society.

8808 Cameron Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4152
Tel: 301-588-4030 • Fax: 301-587-4575 • www.cmsm.org

This newsletter is sent to members and associate members of CMSM. It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations, and to others who have expressed an interest.

If you fall into the last category and no longer wish to receive this newsletter, send an e-mail to postmaster@cmsm.org and you will be removed from the list.