



JUST Love

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

For African American History month, consider reading *A More Beautiful History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights*

by Jeanne Theoharis. Theoharis is, with Rev. William Barber, the founder of the New Poor People's Campaign (<https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/>). In her book, Theoharis emphasizes that the civil rights movement was not the accomplishment of a few heroic figures but the result of long term, persevering organizing and agitation by thousands of ordinary people: "We see that far from being acceptable, passive, or unified, the civil rights movement was unpopular, disruptive, and deeply persevering. It had a broad vision for what justice looked like and what equality would entail. Those who drove it forward were old and young, women and men, and most were labeled troublemakers for their work, not just in Selma and Birmingham but also in Detroit and New York...It took relentless courage, effort, and vision to imagine a different America."

On MLK Day, I always remember my visit to Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta a number of years ago. What most moved me was not the beautiful sanctuary, the pulpit from which Dr. King preached, the window of



the agony in the garden which must have had great resonance for him; what moved me was the church basement-green

linoleum floor, piles of folding chairs, battered coffee urns; identical to every church hall I had ever been in. I thought of the people who spent hours planning, reflecting, organizing there. People of heroic courage and perseverance most of whose names are lost to history but who belong to the great company of witnesses. As Ella Baker said, "Martin didn't make the movement. The movement made Martin." We all need to gather in one of those halls, plug in the coffee pot, and start conspiring. Let's make the movement and let the movement make us.

Resources for African American History Month

<https://africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/>
<http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/black-history-month.htm>
<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2019/02/black-history-month-resources-for-the-classroom/>
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/history-black-catholics-in-america-180969271/>

The Theoharis book is available to borrow from the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity. Request at tmoran@scnj.org



Based on the bestselling book by Bryan Stevenson, the film *Just Mercy* presents the stunning and true story of Walter McMillian, a Black man convicted and sentenced to death in Alabama in 1988 for a crime he did not commit. The film illustrates the structural racism endemic to our capital punishment system, and lays bare how this system devalues and cheapens all human life. Consider seeing the movie with friends and using this study guide from the Catholic Mobilizing Network to reflect together on it <https://catholicmobilizing.org/resource/just-mercy-study-guide-printable>

National Migration Week-Promoting a Church and a World for All

On January 8, 2020, the Sisters of Charity celebrated National Migration Week with a prayer service in Holy Family Chapel. Participants were moved by the testimonies of our speakers: Fahim Mashal who spoke from his perspective as a refugee from Afghanistan and Mary and Gerry Gannon who shared how their life has been transformed by their involvement in the welcoming of refugees. As Mary Gannon said in her beautiful sharing, “Our beliefs have made us passionate about helping refugees. We subscribe to a twist on the Serenity Prayer, We no longer accept the things, we are told, we cannot change but rather want to change the things we cannot accept, like hate, intolerance, violence and cruelty.”



As part of our ritual we placed photos on a wall of the children who have died in detention and mourned these victims of senseless American cruelty. The wall was then removed and placed on the top of the altar so that it



became a table – a symbol of hospitality. From the table we received and ate pita bread and dates – ancient symbols of hospitality in the Middle East. We prayed: God of Abundance, God of Welcome, hear our voices raised in prayer. Remove from our hearts all walls of division and suspicion, of prejudice and fear of the stranger. Make our hearts like yours; open, welcoming, fearless and tender. Bless this bread and these dates, ancient symbols of hospitality; signs of the human capacity to share, to nourish, to open doors and open hearts. May this food strengthen us to be instruments of peace and agents of justice. Amen.

To support the Sisters of Charity work with refugees, consider making a contribution to RAMP (Refugee Assistance Morris Partners) <http://www.rampnj.org/>

JPIC Dates in February

2 World Day of Consecrated Life “In recent decades, attentiveness to people's suffering and closeness to those in processes of change have caused religious to be in the vanguard of the cause of justice on behalf of the poor, of indigenous peoples and of the marginalized. Many of them have paid for their involvement with their life. A well-understood theology of liberation and attention to the analysis of social structures from the point of view of a faith vision have helped—and continue to help—consecrated persons to hear the cry of the poor.” *The Consecrated Life and Its Role in the Church and in the World*, 1992

8 Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, patron of the fight against human trafficking. “St. Bakhita, assist all those who are trapped in a state of slavery. Intercede with God on their behalf so that the chains of their captivity can be broken. We beseech you to pray and intercede for all of us: so that we do not fall into indifference, so

that we open our eyes and can look at the misery and wounds of so many brothers and sisters deprived of their dignity and freedom and hear their cry for help.” Pope Francis



11 Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes/World Day of the Sick At Lourdes a spring of water is an instrument of healing. Access to fresh drinking water is a Pro-life issue. What will you do today to reverence water and to extend access of water? <https://water.org/our-impact/water-crisis/>

22 Anniversary of the execution of Sophie and Hans Scholl (1943), martyrs of the White Rose Resistance movement against Nazi Germany. “Stand up for what you believe in even if you are standing alone.” Sophie Scholl