

JPIC Focus News

The Newsletter of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Network

Issue #4. Vol. 21 2017
www.sistersosf.org

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The Refugee Plight Continues *Good News and Bad*

In the world scene refugees continue to leave their countries of origin in large numbers. Violence and destruction force them out. Their journey across land and sea is treacherous and often ends in death. Across the globe, and here in the United States there is an upswing climate of anti-refugee feelings. Congress and the President have banned refugees from twelve countries, all of them except one from Muslim countries.

The lone global figure, Pope Francis, continues to be a voice for the refugees. His words of mercy and welcome speak loudly and clearly to the world.

“For the Christian, hospitality offered to the weary traveler is offered to Jesus Christ himself.”

The good news, small though it may be, offers hope. Groups throughout the globe continue to rally around refugees and their plight. As Franciscans, we have listened and discerned how we can join with others in this call to love and mercy. Our LCC meeting in March and April provided education and lively conversations regarding our direction to address the problems refugees face. We heard first hand from a Toledo refugee family. Their

description of movement from their home country to the United States via refugee camps gave us firsthand information.

The refugee committee will continue to discern what we can do as Sisters of St. Francis alone and in



We belong to
God.
When we
understand the
truth of that
reality,
we see life as
gift, precious and
wild,
meant to be
squandered
on that which
matters:
gratitude,
service, beauty,
truth, mercy,
love.

~Katherine Greiner,
theologian

What can we do?

continued from page 1

collaboration with other agencies and religious congregations. An immediate action was a bake sale, October 31, sponsored by Sister Gretchen and crew, to raise funds for the refugees.

The committee will continue to apprise you of new actions and further education.

US Gun Violence Statistics: 2017



Total Incidents of Gun Violence in the US:
53,239

Total Deaths by Gun Violence in the US:
13,390

Total Injuries by Gun Violence in the US:
27,359

Children (0-11) injured or killed:
635

Teens (12-17) injured or killed:
2,827

Mass Shootings: 311

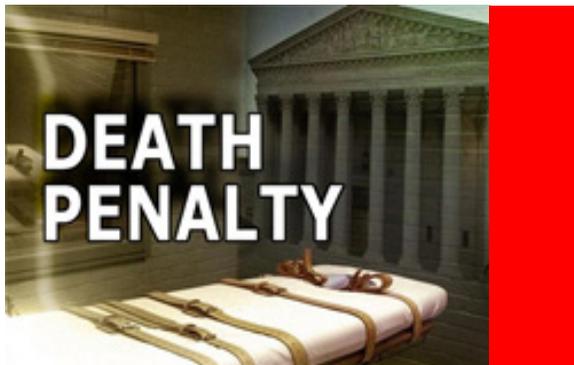
Accidental Shootings: 1,726

Officer Involved Shootings:

Suspect Shot/Killed: 1,794

Officer Shot/Killed: 269

Source of information: Gun Violence Archive, www.gunviolencearchive.org. Numbers are accurate as of November 11, 2017.



In their "Catholic Campaign to End the Use of the Death Penalty, announced March 2006, the Bishops asked us to pray for the victims of crime and their families, those who have been wrongly convicted and those awaiting execution. The following prisoners are on death row, awaiting execution soon. Please keep them in prayer, as well as their families, their victims and the victims' families. Also, please continue to pray for healing in our country that the spirit of peace and reconciliation, rather than violence and revenge, may prevail.

December 2017

14 Juan Castillo, TX

January 2018

18 Anthony Shore, TX

30 William Rayford, TX

February 2018

1 John Battaglia, TX

13 Raymond Tibbetts, OH

22 Thomas Whitaker, TX

Executions in 2017: 23

Executions since the ban was lifted in 1976: 1,465. *Sources for information: Death Penalty Information Center (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org). Numbers are accurate as of November 11, 2017.*

The Cost of War

“We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our streets to deport the undocumented, to rip mothers and fathers from their families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies, rather than our brothers and sisters in terrible need. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men and women and children as sources of fear rather than as children of God. We must disrupt those who seek to rob our medical care, especially from the poor. We must disrupt those who would take even food stamps and nutrition assistance from the mouths of children.” *Quote from San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy in a speech delivered to community organizers in Modesto, California, in February 2017.*

Estimated cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to date:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Iraq | \$ 820,993,135,604 (every hour: \$117,035) |
| Afghanistan | \$ 789,053,7979,264 (every hour: \$4 million) |
| Total | \$1,797,612,917,990 (every hour: \$8.36 million) |

For the Department of Defense, taxpayers in the United States are paying \$528.49 billion. Not including the cost of war. Here’s what those tax dollars could have paid for instead:

- 7.13 million Clean Energy Jobs created for 1 year, or
- 222.93 million Children Receiving Low-Income Healthcare for 1 year, or
- 115.91 Scholarships for University Students for 4 years, or
- 51.15 million military veterans receiving VA medical care for 1 year

US Military Deaths: 6,931 (Iraq: 4,526 Afghanistan: 2,405)

Iraqi civilians killed: 179,470 – 201,101

Sources for information: *The National Priorities Project* (www.nationalpriorities.org/costofwar), the *Iraq Coalition Causality Count* (<http://icausalities.org/>) and *Iraq Body Count* (www.iraqbodycount.org). Numbers are accurate as of November 11, 2017.



Here is an update on the finances in Clare’s Pence. Our fall LCCs brought in \$538! Thank you for your generosity! Since June, 2017, we have awarded \$1,639 in grants to four women. We’ve received \$758 in donations including the LCC donations. As of the middle of May we

have \$2,540 in the Clare’s Pence fund. This will help us with the requests that we receive for the Christmas season. Thank you for all that you do to support Clare’s Pence so that we are able to lend our support to women and children in need.

Every little bit helps!



Support for the Dreamers

Who Are the Dreamers?

The Dreamers are an estimated 800,000 young adult immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children. They have been educated in this country, they have lived and worked peacefully in our communities, and since 2012, they have been able to work legally and stay in this country without fear of immediate deportation because of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.



A study of DACA recipients (the Dreamers) and their families conducted by the Center for American Progress shows that 95% are currently working or in school. Since 2012 when DACA was initiated, 63% have gotten a better paying job, 90% have gotten a driver's license or state ID, 54% have bought their first car, and 12% have bought their first home.

Why Do They Need Help?

Unfortunately, the Dreamers' achievements can very easily be negated. On September 5, 2017, President Trump terminated DACA, eliminating the fragile security the Dreamers relied on. Without legislation to protect them, everything they have worked for can be taken away, and they can readily be detained and deported.

Why Should We Care?

As Sisters of St. Francis and Associates, we must care about these vulnerable members

of our communities because we are committed "to works that reverence human dignity, embrace the poor and marginalized, and respect the gift of all creation."

As messengers of peace, we are called to welcome the stranger (Mt. 25:35) and care for those most in need (Mt. 25:40). As Catholic Social Justice teaching and Pope Francis remind us, most of us were once immigrants. And, as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' chief communications officer, James Rogers, says, "The Bible is clear: welcoming immigrants

is indispensable to our faith" (*from "U.S. Bishops Fire Back at Bannon's Comments on Immigrants and DACA, Sept. 7, 2017, cruxnow.com*).

What Can We Do?

We can put our faith into action by urging our members of Congress to pass the Dream Act. First introduced in 2001, the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (Dream) Act has never been passed by Congress. The latest version of the Act, proposed in the Senate in July, 2017, would protect anyone who has been in the U.S. since age 18 and has lived here for four years or more while also providing a long-term path to citizenship. Please read more about this legislation on the website of the Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, and contact your members of Congress' offices (numbers available at contactingcongress.org).

-Sisters Sharon Havelak and Pat Gardner