



# Where Justice and Truth Meet

February 2022

***“Free our hearts to recognize and attend to Christ in hidden and unexpected places.”***

*– A Prayer for the Life of the World*

## Interconnection and Solidarity:

*Why all of a sudden are we engaging on justice issues related to LGBTQ+ persons?*

*Why do we have to talk about gender identity and gender rights?*

Similar questions were posed in relation to the rights of native peoples in the Americas by European lawyers when Dominican missionaries in Hispaniola (current day Haiti and Dominican Republic) started to advocate for the recognition of the natives' rights and raised the question of their humanity. “Are not they not human? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves?” These were some of the rhetorical questions posed by Anton de Montesinos, OP, to his own Spaniard contemporaries during one Advent Mass in 1511.



Similar questions were posed in relation to the rights of enslaved persons in our country. Antislavery initiatives advocated for the abolition of chattel slavery, recognizing the dignity and personhood of enslaved persons. The 13th amendment, ratified in December, 1865, formally abolished slavery in the United States. While our country found a final constitutional solution to the issue of slavery, the practice continued long after that date and morphed into various forms of control to subjugate others.

Similar questions were posed in relation to women reclaiming the recognition of their place in the public arena as they started the women's rights movement and suffrage movements in the 1840s. Why all of a sudden do we have to occupy ourselves about the right of women to vote? And yet even with the passage of the 19th

amendment that secured for all women the right to vote, in practice many, if not most, women of color were excluded.

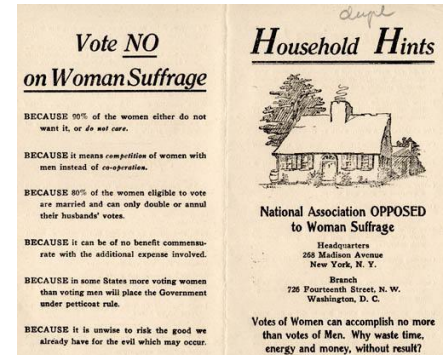
We call these examples the evolution of conscience and consciousness. As we grow in understanding, our perspective is transformed. We are awakened to see things from the perspective of those who are invisible and alienated, but present in our midst. Their humanity, their identity, their rights, have to be fully recognized in society and within our Church.

Indigenous persons, enslaved persons, and women were present in society long before their voices were allowed in the public sphere. They were present long before their full humanity and their rights began to be recognized. Though that recognition has begun, there is more work to be done to bring it to fruition.

We are awakening to see ourselves as a society and as church from the perspective that includes LGBTQ+ peoples. And we must. We are in the midst of an emerging shift in consciousness. And yet, LGBTQ+ people were present all along our history as humanity – invisible, alienated, condemned and pushed to suffer violence from society and from the pulpit.

LZ Granderson shares his story in this [TED talk](#) and, with humor, exposes the “gay lifestyle” for what it isn't, and what the real “LGBTQ+ agenda” is about. Since the presentation is not from the last few years, some of the references to legal impediments no longer apply.

To be more informed about what LGBTQ+ refers to, check out this [GLOSSARY](#).



## We have Family in Ukraine

Daily in the news we hear about the possibility of war in Ukraine. We see photos of the machinery of war and hear about “military exercises” and troops at the border. News commentaries frequently focus on how it will affect “us”—our economy, energy supply, etc. Only rarely—if at all—do we hear the voices of those caught in the midst of the chaos and crisis.

We have (Dominican) brothers and sisters in Ukraine. We were invited to hear their voices and pray with them for peace during the [Dominican Month for Peace](#) in December 2020. We invite you to return to those resources and reconnect with our Ukrainian brothers and sisters. Listen again to the stories they chose to share of a land and people with a [rich history](#) and [hope for a peaceful future](#).



The Dominican Family in Ukraine includes 25 friars, 18 sisters from 4 congregations, 82 laity in 7 cities, and 6 youth groups. They tell us:

Care for the environment is always a social concern as well.

Let us hear both the cry of earth and the cry of the poor.

- Pope Francis

Dominicans are very involved in several projects that promote peace and accompaniment of victims of the separatist conflict that has been ongoing since 2014. [St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv](#), for many years, has been caring for socially disadvantaged children: orphans, street children, sick children and children from disadvantaged families. Since the start of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, the Center has opened its doors to children whose childhood has been poisoned by war. It has adopted more than 220 children from the combat zone, and offered them psychological and spiritual support and the opportunity to recover in a safe environment.

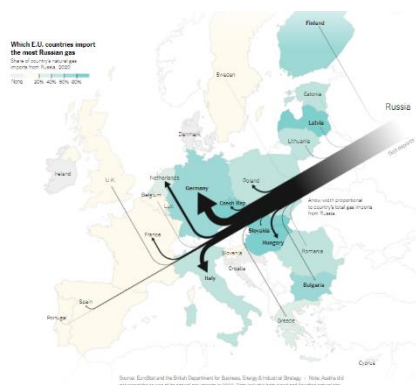
[Click for a 3-minute video from the children at St. Martin de Porres Center in Fastiv.](#)



*Laudato Si'* reminds us that [EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED](#). **All people and all creation is one interconnected whole.** Both human and environmental issues are inextricably linked in every situation, including the crisis in Ukraine.

Some NATO allies are hesitant to join the fight against Russia because much of Europe's natural gas comes from Russia. And there would be negative effects on Russian society if Europe begins to rely on other sources.

[Click on the map for larger view with analysis.](#)



Natural gas is non-renewable energy source. Drilling wells affects wildlife and land use, leading to collapse of local ecosystems. Hydraulic fracking causes earthquakes and overburdens local water sources. Pipelines cause

habitat fragmentation in nature preserves, while leaks from pipes cause environmental problems in both groundwater and on the surface. Though in the final stage, burning natural gas may emit less carbon dioxide than oil or coal-fired power plants, its combustion still releases methane and lowers air quality.

**Knowing that you love the earth changes you, activates you to defend and protect and celebrate. But when you feel the earth loves you in return, that feeling transforms the relationship from a one-way street into a sacred bond.**

Robin Wall Kimmerer  
in [Braiding Sweetgrass](#)

