



Where Justice and Truth Meet

April 2016

"With active hope we choose to imagine the world we want to inhabit and accept the urgent responsibility to collaborate in bringing it to birth."

Together – Birthing Anew, Chapter 2014



Can Modern War Be “Just”?

The Vatican is hosting a [conference](#) this month ongoing move away from the just war theory to a more expansive call to proactive peacemaking, bringing together experts and activists engaged in global nonviolent struggles with the aim of developing a new moral framework.

The just war theory is a tradition that uses a series of criteria to evaluate whether use of violence can be considered morally justifiable. First referred to by fourth century bishop St. Augustine of Hippo, it was later articulated in depth by St. Thomas Aquinas and is today outlined by four conditions in the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) (#2309).

A number of theologians have criticized continued use of the theory in modern times, due to the powerful capabilities of modern weapons and evidence of the effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns in response to unjust aggression.

U.S. Pledge to Green Climate Fund

Catholic Climate Covenant and other faith-based organizations welcomed the recent [announcement](#) that the United States made its first \$500 million contribution under a four-year, \$3 billion pledge to support the [Green Climate Fund](#) (GCF). The GCF was established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to assist the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, especially least developed nations, small island developing states and African nations. We extend our thanks to all who reached out to your members of Congress. Our joint efforts led to success!



Federal Court Affirms Constitutional Right to Healthy Planet



On April 8, 2016, U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas Coffin of the federal District Court in Eugene, OR, [decided in favor](#) of 21 young Plaintiffs, ages 8-19, and Dr. James Hansen on behalf of future generations, who sued the federal government for violating their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property, and their right to essential public trust resources, by permitting, encouraging, and otherwise enabling continued exploitation, production, and combustion of fossil fuels. The court rejected the arguments of the government and fossil fuel industry that Congress could sell the coastal sea waters of the U.S. to Exxon.

[Judge Coffin's decision](#) puts climate science squarely in front of the federal courts. The next step is for the Court to order the government to cease jeopardizing the climate system for present and future generations.

Earth Day Resources

[Prayer Service](#) honoring Earth Day

[Video reflection](#) featuring Jubilee Farm

Faith in Public Life: Voter Discernment

As people of faith, we believe the 2016 election presents an important opportunity to reflect on our deepest values and commitment to the common good. These reflection guides can help!

1. [Take It to Prayer: A Spiritual Reflection for Voters](#)
2. [Faith in Public Life Voter Reflection Guide](#)



“A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground.”

Sr. Marcelline Koch heard these words from Canadian indigenous women when she attended the 2016 U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. The women spoke for women throughout the world when they declared in the next sentence: **Our hearts are strong!**

8,000 women from around the world came to the United Nations in New York to speak for themselves and the women in their countries. Numerous sessions focused on the violence that is a part of women’s experience. 60.3 million women live in parts of the world where violence against women isn’t a crime. This violence is a disease; when it gets to the whole body, it is hard to cure.

While women in the U.S. suffer violence, our experience doesn’t match that of girls and women who struggle against female genital mutilation, child marriage, and conflict violence. Our efforts need to be in solidarity with all girls and women.

Though the areas of violence can be named separately, they are also interrelated. Under the umbrella of patriarchy, the violence of trafficking, prostitution, pornography, female genital mutilation, child marriage, and rape in war speaks to the perceived right and power over women’s bodies.

Violence against women is exacerbated during time of conflict. If the conflict ceases, women are excluded from the peacemaking efforts. It is often said that they need training, need to speak with one voice. Yet training in peacemaking isn’t required of the men at the table, nor are they expected to speak with one voice. Women care, cook, and run households. Why couldn’t they be at the peace table? Not only is it women’s right to be at table, they are helpful to the process.

If girls and women escape a war torn area, they are at great risk as refugees. Jordan,

which has hosted refugees since 1948, has a population of 9.5 million, and 2.5 million are refugees. 80% of these refugees are women. Men cannot get work, and that often leads to domestic violence.

17 years is the average length of displacement for refugees. The social effects of this displacement lead to child marriages (a cultural practice and a way to “protect” the girl), prostitution, and sexual exploitation. Underage marriages are not documented, wives have no rights, and children are born stateless.

Inheritance laws prohibit women from inheriting and owning land. Thus, widows whose husbands are killed in conflicts are left defenseless. Women make up 67% of the rural work force, but cannot inherit the land they cultivate.

For development to occur in the world, gender violence needs to be eliminated. And women are speaking and acting for that to happen. Women are resisting; and women are resilient. That gives us all great hope.

CSW60 Commission on the Status of Women
14–24 March 2016
WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT | SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from March 14-24, 2016.

Women’s empowerment and its link to sustainable development was the focus of the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women ([CSW60](#)). Global leaders, NGOs, private sector, and activists met to discuss how to ensure women and girls are at the forefront of their plans to implement the new 15-year global development roadmap. Adopted by all United Nations Member States in September 2015, the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) is the successor framework to the Millennium Development Goals. Participants also reviewed progress on the [agreed conclusions](#) of the 57th session: *The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.*