



# JUST Love

JANUARY 2017



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



*America's Original Sin* - Sisters of Charity Congregation Archivist Sister Noreen Neary reflects on her own experience of racism and white privilege...

Jim Wallis describes racism as America's original sin. From the "discovery" of the Americas by European explorers through centuries of chattel slavery through Jim Crow to the ridiculous, long-held refusal to acknowledge that President Obama is a natural born citizen, racism is an ugly thread that runs through our past and our present. (Just eight years ago, we were congratulating ourselves on having achieved a post-racial society. . .how ironic!)

I believe that all of us who are privileged because of the amount of melanin in our skin need to conduct an examination of conscience of how we participate - consciously or unconsciously - in that sin. I'll go first.

Conscious sin: jokingly calling one of our Chinese Sisters of Charity "Mary Wong, the pagan baby" for many years. It was done in fun and it never seemed to bother my sister, but I am ashamed of it today.

Unconscious sin: some years ago, I was sitting at a traffic light waiting to make a right turn onto a very wide street, in South Orange. After the light turned green I had to wait for two teenage African-American girls to cross the street before I could turn. They seemed to be sauntering and I thought all sorts of nasty things about them and their arrogant, in-your-face, rude "attitude." I was ashamed when they crossed the street and I recognized them as two of

my students whom I respected and loved. These girls weren't rude or arrogant or full of attitude. I projected all of that on them because I saw their skin color; I didn't see them as real people.

I am still reeling from the presidential election. I do not believe that everyone who voted for Mr. Trump is racist or misogynistic or disrespectful of differently-abled persons, but that is how he portrayed himself. Any one and every one of those reasons prevented me from voting for him. I've read and heard the reasons why some people I love voted for Mr. Trump. I respect their choice, but I don't understand how those reasons outweighed what I found to be so deplorable and dangerous in his candidacy. I pray for humility and charity for myself, that I may help to mend relationships with my family and friends. I pray for humility and charity for our country that we may live out our highest ideals.

*For further reflection...*

-The website of Karen House, a Catholic Worker community in St. Louis, MO, had an excellent collection of resources on racism/white privilege <http://newsite.karenhousecw.org/ferguson-mike-brown-anti-racism-and-white-privilege>

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

**SPEAK UP:** Traffickers depend on our silence. Recognize the signs of human trafficking <https://polarisproject.org/recognize-signs>. If you see something, do not intervene yourself but call the police or the National Trafficking Hotline number 1-888-373-7888. Enter the number in your phone today.

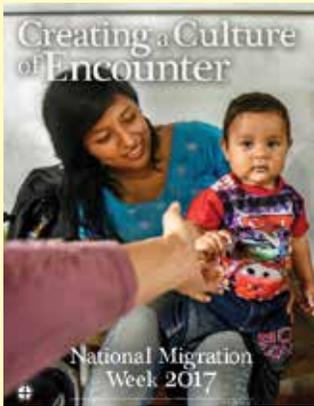
**EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS:** Organize a workshop on trafficking for your colleagues/work group/church/book club. The PJEI Office can help you do this [pjei@scnj.org](mailto:pjei@scnj.org) /Distribute the SC Trafficking prayer cards in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole – available from the PJEI Office/ Check out the resources of the US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking <http://www.sistersagainstrafficking.org/>



**DONATE** to an anti-trafficking organization: national organizations like Polaris <https://polarisproject.org/policy-legislation> or local organizations like the NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking <http://www.njhumantrafficking.org/>

**SHOP SLAVERY FREE:** Support companies that provide employment to trafficking survivors like Thistle Farms <http://thistlefarms.org/>. In general, buy Fair Trade products as often as you can.

## NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK



January 8-14, 2017 IS National Migration Week. At the link below find resources for celebration the week in your parishes or ministries. <http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/>

We rejoice in the ways in which Sister of Charity, associates and coworkers continue the long Charity tradition of service to people on the move and welcome to new immigrants – our communities that house asylum seekers; our sisters involved in *First Friends*; our sisters and associates involved in *RAMP* (Refugee Assistance Morris Partners); the services provided to immigrants in our educational and health care institutions and other sponsored works like Josephine's Place; the ministry of empowerment and personal growth done by Las Samaritanas of the PJEI Office; and most importantly the ways in which our sisters and associates are following the lead of Pope Francis in “creating a culture of encounter.”



### HAPPY FEAST OF SAINT ELIZABETH SETON – JANUARY 4

“In the deep silence of your courageous heart, Elizabeth Seton, Soul Sister and Friend, the Magnificat bubbled up from the depths of your soul as you fed on the bread of the Eucharist for the first time.

May this melody of Justice, of righting wrong relationships, become the song of the universe, as we move ever further away from silent agreement with patterns of domination, to cherish Earth and celebrate our kinship with all creatures. Elizabeth, as you changed your understanding of Eucharist, you changed your life.” Sister Vivienne Joyce, SC (New York)



### DATES IN JANUARY

**1 International Day of Prayer for Peace** “God is a God of peace. There is no god of war.” Pope Francis

**4 Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** “I’ll be wild Betsy to the last.” Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton in a letter written shortly before her death. What world situation makes you wild for justice?

**8-14 National Migration Week** <http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/>

**16 Martin Luther King Day** “We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear.”

**1/29-2/4 Catholic Schools Week** – If you attended a Catholic school or religious education what kind of formation did you receive in Catholic Social Teaching? What kind of formation does your parish give now? How can you help in this area?