

# Justice, Peace and Life

March 2015



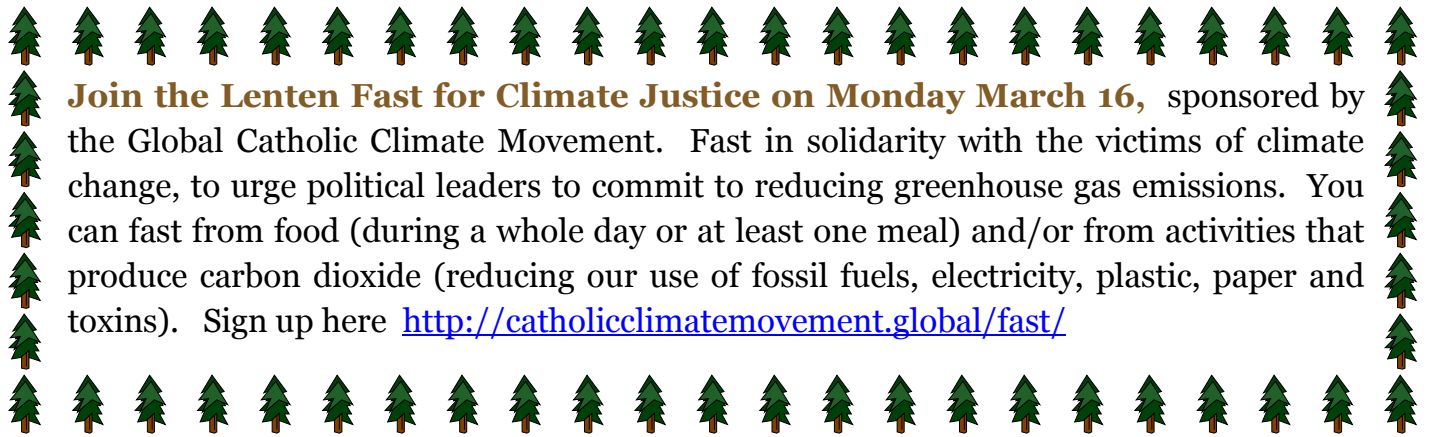
*“When the church hears the cry of the oppressed it cannot but denounce the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate the misery from which the cry arises.”*

*~ Archbishop Oscar Romero*

March 24 will mark the 35th anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, murdered while celebrating Mass. He was known to be a bookish, quiet man who said little about the repressive society in his small Central American country, a society in which the vast majority of the people lived in poverty while a small percentage held most of the land, power and wealth. When he became archbishop, he began to change. He saw firsthand the state-sponsored violence done to those who spoke up for workers' rights, for land reform, for democracy. Friends of his working for social justice were raped, tortured and murdered by the government-supported death squads. He was transformed into an outspoken critic of violence and political repression. Sadly, his pleas to the U.S. government to stop sending weapons to El Salvador were not heeded. In a public homily the day before he was killed, he took the extraordinarily brave and dangerous step of beseeching soldiers to disobey orders “contrary to the law of God”, saying:

*“The church cannot remain silent before such an abomination. ...In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cry rises to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you, **I order you: stop the repression.**”*

Last month, Pope Francis declared that Romero was a martyr of the Church, killed out of hatred for his faith. Archbishop Romero will be beatified on May 23. May his example remind us that we too can be transformed, we too can move from quiet acceptance of the way things are to courageous action. While most of us will not lose our lives for speaking out against unjust wars, police brutality, unfair labor conditions and wealth inequality, this witness to the truth can still cost us. Perhaps we'll lose some leisure time, privilege or friends. We are strengthened by Archbishop Romero's words that remind us, “We know that every effort to improve society, above all when society is so full of injustice and sin, is an effort that God blesses; that God wants; **that God demands of us.**”



**Join the Lenten Fast for Climate Justice on Monday March 16**, sponsored by the Global Catholic Climate Movement. Fast in solidarity with the victims of climate change, to urge political leaders to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. You can fast from food (during a whole day or at least one meal) and/or from activities that produce carbon dioxide (reducing our use of fossil fuels, electricity, plastic, paper and toxins). Sign up here <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/fast/>

## ***SAVE THE DATE....***

# ***2015 Diocesan Social Ministry Conference Care for God's Creation and the Poor***



**Saturday May 9, 2015  
9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
Notre Dame Retreat House  
5151 Foster Road  
Canandaigua, NY 14424**



**\$15 registration fee, includes lunch and materials**

Featuring Guest Speakers

Dr. Gerry Gacioch, Catholic Climate Ambassador for the Catholic Climate Covenant  
on "Catholic Social Teaching and Climate Change"

and

John Strazzabosco, trainer for Focus Plus mentoring program  
on "The Anatomy of Poverty: What Traps People in Generational Poverty"

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