

JPIC Report



(Left to right) Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, O.M.I.; Fr. Fernando Velazquez, O.M.I.

United Nations: Celebrating 75 Years

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POPE FRANCIS

"Genuine social friendship within a society makes true universal openness possible." (No. 99)

Fratelli Tutti, 2020,
Encyclical Letter of the
Holy Father

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Fr. Séamus Finn, O.M.I.



We first heard about COVID-19 as we welcomed 2020. It has now remained with us all across different regions of the world, at different levels of intensity for nearly a year, and as much as we want to see it end, we realize that there are still months to go before we can claim victory. By all the measuring sticks we have at hand to calculate levels of loss and pain, disruptions, amended schedules and responses, these past 12 months come very close or top the list of all previous global calamities.

So many of our usual rhythms of social and communal lives have been upended, forcing us to re-examine the significance and quality of many rituals and activities that were part of our lives. The pandemic has cut across continents, countries and regions. It has interrupted the flow of our religious, commercial and political practices in innumerable ways. On the positive side, we have adapted and constructed new patterns and practices and welcomed many of the tools that technology has developed to support our commitments to each other, our families, our neighbors and our fellow citizens.



Fr. Valentine Talang, O.M.I. Bangladesh,
pours sanitizer

The work of JPIC has also been disrupted by the pandemic and we are diligently adapting and learning in order to be faithful to our vision. We too have taken advantage of new resources, tools and avenues to somewhat circumvent this disruptive period imposed on us and upon people and institutions across the world. Lockdowns and other restrictions seem to have encouraged more creativity, as told by people in sharing their stories of struggle and disruption in their communities. They share how they have improvised and developed responses to meet the needs of family, friends and neighbors. Moreover, internet connectivity has offered increased access to resources for prayer, reflection, conversation, networking, collaboration and inclusion.

We have heard from many of our collaborators in different regions of the world and through networking, have been able to offer support and advice where needed. We have also been able to redirect the extra time saved from restricted travel and commuting to join in numerous webinars and strategy sessions that align with our priorities. Our two special work priorities are getting people access to basic necessities, including medicines and services for those directly affected by the pandemic and urging government and corporations to support workers furloughed or laid off as a result of the pandemic.

On a parallel track, many other issues of a more systemic and long-term nature have been laid bare during this time. The damage reflected in the climate crisis and biodiversity loss that our financial system has visited upon the environment continues unabated. The inequality, exclusion and discrimination that the same system has supported and exacerbated has reached new levels and brought about calls for a serious examination of the institutions, frameworks and structures that have allowed this to happen.

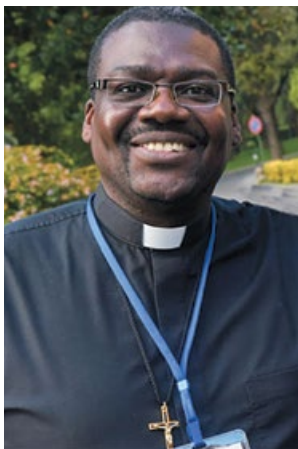
In the two encyclicals, *Laudato Sí* and *Fratelli Tutti*, signed by Pope Francis, we are invited into an open reflection and a deep conversation about the historical roots and causes of these issues. We are called to a personal conversion and institutional transformation that will place all of our social, political and economic systems and practices within an environmental context to protect and sustain the only common home we share with so many other species.

We celebrate Advent with hope for our promised futures. Let us walk together in faith.



NEWS & HAPPENINGS

Father Louis Lougen, OMI, the Superior General of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate recently appointed **Fr. Jean-Hérick Jasmin, O.M.I.**, of the Province of Haiti, as Director of the General Service for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, for a first term of three years.



Fr. Jean-Hérick JASMIN, O.M.I.

Father Jasmin, was born in Cap-Haïtien, Haiti, on 16 January 1972. He began his vocation formation with the Oblates in 1993 and entered the pre-novitiate in 1995. He made his 1st Vows in 1996 and Perpetual Vows in 2002. He was ordained to the sacrament of priesthood in 2003.

In the same year, 2003, Fr. Jasmin received his first obedience to the Oblate mission in Colombia. He was first the socius and then the Director of Formation in Colombia for nine years. In the meantime, he completed his master's degree and doctorate in Theology of Action, at the Javeriana University from 2007 to 2014.



Rev. Aniedi Okure, O.P.

Thank You Father Aniedi for Your Years of Selfless Service to AFJN

After serving as Executive Director of AFJN for nine years (2011-2020), Rev. Aniedi Okure, O.P. is moving to a new assignment in Europe. Father Aniedi has been appointed the Dominican General Promoter for Justice and Peace and Permanent Delegate to the United Nations. AFJN is blessed to have had such a gifted leader over these many years. Father Aniedi brings a wealth of his experience to bear on his new engagements as he continues to advance the cause of justice around the globe. May God Bless you now and always Fr. Aniedi!

Archbishop Bejoy Nichephorus D'Cruze, OM.I., the new head of Dhaka Archdiocese in Bangladesh, was installed as the new Archbishop of Dhaka at St. Mary's Cathedral Church in Bangladesh's capital city on November 27.



Archbishop Bejoy D'Cruze, O.M.I.

Bishop D'Cruze was born on Feb. 9, 1956, in Dhaka. He made his First Vows as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate on September 6, 1983 in Bandarawela (Sri Lanka), and was

ordained a priest on February 20, 1987 in Golla (Bangladesh). He has obtained his Ph.D. in Dogmatic Theology from the Gregorian University in Rome.

He has pastored several parishes, was Rector of the Oblate Juniorate (Dhaka), Superior of De Mazenod Scholasticate (Dhaka) and also the Oblate Delegation Superior from 2001-2005. As a bishop, he was first called to serve the diocese of Khulna, from 2005 to 2011, and later was installed the first Bishop of Sylhet on September 30, 2011.



Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, O.M.I.

THE UNITED NATIONS: Celebrating 75 Years

By **Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, O.M.I.**

On October 24th, 2020 the United Nations celebrated 75 years of existence. During these 75 years this multilateral organization has brought together 193 countries of the world, many regional country organizations, as well as other stakeholders, including civil society and faith-based organizations.

We, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate are officially recognized as such by the United Nations.

We participate as O.M.I. and as a part of VIVAT International, a grouping of 12 religious congregations of women and men.

During this year's commemoration, people from all over the world, as individuals or members of groups and organizations, have participated in a huge effort to identify successes, failures and challenges, with the aim of "building back better" into the future.

Contd. pg 6

UN Celebrates 75...contd

The United Nations Charter was finalized in April 1945 in San Francisco, signed by representatives of 50 countries on June 26 and finally became operational on October 24, 1945 — 75 years ago.

The General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice and the U.N. Secretariat are six main parts of the U.N. The central mission of the U.N. is maintaining international peace and security, which is accomplished by pre-empting and preventing conflict and persuading parties in conflict to reconcile. They also work to improve conditions that preserve peace.

Over the past 75 years the U.N. and its agencies have worked on a wide range of issues. They include maintaining peace and security, disarmament, clearing land mines and the prevention of nuclear

proliferation and genocide. The U.N. has also worked on counterterrorism, the peaceful use of outer space, delivering humanitarian aid, providing food, sustainable development, environmental protection, disease control, human rights, gender equality and the promotion of rule of law in national and international relations.

The U.N. is credited with helping negotiate 172 peaceful settlements and serving over 30 million refugees. It has provided safe drinking water to more than a billion people and food to millions of people across 80 nations. It has assisted countries with their election processes, provided vaccinations for children, helped millions of women access maternal healthcare and protected human rights through some 80 treaties and declarations. Currently, approximately 100,000 peacekeepers from 120 countries are serving in 13 missions around the world. The U.N. and its agencies have had success in coordinating global efforts against diseases such as HIV/

AIDS, Ebola, cholera, influenza, yellow fever, meningitis and COVID-19 and has helped eradicate smallpox and polio from most of the world. Ten U.N. agencies and personnel have received Nobel prizes for peace.

Unfortunately, the U.N. has also had failures, such as stopping the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In addition, U.N. aid workers were blamed for spreading cholera in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Allegations of



Photo courtesy of Kyle Glenn, Unsplash

sexual misconduct and rape were leveled against U.N. peacekeepers in the Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Haiti and other countries. The U.N. 'oil for food' program in Iraq was accused of corruption. U.N. peacekeepers were unable to stop the Srebrenica massacre of around 8,000 Bosnian Muslims who fled to a U.N. declared safe zone in 1995.

A few of the challenges facing the U.N. include a burgeoning bureaucracy, creeping unilateralism, a non-representative Security Council with abuse of veto power by permanent members, powerful members ignoring the U.N. charter and resolutions and a lack of youth involvement.

A number of ongoing crises are indicative of U.N. inaction and paralysis, including Russia's takeover of part of Ukraine; China occupying disputed territories in the South China Sea; the Iraq War; the Israel-Palestine conflict; civil wars in Syria, Yemen, Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the treatment of Rohingyas in Myanmar, Uyghurs in China and Kashmiris in India.

Still, the U.N. and multilateralism are popular throughout the world. More than a million people were surveyed and global consultation dialogues under the label, "UN75: The Future We Want, the UN We Need,"

found that over 87% considered global collaborations vital to facing global challenges and 74% deemed the U.N. essential in tackling these challenges. People surveyed showed major concerns for the environment and climate change.

The public's priorities for 'the world we want to create' emerging out of the UN75 initiative were environmental protection, protection of human rights, less conflict,

equal access to basic services and zero discrimination.

Ninety-five percent of survey respondents indicated that it is either 'essential' or 'very important' for international cooperation to address our shared global challenges.

OF PEOPLE SURVEYED

95%

INDICATE INT'L COOPERATION IS
'ESSENTIAL' TO ADDRESS GLOBAL
CHALLENGES

Ideas for enhanced global cooperation through the United Nations emerging out of the dialogues include:

- adopt more of a bottom up policy solutions approach;
- promote more effective global partnerships and platforms for cooperation/knowledge sharing;
- and involve more women, youth, indigenous and vulnerable groups in policy/decision-making processes.

The survey data shows a noticeable uptick in perceived importance of countries working together since late February 2020, as the socio-economic upheaval caused by COVID-19 spread around the world.



Deer Run Coal Mine Is Sinking the Heartland and Hearts

By Sr. Maxine Pohlman, S.S.N.D.

About an hour's drive northeast of Immaculate Heart of Mary Novitiate and La Vista Ecological Learning Center lies the town of Hillsboro and the Deer Run Coal Mine. As part of my ministry at La Vista I joined the Mining Issues Group of the Sierra Club fighting longwall mining, a process used by Deer Run which extracts 90% of the coal, causing land above to subside 5 – 6 feet and changing it irreversibly. Homesteads, highways, schools and whole communities have been lost or threatened due to “planned subsidence.”

Our work group includes members of CALM, Citizens Against Longwall Mining and since 2004 they have been committed to opposing coal mining that destroys fertile farmland as well as coal ash and coal slurry disposal methods that threaten the health of their communities, their lands and waters. This is an example of social and environmental justice going hand-in-hand, as we read in Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si': The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation.* (48)

In our meetings to determine actions to stop destructive mining, Mary Ellen DeClue, a member of CALM, raised this significant question: “Why are Illinois government agencies and legislators aligning with the interests of coal-fired utilities and coal mining companies to the detriment of the public they serve?” This theme is repeated weekly during our meetings and in these comments I hear the frustration that comes when the burden of harm and cost is shifted to the local community, all to maximize short-term gains by coal companies. *The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together...*

We were made aware that the coal processing plant next door to Hillsboro Hospital has contaminated liquid waste that flows from the mine into Central Park Creek. The contaminated waste also flows past the Hillsboro high school, middle school and throughout the community.

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together...

The agencies that regulate coal mining are allowed to be overly pressured by the industry that they oversee. Coal mining regulations are not enforced and communities pay with their health and a degraded environment. *The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together...*

The wisdom of *Laudato Si'* is exemplified in examples like this one all over the world every day. When will the human community start taking this wisdom to heart?

For more information visit:

CALM:

<http://www.citizensagainstlongwallmining.org/>

Watch the video “Sinking the Heartland” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXp6KRVgH6U>

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Youtube: youtube.com/user/OMIJPIC

Learning Garden is Born: The Novitiate Farm is Revitalized

By **Mary O'Herron**



Something exciting has been going on at the Novitiate in Godfrey, Illinois, and, as is often the case with such things, a tremendous amount of effort was involved.

Time at the Novitiate usually includes only theological, spiritual and ministerial

formation for novices as well as learning about the Oblates and what it means to be an Oblate. This past year, there has been an additional dimension of learning – hands-on very practical skills that can be useful for any adult no matter where they work or live – things like maintaining a property, how to begin and

maintain a garden and other things that help provide for a family or a community.

The current novices, who come from several different cultures around the world, have been transforming the property under the tutelage of an amazing volunteer, Vernon DePauw, a nationally-known wood carver, who also has many other talents and skills.

This Novitiate has a farm area that was neglected the past several years. It is gradually being restored to a working farm and a place to teach practical skills to novices that they can use the rest of their lives. From March through June, they spent nearly 800 man-hours among them and learned how to replace broken windows and lights, repair roofs, gutters and sagging gates, how to use chainsaws and table saws safely, set

Vernon DePauw

Vernon grew up on a farm in Illinois and has been carving wood for over 40 years. His carvings have brought him national recognition.

Novices and home countries:

Henry Zayamoe, **Burma**;
Marapogu Prasad, **India**;
Moses Khisa, **Kenya**;
Brandon Garcia, **Mexico**;
Matuesz Garstecki, **US**;
Musonda Chota and Chomba
Kangwa – **Zambia**

up honeybee hives, do electrical work, make a chicken house, create an orchard, to re-purpose many items as well as the farm itself.

Vernon taught the novices basic gardening skills around planning, improving the soil, preparing and planting fields, watering, weeding, composting, and other ongoing tasks that make a farm functional. He also showed them how to set up a rainwater collection system.

They designed and installed a new sign at the entrance to the property and set up the shop as a work area. Lots of painting and organizing were part of the effort. They cut up dead trees and cleared fields that had been too full of debris to be mowed.

Vernon says that he has intentionally not finished some projects so the next group of novices have similar learning opportunities. He says further: “A farm like this will always have work to be done and things to repair, so the learning will be ongoing. Thanks to this

group of novices, the hard work of just cleaning the farm up so we can move on to learning is mostly done. The many, many hours of dirty work of junk removal and clean up have been time consuming but all have given their best to get the work done, and they are the best!”

Vernon believes that those who saw the Novitiate last fall will easily see the transformation, but others seeing it for the first time may simply see it as an organized and functional farm. Not only did Vernon help the novices connect with the earth and teach by his example and knowledge but they came away with a deeper appreciation of community and how working together can enhance their lives, as well as skills that will be a good resource in daily life and ministry no matter where they end up working or living.

Not only will future novices learn these ideas and skills but all those who see the farm and learn the story can be beneficiaries of these experiences. Perhaps they will be inspired to see fresh possibilities or do similar things. **Bravo Vernon and the Novices!**



Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story

By Fr. Jim Brobst, OM.I.



On January 27, 2020, I had the privilege of attending the Washington, D.C. premier screening of *Revolution of the Heart: The Dorothy Day Story*, a new biographical pic from Journey Films, directed by Martin Doblmeier. It featured archival footage of Dorothy herself as well as an appearance and comments by Sr. Joan Chittester, O.S.B., noted theologian, author and speaker. The event was hosted by Georgetown University's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life.

At only 55 minutes, the film is very reasonable for a viewing with time left for sharing and discussion. This was ably done at Georgetown University, with quite the cast of commentators after the film. That included the mentioned director Martin Doblmeier, also the founder and director of Journey Films; Dorothy Day's grand daughter, Martha Hennesy, who is currently awaiting sentencing for an action protesting nuclear arms; former editor of *The Catholic Worker* and current editor-in-chief of Orbis Books, Robert Ellsberg; and editor of the *Dorothy Day Guild Newsletter* and content editor for their website, Carolyn Zablotny. The event's moderator was John Carr, Director of Georgetown's Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life.

In the days following the event, I was struck by a number of links between Dorothy Day and our Missionary Oblate presence in the United States. I think of her connections to the peace movement and her grand daughter's connection to Ploughshares, an anti-nuclear weapons and Christian pacifist

movement. Ms. Hennesy is currently awaiting sentencing and facing prison time of up to 20 years for her involvement in a protest at a naval base in Georgia. Oblates Carl Kabat (also strongly involved in the Catholic Worker movement), Larry Rosebaugh and Darrel Rupiper have been in similar shoes for their public witness against nuclear arms through Ploughshares. Spanning a theological continuum, Dorothy Day was also recognized as an important public voice in Catholic social teaching by a young Francis Cardinal George, long before he became a "prince of the church" when he invited her to speak to Oblate seminarians in Pass Christian, Mississippi.

Oblates have been presiding at Mass for decades in the same chapel where Dorothy Day once sought guidance early in her conversion. Her granddaughter shared that at one time she considered putting aside social activism, having been told that this would be necessary to be a faithful Catholic. While traveling in Washington, DC she prayed for guidance and lit a candle in the crypt chapel of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, then returned to New York. Just two days later, she met Peter Maurin and found the answer to her prayer for guidance and the world has not been the same since. It's thankfully difficult to peg her well-known witness within any single cohort within the Catholic Church.

In discussions after the film, speakers remarked that in addition to being a social radical, she also had a very

traditional Catholic appreciation of worship and moral expectation. She was deeply nourished spiritually by the traditional Latin Mass and also expressed open disapproval of some of the “free love” practiced by volunteers in Catholic Worker houses of hospitality.

One of my favorite observations came from Martin Doblmeier who offered something Dorothy shared with Donald Trump: “They both boasted that they didn’t want to pay taxes.” Beyond the obvious humor, one can wonder at the seeming discrepancy of Dorothy’s own publicly stated position against people calling her a saint for her singular commitment to her faith: that she “would not be dismissed so easily.” Carolyn Zablotny addressed this directly: “Dorothy Day doesn’t need to be a saint; we need for her to be a saint... The

Church also needs saints... The Church doesn’t make a saint but recognizes a saint.... Everyone’s Christian vocation is to be a saint.”

Whether or not she becomes an officially named saint one thing is certain, our world would be a better place if current and future generations do not easily dismiss her life and message. Doblmeier’s excellent film is one step to assure that she is not dismissed too easily.

A DVD of the affordably priced film can be purchased at journeyfilms.com and other well-known online outlets. The hour-long discussion at Georgetown can be viewed at this link:

<https://youtu.be/dv7oTevFvr8> or this: <https://bit.ly/39B3Rza>

Three Part Harmony Solar Power Campaign

Just a few weeks ago, Earthbound Building and Three Part Harmony Farm supporters raised a timber frame wash station at the farm. This structure is a crucial piece of infrastructure for the farm and it literally lays the groundwork (or rather, lays the roof space) needed to acquire the last item on the farm's wish list: SOLAR POWER! Solar panels will help Three Part Harmony Farm grow more vegetables, grow their self-sufficiency and grow their communities in the process. Three Part Harmony Farm will begin its 10th season next year and needs to **raise \$30,000 for solar panels.**

They need your help! If you can please visit Three Part Harmony's GoFundMe page and donate: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/3phsolarpower>



Winds of Climate Change: How Young Folks Should Inspire Us

by Joey Methé



As the last decade drew to an end, I took some time to reflect on the last ten years. Though there have been many tragedies, conflicts, persistent inequality (and the list goes on), a spark of hope has also emerged in the way of heightened youth interest and engagement on climate change.

Climate change is shaping up to be a defining issue of their generation as seen by the acclaim of Greta Thunberg, a young person from Sweden, who has become a public face for this issue. She is inspiring an entire generation of young people to get involved because, even at a young age, they are witnessing our climate shift from the certainty of seasons to the chaos of catastrophic weather.

The impact of the changing climate is wide-ranging with entire subcontinents affected; think of the Australian bush fires of 2019. Despite such tragedies, the last decade has laid the groundwork for wider consciousness on these issues. We can inspire ourselves as we witness the actions of our youth here in the United States who are actively engaged in this movement, especially here in Washington, DC. Student groups are emerging on university and college campuses throughout the world to mobilize young people around this issue. What's more encouraging is that even the institutional church is taking note. Many Catholics are mobilizing around the issue inspired by Pope Francis' second encyclical, *Laudato Si*, and by these youth-led movements. Pope Francis commends worldwide youth-led movements

for their courage and bravery in tackling this issue. In 2019 during an audience with diplomats, he said: "The younger generation reminds us of the urgent need for an ecological conversion."

We need to make more space for these young people in our churches, our communities and our institutions so they can become greater actors in this global undertaking.

The OMI USA JPIC office has also been busy in the background working on issues related to climate change. We continually engage with major companies such as Boeing, Marathon Petroleum, Disney, JP Morgan Chase and other multinationals on their climate change records and bringing into question their pollution-enabling practices. On a global level, we participated in the UN Climate Action Summit in New York City in September 2019 and in June 2019 the Biscay ESG Global Summit on climate change in Madrid, Spain. Our work takes us all over the world and youth climate activists give us hope for the future. As 21st century missionaries, we need to inspire ourselves and engage with young folks just as St. Eugene De Mazenod was not afraid of engaging with youth of his time. Now, in continuing this tradition, it is time for us to let ourselves be evangelized by the poor; in this case, youth who fear for their future, especially when it comes to climate change related disasters.

Faces Not Forgotten: Gun Violence Prevention Through Awareness & Art

Christine Ilewski Huelsman is the Director/Founder of *Faces Not Forgotten*, a nonprofit that solicits artists to paint portraits of children (age 20 and under) who have been lost to gun violence to give comfort to their families.

Faces Not Forgotten is a 501(c)(3) run on donations and volunteer help. Artists give their time, talents and materials as a pure gift from their hearts. The organization needs support to fund the graphic designs, printing, transportation, exhibition, installations of the portraits and quilts and all administration activities.

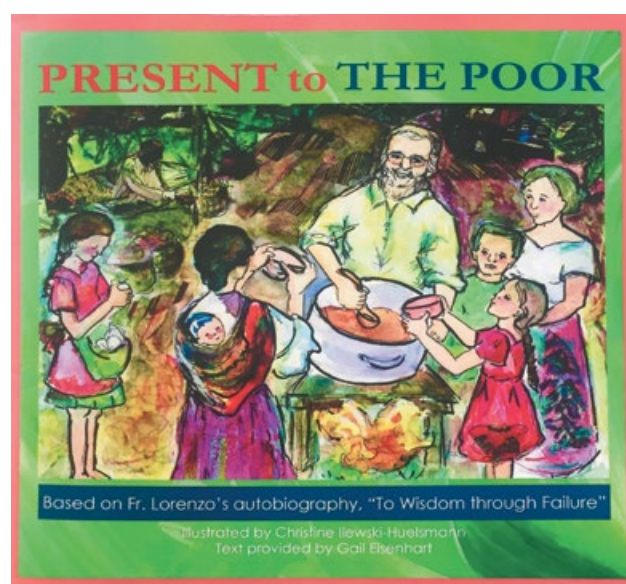
If you would like to support the work, with a sustaining donation of \$15 a month or a one-time donation of \$50 or more, you will receive a copy of *Present to The Poor*, a 40-page fully illustrated paperback about the life of Fr. Larry Rosebaugh, OMI whose tragic death due to gun violence inspired the creation of *Faces Not Forgotten*.

You can contact *Faces Not Forgotten* via email and learn more through their website:

EMAIL: christine.ilewski@gmail.com

Website: www.ilewski.com

Thanks for your support!



Suggested Resource



ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP (FRATELLI TUTTI) by Pope Francis

Pope Francis's prophetic new encyclical speaks directly into the lives of men and women today! This greatly welcomed encyclical is a beautiful reflection on humanity's path forward to a deeply desired and sought-after peace. Pope Francis addresses his renewed call to universal fraternity "to all people of good will, regardless of their religious convictions."

Price: \$13.95

Resource can be purchased at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop's website:

<http://store.usccb.org/>

Rise!

By Fr. Ali Nnaemeka, O.M.I.

Rise!

you daughters of the motherland. Hold high

your fist with your babies by your side.

Let's

reform, transform and make this nation work .

Prove to the world that you are the new Amina.

That your combat is for your mother Anawo.

To save your offsprings from the den of lions

— #Alisonomi2020



UPCOMING

- January 5-11:** U.S. Catholic Bishops National Migration Week 2021
- January 29:** U.S National March for Life 2021
- February 17:** Missionary Oblates Founder's Day

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Your generosity helps support this publication and other missionary initiatives, please consider donating.

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