****

**February 11, 2019**

*“…the Creator of all things and of all persons wants us to live as brothers and sisters, dwelling in the common home of creation which he has given us. Fraternity is established here at the roots of our common humanity, as “a vocation contained in God’s plan of creation”. This tells us that all persons have equal dignity and that no one can be a master or slave of others.”* Pope Francis

**CALENDAR**

***February 2019***

***Black History Month***

**Feb 11 World Day of the Sick**

**Feb 11 International al Day of Women and Girls in Science**

**Feb 20 world Day of Social Justice**

***March***

**March 8 International Women’s Day**

**TAKING ACTION**

***An Astronaut’s Story***

What job is best for a young man who's been a tennis ace, a cross-country traveler, a chemistry nerd and an NFL draftee? How about ... astronaut? Leland Melvin tells the story of the challenges he's accepted and the opportunities he's seized -- and how they led him to the International Space Station and a whole new perspective of life on earth. ***(How can we have the right prespective?***

|  |
| --- |
| [Watch now »](https://ted.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=07487d1456302a286cf9c4ccc&id=90a3df67fc&e=21df47c728) |

***Contemplative Action***

The following quote is from President Trump’s State of the Union speech.

*“We must choose whether we are defined by our differences — or whether we dare to transcend them.*

*This is the time to rekindle the bonds of love and loyalty and memory that link us together as citizens, as neighbors, as patriots..*

*No matter the trials we face, no matter the challenges to come, we must go forward together.*

*We must keep America first in our hearts. We must keep freedom alive in our souls”.*

I am encouraging each of us to hold in prayer that this statement can become a reality in our country. Take 20 minutes each day to embrace the present situation our country faces and send out energy from the heart that this quote can become a reality, one that reflects gospel values. Especially pray that a compromise will be reached by Friday to avoid another government shutdown. Please join me in prayer this week.

**INFORMATION**

***Great news:***

The annual count of monarch butterflies wintering in the warmth of Mexico right now shows an increase of 144 percent from last year's count — the highest count since 2006. But to make sure monarchs survive, we must give them more protections. Last week Center staff who work on these butterflies' behalf visited one of their Mexico wintering sites, where they took some amazing footage. Watch it on [Facebook](https://click.everyaction.com/k/4683404/38447432/1283538360?nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9DQkQvQ0JELzEvNjE0MjkiLA0KICAiRGlzdHJpYnV0aW9uVW5pcXVlSWQiOiAiZjQ0ZjdjNzMtMDYyYi1lOTExLWI4YjMtMjgxODc4MzkyZTg5IiwNCiAgIkVtYWlsQWRkcmVzcyI6ICJkc21pdGhAY3NqbGEub3JnIg0KfQ%3D%3D&hmac=Ik6YSw5odfPZHVRtnavCuTVIMctRAlxNwuoO9TsLqTA=) and YouTube

[***UN report: Sanctions aren't stopping N. Korea's nuclear program***](http://r.smartbrief.com/resp/liybCCjbkDDgvyeBCieHdeCicNtLoY?format=multipart)

North Korea is taking action to protect its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and continues to violate an arms embargo and financial sanctions levied against it by the United Nations, according to a report by UN experts. The report indicates North Korea is moving missile assembly and testing systems into civilian facilities to protect them from "decapitation" strikes.

***Gun Violence***

“The American public made their voices heard last November in electing a Congress that cares about gun safety more than gun industry profits, and they are leading the charge to take real action to address the epidemic of gun violence. We are excited about next week’s hearing, the first in Congress to focus on proactive gun safety measures in almost a decade, but we’re even more excited about the next hearing, the one after that, and the one after that. Gun safety is an issue that isn’t going away, and we finally have a Congress that recognizes that and is willing to confront it head on.”  
- [Brady President Kris Brown](https://click.everyaction.com/k/4605883/37552307/842475632?nvep=ew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9UU00vVFNNQkMvMS81Nzg1NyIsDQogICJEaXN0cmlidXRpb25VbmlxdWVJZCI6ICIzNzBmNTE3Ny1kYjI3LWU5MTEtYjhiMy0yODE4NzgzOTJlODkiLA0KICAiRW1haWxBZGRyZXNzIjogImRzbWl0aEBjc2psYS5vcmciDQp9&hmac=HSD9AvV7QGo8IqbYTOqnLXmCZabb_JzZ7G7qtpghGzQ=)

***Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on February 4, 2019, signed the Document on “Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together.”***

The signing following the [Holy Father’s speech to the Global Conference on Human Fraternity](https://zenit.org/articles/abu-dhabi-pope-francis-address-to-interfaith-meeting-at-founders-memorial-full-text/) in Abu Dhabi, a key element in the Holy Father’s February 3-5 apostolic visit to the United Arab Emirates.

“The document represents an important step forward in the dialogue between Christians and Muslims and is a powerful sign of peace and hope for the future of humanity,” said a statement from Alessandro Gisotti, Interim Director of the Vatican’s Press Office.

**RESOURCES**

* [Lightning, struck: How an Atlanta neighborhood died on the altar of Super Bowl dreams](https://donate.splcenter.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fbittersoutherner.com%2flightning-the-atlanta-community-lost-to-super-bowl-dreams&srcid=1218975&srctid=1&erid=333972733&efndnum=17092180557&trid=2576217b-541a-4776-b565-823559a86d0b) by Max Blau for Bitter Southerner
* [From the civil rights movement to Black Lives Matter: Honoring black mothers who lost their sons](https://donate.splcenter.org/page.redir?target=https%3a%2f%2fwww.nytimes.com%2f2019%2f01%2f29%2flens%2fsheila-pree-bright-civil-rights-black-lives-matter-mothers-atlanta.html&srcid=1218975&srctid=1&erid=333972733&efndnum=17092180557&trid=2576217b-541a-4776-b565-823559a86d0b) by Fayemi Shakur for The New York Times

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  | | --- | | [***How to negotiate with Afghanistan’s Taliban?*** Local women know.](http://click.newsletters.usip.org/?qs=9453901d5b1656cfe51a921e157ec5a51e9f1e4187a25cba3ed1b53e60fe7a92f7d51c0bf7852dc8f96683f59913dd763bf6eeacbe8a6ed2)  Afghan political leaders met in Moscow this week with Taliban representatives. Like other recent discussions, including those with U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, Afghan women remain almost entirely excluded. Yet mostly unnoticed amid the formal diplomacy, Afghan women already have managed negotiations with local Taliban leaders. | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [Read their stories](http://click.newsletters.usip.org/?qs=9453901d5b1656cf3d49773e3ec8267172c51fa2984b27cffc0ed47286bb019aa3010339e7a4c5b50ab4d5560026d5af70d5102571ceb096) | | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | [Facebook](http://click.newsletters.usip.org/?qs=9453901d5b1656cf4e5147ef65c6bb7f1de29e36f67b5acd8cc2d15eecdc25d8bce3e90c8eb8ff8caab965907f82ed0909168fa4125b03d7) | | |  | | --- | | [Twitter](http://click.newsletters.usip.org/?qs=9453901d5b1656cf1af81f1c31dfe85fe12956b48c232f4cc89d8b32370f1286bbcb6b3daaf81c8b9c88cfbb077ad503417ec8e504b30f97) | | | | | | | |