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Reflection Date: January 28, 2018: The 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Belief and Action

In yesterday's Gospel of Mark, Jesus called the first disciples to follow Him. Jesus's words were so powerful, they left everything behind to follow Him. [This week's readings](#) challenge us to remember the moment when God called us and stirred our hearts into action from our ordinary lives. But the true message of this week's readings is, to have our hearts and lives changed or turned around by God's word we have to believe in He who is speaking to us and to act on our beliefs.

Recently, our Capuchin Community in the United States rejoiced at the Beatification of Fr. Solanus Casey. He was a simple man who had a great belief in God's Divine Providence. He taught us to "thank God ahead of time", in answering our prayers and to trust in God above all else and at all times. That is the great beauty in the history of our relationship with God. When we believe and put our trust in God change happens, there is healing, and there are changes in our lives and in our society.

In the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy, we hear God proclaiming that, "I will raise up for them a prophet (like Moses) from among their people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who will speak to them everything that I command." Now, we can assume that the word is true by virtue of their source in God, not everyone will believe. This is why God then adds: "Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself shall hold accountable."

The Word of God does or should not lead us to Passivity, but to change, or encounter with the other, or to action. But too often, we are similar to the Pharisees and ask for a visible sign or miracle instead of being changed ourselves or standing up for change in our safe social life and settings. We are interested, intrigued even, but we still aren't ready to commit, to become the prophet or the agent for change and justice.

St. Paul in the second reading, really hits the nail on the head with the passage from 1 Corinthians, "I should like you to be free of anxieties." We are simply too anxious about all the wrong things.

This week, we are again offered a choice; are we following and looking for signs or are we becoming a sign of believing and trusting in God's word in our lives and for our society?

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM, Cap
FAN Board Member



Suggested Action:

Make a commitment to put worldly anxieties aside and pledge to turn faith in to action.

Suggested Petitions:

Remain with us, O Lord, so that your Word will transform our hearts and our lives, we pray...

Inspire us O Lord, through your Word today to embrace it and to begin living it anew in our lives, we pray...

Collect Prayer

**Grant us, Lord our God,
that we may honor you with all our mind,
and love everyone in truth of heart.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever**

Amen

Franciscans March for Consistent Ethic of Life

Last Friday, January 19th, the staff of FAN joined the thousands of participants in the annual March for Life. Carrying a banner calling for consistent ethic of life, they were joined by the Sisters of Mercy and many other friends along the route.

Echoing this year's march theme, "Love Saves Lives", FAN was able to get this [Op-Ed piece](#) published in The Hill. Written by FAN Board Member, Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF, in cooperation with FAN Executive Director, Patrick Carolan and Eli McCarthy, Justice and Peace Director of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men, the piece calls attention to multitude other life issues and promotes the "seamless garment" ethic from the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

A pro-life Mass was celebrated at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land the day before the march. Our executive director Patrick was invited and the entire D.C. based staff was honored to attend.



Franciscans Represented in Delegation to Honduras

In response to a plea from Rev. Ismael Moreno (Fr. Melo), a Jesuit who has accompanied the Honduran people for more than 20 years, FAN's own Sr. Maria Orlandini will be joining a delegation of

about 50 people from all over the country on a mission trip to Honduras from January 24-30, 2018.

Honduras is in an extreme crisis following a grievously flawed presidential election on November 26th. Social movements have been pouring into the streets for weeks protesting electoral fraud, and have been repressed by Honduran security forces. Over 30 people have been killed and hundreds wounded and detained. The government imposed martial law and, days before Christmas, prematurely called the election in favor of the current president. The delegation will go to the country to accompany the activists, to collect testimonies, and witness the repression against those involved in the peaceful demonstrations then share their findings with the world.

Delegates are asking for two things: prayer and financial support. There is a campaign to repair the destroyed transmission tower of Radio Progreso, a vital means of communication. The Hondurans need material aid to care for those who have been injured and to provide supplies and support to the ongoing mobilizations across the country. Father Melo is asking for "critical financial support to continue transmitting as a radio, and to cover the emergency." [Contributions can be made here.](#)

Please keep the delegation in your prayers as they live the Gospel in support of justice for the people of Honduras.

Registration is Now Open: State of Appalachia Conference

FAN is a partnering organization for the upcoming [State of Appalachia conference](#) being held March 23 & 24, 2018 at Pipestem Resort State Park in West Virginia. The conference will focus on the health, economy, ecology, and spirituality of Appalachia. This year's theme scripture is Revelation 22:2, focusing on the tree of life and healing the nations.



Save the date and spread the word. A [flyer](#) and the [Facebook event](#) are available for sharing with your networks. Please check out the [website](#) to learn more about the conference, and consider registering. Limited scholarships are available. As more information about workshops becomes available the website will be updated.

Franciscans Supporting Immigrants, Easy as Apple Pie

[St. Anne-St. Augustin Roman Catholic Parish](#) in partnership with the NH Council of Churches and Granite State Organizing Project's Immigrant Solidarity Network will host a multicultural prayer service affirming the dignity of all refugees and immigrants this



Wednesday, January 24 at 6:30pm. The prayer service will feature music in Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic and English as well as special prayers for those who are suffering family separation. Attendees will be invited to a reception with light refreshments of coffee and apple pie to follow.

Fr. Sam Fuller, OFM, Cap. is administrator of the parish and was instrumental in preparing this worship service. In an email about the service and reception, Fr. Sam stated, "we believe that what we are doing is as American as Apple Pie."

More information about the service is available on the [Facebook Event page](#) or by contacting the St. Augustin parish office directly at (603) 623-8809.

Final Opportunity to Give: FAN takes the Polar Bear Plunge Again

As part of FAN's commitment to care for all of creation, **this Saturday, January 27th we will again participate in the Polar Bear Plunge** to [Keep Winter Cold](#). This annual event is organized by the [Chesapeake Climate Action Network](#) (CCAN) and helps raise funds for important local grassroots efforts on climate justice.

This Saturday, FAN's executive director, [Patrick Carolan](#) will be jumping in to the icy waters of the Chesapeake along with FAN board members, [Alisa O'Brien](#) and [Kelly Moltzen](#). **Please consider donating to help us reach our goal of \$3,000** raised to help fund climate efforts in the Chesapeake area. Just click on the links attached to each jumper's name to donate to that person.



Thank you so much for your prayers and support of our efforts to make a positive change in our world. Our team will be gearing up to run into the water the morning of January 27th and would love for anyone in the DC Metro area to come down to National Harbor and join the fun! There will be plenty of hot cocoa and treats for everyone!

No Muslim Ban Ever Week of Action Toolkit

On January 27, 2017 the Trump Administration released Executive Orders banning individuals from seven (then six) Muslim-majority countries and all refugees from entering the country. Now, a year later, we're in a critical moment. After the courts repeatedly blocked various versions of these bans, **parts of both the most recent Muslim ban and refugee ban are being implemented**. We must keep up the public pressure and media coverage to stop the Muslim and refugee bans now.



Many advocacy organizations are building a list of creative activities and important public witness events for a **week of action from January 27 - February 3, 2018**. There is already an action being planned in front of the White House in Washington DC. We urge all FAN members to use this [toolkit](#) to find an idea and some resources for taking action. One example we offer is to click on the [postcard image here](#) to download and print a supply to distribute. Have folks in your community or parish sign them and send them to their members of Congress.

Put your event on the map and find an event near you at www.nomuslimbanever.com/ and www.weareallusa.org/events

