

Publication Date: January 29, 2018

Reflection Date: February 4, 2018: The 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Urgency of the Message...no time to waste

According to [Mark's Gospel](#) this Sunday, this is Jesus' first full day "on the job" so to speak. After being baptized in the Jordan, and spending time alone in the desert, choosing a few friends to hang out with, Jesus started to proclaim the Good News in the synagogue in Capernaum where his teaching is noticed, new and coming from someone who speaks with such authority that "even the unclean spirits obey him." His reputation spreads fast and by the end of the day the whole town was gathered at the door of the house of Peter's mother-in-law whom he has cured even before he could have dinner. Jesus then cures all those who were brought to him before going to sleep. A very long and busy day indeed.



The next day he rises very early and is off to a deserted place to pray. The peace does not last too long because he is reached by his new friends telling him that everybody is looking for him with many more people to heal. Jesus tells them "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also." And then he proclaims "For this purpose I have come".

Jesus is on the move in Mark's Gospel. I feel the urgency in his words and deeds; he has so many people to reach and the Good News to proclaim. It feels like he knows that time is short and he has too many things to accomplish and so many things to say on behalf of His Father. The same urgency and sense of being sent for a purpose, is in Paul's words in his first letter to the Corinthians "for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!"

Where does my urgency lie? Do I really feel it? I too have been called by my Baptism to continue the mission of Jesus in our world today. Do I/we feel the urgency to proclaim God's mercy and love to our world that seems to have lost His teaching as a compass? There are so many towns and villages that seem to have forgotten their Christian roots, so many people who need a word of comfort and healing.

There is no time to waste because our world needs help: Nuclear arms race being reignited; Social inequality growing larger and larger; gun violence rampant in our cities and our leaders unable or unwilling to act to help; health care seen as a privilege not as a right for all citizens; millions of people displaced and fleeing from their homes because of war and famine; millions of people in our own country living in fear of deportation, and a seeming unwillingness from our leaders to see their suffering and find a solution. And this is not an exhaustive list.

How can we face this daunting mission and not feel overwhelmed like Job who asks "Is not man's life on earth a drudgery?" Like Jesus and like Paul we can only rely on the One who

chose us for a purpose, spend time daily, maybe like Jesus early before dawn, to renew our commitment to be the face of love, justice and compassion in a world that seems not inclined to hear it. We can only “offer the Gospel free of charge” knowing full well that “We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.” (Bishop Ken Untener)

Sr. Maria Orlandini, OSF
FAN Director of Advocacy

Suggested Action: Take some time to reflect on this quote:

“A church that does not provoke any crisis, preach a gospel that does not unsettle, proclaim a word of God that does not get under anyone's skin or a word of God that does not touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed: what kind of gospel is that?”

— Oscar A. Romero

Suggested Petitions:

For our Church and Civic Leaders, that they may feel the urgency of being proclaimers of justice with compassion, we pray...

For all Christians that they may feel and act as proclaimer of the Gospel, we pray...

Prayer by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw

(This prayer is often attributed incorrectly to Archbishop Oscar Romero)

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Amen

As We Mourn Another School Shooting in Kentucky We Must Speak Out Against Bump Stocks

Less than three miles from the site of the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history, which took place outside Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas last October, the annual [SHOT Show](#) sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation occurred last week. More than 65,000 people are expected to attend this event, where firearms and accessory makers launch new products, the country's leading silencer manufacturers are planning to be there as well as one bump stock manufacturer. Bump stocks are accessories that essentially turn a firearm into a machine gun. It's what allowed the shooter in Las Vegas to fire about 90 rounds every ten seconds.



All this happens as we hear of another [shooting](#) at a high school in Southwestern Kentucky where 2 people have died and 16 others were wounded. While Federal Legislation has stalled in Congress, some states are taking on the responsibility at the local level. In Colorado, the [Denver City Council enacted a ban](#) on the sale and possession of bump stocks, which it is hoped will translate to the state level this year. In [Columbia, South Carolina](#) leaders worked with the mayor's office on a municipal ban on bump stocks. Finally, Republican Governor Chris Christie signed a bill into law banning bump stocks in [New Jersey](#).

These small victories strengthen our resolve but we need more than a patchwork of local and state laws, we need a national ban on bump stocks so tragedies like Las Vegas can never happen again. We urge members to [call your member of Congress](#) to urge they work across the aisle on banning bump stocks.

Take Action: Sign NAFTA Petition That Puts People Over Profits

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is an agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States established in 1994 to create a trilateral free-trade zone in North America. It is described by many as disastrous for the U.S. economy as in it's current state, NAFTA eliminates jobs, erodes wages, increases pollution and is heavily in favor of large corporations.

North
American
Free
Trade
Agreement



Global Trade Watch has released this [video](#) of a cancer survivor and mother who is fighting the big pharmaceutical companies' latest attempt

to keep prescription drug prices sky high – this time buried in NAFTA renegotiations.

NAFTA is now being re-negotiated in Canada. Negotiators have until the end of March to reach an agreement. Advocates have put together [this petition](#) to demand that the replacement puts people and planet before corporate profits. [We urge members to sign](#). Additionally, we encourage you to [email your representative](#) demanding NAFTA be replaced with a deal that stops job outsourcing and strengthens labor, wage and environmental standards.

CMEP Statement on Withdrawal of Humanitarian Aid for Palestine

Formed in 1984, [Churches for Middle East Peace](#) (CMEP) is a coalition of 27 national church denominations and organizations that works to encourage US policies that actively promote a comprehensive resolution to conflicts in the Middle East with a focus on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. CMEP works to mobilize US Christians to embrace a holistic perspective and to be advocates of equality, human rights, security, and justice for Israelis, Palestinians, and all people of the Middle East.



Last week, CMEP released a [statement](#) in response to the U.S. announcement it would be withholding \$65 million from a \$125 million scheduled payment to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the sole UN agency working with Palestinian refugees. From the statement:

"Undermining humanitarian aid, unilateral decisions on Jerusalem, and suspending the recognition of Israel will create new fissures in already cracked relationships, moving peace further out of reach and leaving another generation of Israelis and Palestinians to grow up under a perpetual threat of violence and war."

FAN applauds the CMEP for their statement and for the work they do to bring peace to a troubled section of the world.

Honduras is in Need of Prayers and Support

In last week's newsletter, we told you about the state of chaos in Honduras after fraudulent [presidential election](#) in November. In advance of the January 27th swearing in of Juan Orlando Hernandez for a second presidential term, Hondurans participated in a week-long National Strike in protest. FAN's own Sr. Maria Orlandini is there as part of a delegation of support from the international community.



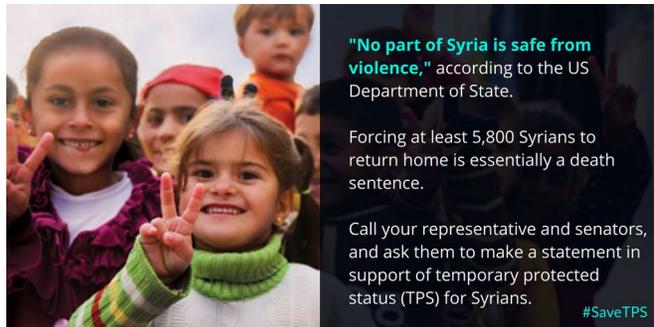
Photograph: Jorge Cabrera/Reuters

In the weeks leading up to the National Strike, there was a marked increase in targeted repression of protest leaders, human rights defenders, and journalists. These brutal attacks are being carried out by US-trained and financed state security forces from School of the Americas (SOA), renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001. Over 30 people have been murdered, many of whom were killed by the Military Police or other state security forces who fired live bullets at protesters, and hundreds of others have been injured or tortured.

FAN urges members to take action in solidarity with the people of Honduras and against continued US financing of the murderous Honduran regime. [SOA Watch](#) is an organization FAN has worked with in the past on educating and working to close the SOA / WHINSEC. They have set up an [action page on their website](#) with more information, a call-in number for Congress and sample script.

We Must Support Temporary Protected Status for Syrians

Last week, Church World Service and CLINIC Legal delivered an [interfaith letter](#) signed by nearly 300 faith leaders & faith-based organizations (including FAN) to DHS Secretary Nielsen, urging a re-designation & 18-mo extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Syria.



In addition, CLINIC released a new report, [No Safety in a Warzone: Why TPS is Needed for Syria](#), which states clearly: the administration must extend and redesignate TPS for Syria. The administration decision to extend or terminate is due by January 30, 2018, affecting approximately 5,800 people and their families. The report contains in-depth legal analysis, specific recommendations for the administration and the stories of Syrians whose lives depend on TPS.

We urge all members to support this effort. Make calls to Congress and support the campaign on social media by [sharing this post on Facebook](#). We can not in good conscious send God's people back to the war zone that is Syria.

College Students Spend Break With Capuchins

The [College Capuchin Outreach Program](#) (COP) is designed for college students who wish to do service during their winter break. The program is based out of the Capuchin Youth & Family Ministries (CYFM) retreat center in Garrison, New York. This year, students from 13 different colleges joined the program for a week, from January 7-11. During the day the participants work at various jobs around the Hudson Valley area. In the evenings they come back to the retreat center

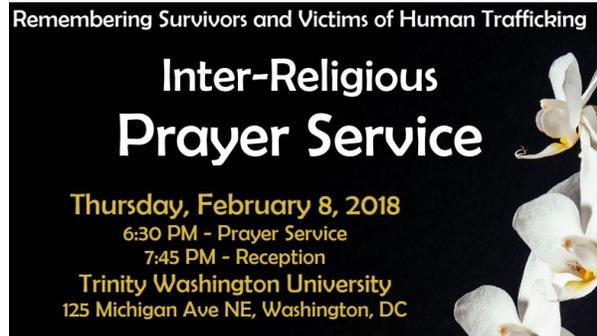


and have time for fellowship and faith building. Each evening offers participants a theological reflection and time for the workers to discuss their day. The week culminates with a talent show where participants can show off their skills.

Here is an [article in National Catholic Reporter](#) highlighting this year's program. Congratulations to the College COP and all the participants and leaders.

Inter-religious Prayer Service Remembering Survivors of Trafficking

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops / [Migration and Refugee Services](#) is hosting an Inter-Religious Prayer Service on Thursday, February 8th to remember survivors and victims of human trafficking. The evening of prayer and reflection will be at Trinity Washington University where diverse religious leaders will contemplate the power of working together to end modern-day slavery.



FAN's own Sr. Maria Orlandini was invited to speak about Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of Sudan and herself a traded and beaten slave. You can learn more about Sr. Josephine's life [here](#).

Energy Star Offers Webinars and Training Information

The EPA offers free webinar trainings on a range of energy efficiency topics and [Energy Star for Congregations](#) has the tools and resources to help congregations and communities cut energy costs by up to 30%. The free, unbiased information and technical support from Energy Star will allow your congregation to easily improve stewardship of your budget's energy dollars and of the earth.



On **January 30, at 12pm Eastern / 9am Pacific**, Energy Star is offering a free one-hour webinar for worship facilities. The purpose of the webinar is to discuss the 1-100 Energy Star score which is administered by the U.S. Energy Information Agency every four years. The scores are periodically updated to reflect changes in the marketplace and an update is due for worship facilities in August of this year. This webinar will explain how it will affect houses of worship and what congregations can do to prepare.

[Click here to join the webinar.](#)

