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Reflection Date: April 22, 2018: 4th Sunday of Easter

Our Loving God Always Accepts Us

The [readings this week](#) stress the all-loving and accepting nature of the God who created us. They also call us to see God in everyone and especially to see God when we look in the mirror. We are reminded that we are God's children and we are all accepted into God's "fold."

In the first reading, Peter was asked how the crippled man was healed and he told them, although he probably didn't see why it mattered. Peter and John were arrested and jailed because they healed a lame man in the name of Jesus. Again, how a man was healed seemed to be a huge concern. The leaders must have been incredulous when Peter said that he healed in the name of Jesus. They surely felt intimidated by a man they had crucified, that he would have such great power through his followers. Peter was telling the people of Israel that even though they turned away from Jesus, he is continuing his mission of salvation and healing through those who believe.



Should we be called to account for the kindness we have done? How many times have I questioned when someone is helped? Do they deserve it? How much do they deserve and how often? I may even be suspicious of the motive of the person doing the good deed. Instead, I tried this Lent to die to my human shortfalls and live in Christ.

Carolyn Meyer

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Suggested Actions:

This week, go out of your way to see Christ in every person you meet.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those persecuted for their religious beliefs. May the merciful God grant them serenity of heart and peace of mind, we pray...

For all those who believe themselves unworthy of God's mercy. May the teachings of the Gospel dispel that fear, we pray...

Collect Prayer

**Almighty ever-living God,
lead us to a share in the joys of heaven,
so that the humble flock may reach
where the brave Shepherd has gone before.**

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

Countering “Chain-Migration” Myth with Pro-Family Narrative

Recently, [Faith in Public Life](#) and [Church World Service](#) hosted a webinar on countering the dangerous "chain migration" myth with a pro-family narrative. If you were not able to join, you are welcome to listen to the [recording of the webinar](#) and access the [slides](#) and the [message memo](#) mentioned in the webinar. Feel free to share these resources with trusted partners but *please do not post them online or on social media.*



Changing the immigration narrative will take sustained effort. Here are some ways you and your networks can continue these efforts:

- **Call Congress:** [Urge your Representative](#) to oppose the so-called “Securing America’s Future Act,” an anti-family, anti-immigrant proposal that would tear families apart and prolong family separation.
- **Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor:** Show your support for family reunification by writing to a local or national publication. [Here is a sample](#) op-ed written by CWS CEO Rev. John L. McCullough on the importance of family unity.
- **Amplify on Social Media:** [Tweet your Members of Congress](#) and post on Facebook to show your support for family unity. Here is a sample post: "Families belong together and they are at the core of every community. LIKE and SHARE to show your support for family reunification. #ValueOurFamilies"

For more resources, click here: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/issues/family/>

Thank you for continuing to support family values.

Support for our Muslim Brothers & Sisters Continues

Last week, the Franciscan Action Network was one of more than forty faith-based groups to sign on to an [amicus brief](#) in support of the respondents in the *Hawaii vs. Trump* case which challenges the indefinite proclamation now in effect that bans immigration and most travel from a group of predominantly Muslim countries.

The objective of the brief is to "...speak with one voice to urge the [Supreme] Court to affirm the court of appeals' judgment and to hold that" the administration's most recent iteration of the



NO
MUSLIM
BAN
EVER.

Muslim Ban is unlawful.

From the brief:

United in [our] belief that nationality-based discrimination is repugnant to our Nation's values and the equal dignity of all men and women.

[The undersigned] have a strong interest in ensuring that the government neither favors nor discriminates against members of any faith. All religious people in this Nation depend on the right to practice their faith free from discrimination. When religion-based discrimination is permitted—especially when propagated at the highest levels of government—the free-exercise right of members of all faiths is threatened.

As we look forward to the [rally on April 25th](#) outside of the Supreme Court, we urge members and friends to join us in a visible, strong presence from those who support and advocate for all people regardless of religion or country of origin.

Celebrate Earth Day with These Resources

Here is a waste management fact from the [Earth Day](#) website: Approximately 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enters the ocean every year. We hope all our members and friends will spend some time on Earth Day praying and caring for our Common Home. Here are some resources for your use:



The Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC) has developed a program titled [Beyond a Throwaway culture - Reduce Waste, Grow Community](#) for parishes, schools, and religious communities to use as part of your Earth day celebrations this weekend. [Click here](#) to download the one-hour educational program.

Additionally, FAN's Associate Director, Sr. Marie Lucey developed [this resource](#) for her community to use as a prayer service for Earth Day. With suggested songs, readings and a poem, it's a beautiful way to reflect on the impact we make on our Common Home. Download and print this prayer service from [our website](#).

Aligned with the national [Earth Day](#) theme urging an end to plastic pollution, both of these programs are designed to raise awareness on societies' overuse of single-use disposable plastics and how we contribute to what Pope Francis calls "the throwaway culture."

Finally, the [Earth Day Network](#) has a goal of planting 7.8 billion trees - one for every person on earth - in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in 2020. [Click here](#) to read about the Canopy Project as a way to take action on Earth Day.

Poor People's Campaign, 50 years Later

In December of 1967, just 5 months before



his assassination, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had a vision to bring together poor people from across the nation for a march on Washington. Their demands were for better jobs, better homes, better education, basically for better lives than the ones they were living. They called it the [Poor People's Campaign](#). Now, in 2018, not much has changed for the poor and there is a revival of this vision.

The [Institute for Policy Studies](#) along with the Poor People's campaign has recently released a report called the [Souls of Poor Folk](#), "Auditing America 50 years after the Poor People's Campaign challenged racism, poverty, the war economy/militarism, and our national morality." Over two years, they've met with tens of thousands of people and gathered testimonies from persons experiencing poverty. This report is an assessment of the conditions and trends of poverty today. We urge all members and friends to [read](#) this powerful study.

Sultan and the Saint Premiere in Detroit

Franciscan Action Network was made aware of an article from *Bill Joyner's Friday Musings*, a local news source in Livonia, MI. The narrative describes the screening of the *Sultan and the Saint* to a packed house of 500 in Detroit. More than 30 Franciscans attended representing OFM's, Capuchins, Conventuals, Bernadines, and Felicians.



Before the film, Felician Sister Nancy Marie Jamroz and Steve Spreitzer were presented with special awards (*see photo*) for their work in promoting peace and understanding between religious organizations and people.

It is wonderful to continue to hear of screenings which are developing relationships between Christians and Muslims all over the country. We are humbled to be a part of such a transformative movement. To order a copy of the the *Sultan and the Saint* to show in your parish or community, please [click here](#).

St. Francis Forum and Spirit of Assisi Symposium

Last week, the Franciscan Friars Conventual from [Our Lady of the Angels Province](#) invited the Franciscan Action Network and the DC/MD/VA chapter of [Interfaith Power and Light](#) to join in a Forum and Symposium on Environmental Justice and Service to Vulnerable Populations. The gathering was held at the [Shrine of St. Anthony](#) in Ellicott City, MD.



The goal for the gathering was to bring together peoples of various faiths, government officials, and other interested parties to discuss issues elevated by Pope Francis' encyclical "*Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*," which touched on many

issues pertinent to the protection of the environment, public health and other quality of life concerns of vulnerable communities. The participants were able to identify opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration among those gathered in meeting the needs of vulnerable communities and promoting the common good of all.

The Symposium concluded with participants joining the Franciscan Friars and representative faith leaders for a blessing of the friars' new Little Portion Farm (*see photo*). Inspired by *Laudato Sí*, the farm will grow fresh food that will go from the farm to the table at the Franciscan Center meal program in Baltimore.