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Reflection Date: April 29, 2018: 5th Sunday of Easter

Ignited in Jesus

“Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit to no labor in its cause? I don’t think so.

All summations have a beginning, all effect has a story, all kindness begins with the sown seed. Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of light is the crossroads of — indolence, or action.

Be ignited, or be gone.”



These words from the poem “What I Have Learned So Far”* by Mary Oliver came to mind as I reflected on this [Sunday’s readings](#).

After Paul’s conversion he was “ignited” to speak “out boldly in the name of the Lord.” (Acts 9:29) However, Paul experienced what many people to this day encounter when attempting to live the Gospel, “they tried to kill him.” Anyone who has ever attempted to follow the Gospel call to speak out for justice or take action for peace has probably experienced the angst that comes with the numbness that comes with the status quo, the negativity of those who prefer “indolence.”

In her poem, Mary Oliver echoes the words from our second reading where St. John writes “Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.” (1 Jn. 3:18) There are people who may say they are Christians but when it comes to being ignited, taking action for justice and peace, they do not do them. Action, deeds and truth validate the speech about, and words of, love.

In our Gospel, Jesus invites us to remain in relationship with him, to stay connected to him as he is connected with us. Only through contemplating the love of God within us can we reflect the creative power of God and “bud toward radiance.” Jesus invites us to “be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy,” and to commit to labor for its cause. Jesus invites us to live our very short time on earth “ignited,” to actualize the Gospel each day.

Remain with Jesus and be ignited!

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
FAN Board Member

*from New and Selected Poems, by Mary Oliver, Beacon Press; July, 1993

Suggested Actions:

Take time to contemplate the love of God within you and how you can reflect the creative power of God by taking action on one of the issues discussed in this newsletter.

Suggested Petitions:

May all Christians sow the seeds of kindness toward all people, we pray...
Grant us, Lord the temerity to practice our faith by actions, we pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
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

Gun Violence Prevention a Renewed Priority for Faith Groups



FAITHS UNITED
TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

[Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence](#), now in its 10th year, held a strategy meeting in March to re-activate members, including FAN. After a brainstorming session, three committees were created: Grassroots, Policy & Advocacy, Communication & Education. FAN staff volunteered for the C&E committee and has participated in follow up calls and continue to offer our members and friends new information we come across.

On Sunday, April 15th, Sr. Marie Lucey, FAN Associate Director, was invited to give a presentation on gun violence prevention from a faith perspective to [St. Columba's Episcopal Church](#) in DC. More than 75 members of the congregation attended and were very engaged, asking insightful questions following Sr. Marie's talk. A group is interested in creating a committee to continue addressing gun violence and taking appropriate action. All agreed that leadership taken by young people after the Parkland, Florida high school mass shooting has stirred up new energy and hope.

Updates and Next Steps in Gun Safety Dialogue

As gun safety advocates continue to bring awareness to the issue nationally, there are definite steps that can and must be taken on a local level and even at the manufacturing level. Most the advocacy thus far has been with Congress and rightfully so, as our country needs federal regulations that protect all people. However, in a more local step, last week, [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) shined a spotlight on the responsibility of gun makers with a new report.



["The Time for Talk is Over: A Call to Action for Gun Manufacturers,"](#) is a document which takes on misleading statements to shareholders by publicly traded U.S. gun manufacturers

and challenges the companies to embrace six commitments that would improve public safety. In the weeks since the Parkland shooting, we have seen unprecedented action by retailers and financial institutions seeking to help improve gun safety, which is worthy of praise. Now, it is time for gun manufacturers to follow their lead.

Take Action: Call Congress Today to Urge Protection of Nepali TPS Holders

The deadline for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to decide whether to extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for people from Nepal is this week on April 25th. **Now is the time to tell our elected leaders to do everything in their power to ensure we do not turn our backs on the Nepali TPS holders we pledged to protect.**



We urge our members and friends to **call your Members of Congress at (202) 224-3121**. Be sure to call three times: Once for your [Representative](#) and twice for each of two [Senators](#).

Here is a sample script: "My name is [Name] and I am your constituent from [City, State]. I am calling as a person of faith to urge the [Senator/Representative] to see that Nepal's Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation is extended for at least another 18 months. As we approach the April 25th deadline for the administration to decide whether to extend TPS for Nepal, TPS holders are at risk of being returned to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Nepal where they face housing and food insecurity, lack of water, and inadequate access to health care. I urge the [Senator/Representative] to call or write a letter to DHS in support of an 18-month minimum extension of TPS for Nepal. I also call on the [Senator/Representative] to support a permanent, legislative solution to protect all TPS holders and their families."

In addition, we urge you to **post on Social Media**. [Click here](#) for a social media toolkit with tweets, Facebook posts, graphics, and other sample content.

Citizenship Question Could have Detrimental Effects on 2020 Census

This email from [Reform Immigration for America](#) succinctly explains why a new citizenship question on the 2020 Census is bad for all citizens. Please take the actions described:

Census data is the basis for fair political representation and it is how the government is able to take a snapshot of our country's demographics. Last week, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross included a citizenship question in his 2020 Census questions submission to Congress. **Why should you care?**



Because, if included, this question could threaten people's access to resources and vital programs they depend on. And a likely drop in participation in this critical survey could undermine representation of communities of color and immigrant communities that will have detrimental effects for generations to come.

Let's break this down. First, this question is untested. The Census Bureau conducts careful, costly research and testing over many years to develop census questions. The citizenship question was added without any of these tests. Second, adding a citizenship question will cause panic for many immigrant communities and they will avoid the census for fear of being targeted by this administration. Third, census data is instrumental in determining congressional seats and the allocation of resources for community needs, such as funding for hospitals and schools. If participation plummets we will all be affected.

Here are two ways to fight back right now:

- 1) [Share this graphic that breaks down why this is bad for our nation's future](#)
- 2) [Share this tweet to #SavetheCensus](#)

Remember, your efforts make a huge difference! We need your support as we fight against an administration that continues to undermine our democracy.

On Water and Faith: Ministry Training in NYC

Across religious and faith traditions, water holds special significance. Water purifies and cleanses, makes sacred and gives life. It binds communities through ceremony and tradition, reminding all of its intrinsic value and communal worth. However, right now, the cycles of water that give life to our planet are in distress due to climate change, mismanagement, and pollution.



Center for
Earth Ethics

UNION

Our friends at the [Center for Earth Ethics](#), in partnership with the [Climate Reality Project](#) have developed a Minister Training to train, support, and empower faith leaders to better address the ecological crisis in their own communities. The training will be held **May 31st - June 2nd at [Union Theological Seminary](#) in New York City**. To Learn more, visit centerforearthethics.org/water.



The Climate
Reality Project®

The conference will cover a wide range of topics including, the role of faith leaders in protecting access to water, the theology of praxis: water in our faith practices, the science behind water systems, and more. There are still some spots open for the 2018 program with a nominal fee to help offset cost of materials and meals. To apply, visit centerforearthethics.org/water, for any questions, email Genie Cooper at ECooper@CenterForEarthEthics.org

As our faith traditions call us to remember the sanctity of water, so too do they call us to care for those who need it most.

Join Us: No Muslim Ban Ever Rally at Supreme Court & Online

This week, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *Hawaii v. Trump* to decide whether the latest Muslim Ban - which permanently bans nationals from six Muslim-majority countries - violates federal law as an overreach of a president's authority and our constitution because it discriminates against a particular religious group. FAN is a proud co-sponsor of a [rally planned on April 25th](#) outside of the Supreme Court.

Recently, FAN was one of more than forty faith-based groups to sign on to an [amicus brief](#) in support of the respondents to the case. The National Immigration Law Center is hosting a blog series leading up to oral arguments. We invite you to read "[A Year in Review: Reflections on Resistance against the Muslim Ban.](#)"

The next step is to have a visible, strong presence outside of the Supreme Court so the justices and the American public will see the concern, not just of the Muslim community, but of those of us who support and advocate for all people regardless of religion or country of origin. **If you are in the DC-Metro area**, we hope you can [join us](#). **For those who can't be in Washington**, please join in online with digital actions on Facebook and Twitter using this [Partner Toolkit](#) chock full of posts and graphics.

