

God: The Shepherd of All

While on retreat recently, I participated in an exercise that had a profound impact on my life. We were asked to find a partner we did not know and then sit facing each other, holding each other's hands. We were asked to first look into our partner's eyes and then look down at their hands. We sat this way for about 15 minutes while a mantra "I love you" played quietly.

As I gazed at my partner's hands I began to "see" hands of people in countries throughout the world, people I did not know, hands of all different shapes, sizes, and skin tones. With each, I thought to myself "I love you." After several minutes my thoughts flowed to the hands of those who traffic other human beings for profit. In my mind these hands also took on different shapes and hues. I remember hesitating; I knew that I was called to say "I love you" to each of these people also. I also knew that I could only authentically say this by remaining "faithful to the grace of God." (1 Acts 13:43) My thoughts then moved to the hands of some specific people in the news who I disagreed with or I disliked. I knew that each of these individuals were made in the same image and likeness of our God who shepherds us, and so to each I said, "I love you."



This Sunday is often referred to as [Good Shepherd Sunday](#). It may serve to remind us (me!) that God reaches out to all people. God is the shepherd of all, even, and perhaps especially, those individuals who plan evil acts, who not just ignore, but who choose to do all they can to mock and to destroy the most vulnerable in our society and world.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, TSSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Take time this week in silent meditation of the words, "I love you." Start to envision all those close to you, ever widening that circle of loved ones to eventually include those you may disagree with and those you may dislike.

Suggested Petitions:

May the God who shepherds us all settle deep in your heart and provide love, mercy, peace, and joy. We pray....

May all those who suffer violence in all its forms see the Lord in the eyes and hands of those who advocate with them. We pray...

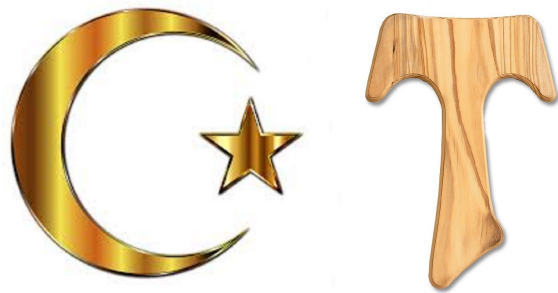
Collect Prayer:

**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

Join Us: Franciscans To Fast in Solidarity with Muslims During Ramadan

The recent bombings in Sri Lanka, combined with the 800th anniversary of the meeting of St. Francis and Sultan Malik Al-Kamel during the 5th crusades, the staff of FAN has been daily thinking of our Muslim sisters and brothers. The president and vice president of the Centre for Islamic Studies in Sri Lanka released a [statement](#) last week which called for deeper investigations in to the attacks on Easter as well as urging an end to extremism in all forms. You can [read the statement in full](#) on our website.



The Muslim holy observance of Ramadan begins next week at sundown on May 5th and continues to June 4th. Each year, during the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, 1.5 billion Muslims participate in this season when, from sunrise to sunset, they fast from food, drink, and general sinful behavior, such as violence, arguing, and lying. It is seen as an opportunity for Muslims to rediscover their own belief, improve their character, and ensure they bring benefit to society. The idea is to develop a deeper understanding of where you are and what you have in order to become a better person.

Because we wish to stand in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers, and honor their beliefs, we invite all our members and friends to [join us in a day of fasting on Friday, May 17th](#). On this day, we as Franciscans will fast for peace in all hearts, peace in all minds, and peace in our world. [Sign up here to join us](#).

Statement on Passing of Senator Lugar from Jubilee Network

Former Indiana Senator Richard Lugar (R) passed away on Sunday, April 28th. Lugar sponsored and led [Jubilee USA](#) legislation and efforts on debt relief, anti-corruption, preventing financial crisis, tax evasion and the Jubilee Act on responsible lending and borrowing.



Eric LeCompte the Executive Director of Jubilee USA, released the following [statement](#) last week:

"Senator Lugar was a bridge builder and defender of the vulnerable.

"Lugar was a leader of legislation to prevent financial crisis, provide debt relief for poor countries and make our financial system more responsible and transparent.

"Currently in Congress we face such polarization and so many divides. In Washington DC, we need his kind of leadership again."

We are keeping Senator Lugar's family and friends in our prayers. He will be missed.

New Franciscan Solidarity Tables Forming; Join our National Call

After a successful local launch of the Franciscan Solidarity Tables in [New York City](#), Franciscan Solidarity Tables have now formed in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#) and [Spokane, Washington](#).

On **Wednesday May 8th at 3pm Eastern / 12pm Pacific**, FAN will have its monthly national Franciscan Solidarity Table call where FAN and FST members will learn about the growing grassroots efforts of the Solidarity Tables across the country and the latest news coming out of the FAN office in Washington, D.C. All Franciscan and Franciscan hearted individuals are encouraged to join to learn about what's happening across the country and how they can get involved and spread the message of St. Francis and St. Clare in their local community and advocate for the common good. For call in info or for more information about the Franciscan Solidarity Tables, [email FAN's Jason Miller](#).



Gun Violence Prevention News and Resources

Every state in the union has had at least one school gun incident since 1970. This information was gathered from the [K-12 School Shooting Database](#) which is a project of the Department of Homeland Security. Last year stands alone as the worst on record, with 94 incidents of school gun violence documented, an increase of nearly 60 percent over the previous record high in 2016.

As a response to this data, lawmakers in 6 states are now promoting that teachers be armed, despite the March 2018 [Gallup poll](#)



which found that 73 percent of U.S. teachers do NOT want to carry guns in school.

[Guns & America](#) is a groundbreaking new reporting collaboration of 10 public media newsrooms, focused on a single issue: the role of guns in American life. Their mission is "to go deeper — to bring context, nuance and a human face to some of the most divisive issues of our day."

The Center for American Progress' Gun Violence Prevention team has released a new report, "[Guns, Lies, and Fear: Exposing the NRA's Messaging Playbook](#)," examining how the NRA's reliance on fear-mongering and misinformation copies tactics deployed by illiberal and authoritarian regimes.

We urge our members and friends to use this data in your own communities to start conversations and discussions on next steps.

Migration Resource from the Mennonite Central Committee

The [Mennonite Central Committee](#) (MCC) is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches, "sharing God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice." Click her to read more about their [work on migration](#).

Food shortages, environmental disasters, climate change, poverty and conflict push people to move. Land, resources, jobs, family, health care and education pull people away from their home communities. Some people move voluntarily, a choice made after weighing the pros and cons. Others leave involuntarily, forced by violence, extreme poverty, human trafficking and ethnic cleansing.

All of this points to the number of families seeking asylum is on the rise. The MCC has developed this [comprehensive resource](#) with multiple links for more data. We urge you to read through it.



FAN Supports House Resolution Combating White Supremacy and Terrorism

The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) supports [House Resolution 299](#), which opposes white-supremacy actions and mindsets and was introduced this month by Congressman Tom Malinowski, (NJ-7) and a number of Representatives.

Last week, FAN received the invitation to support this resolution from our friends at NETWORK Lobby. Any national and state organizations who want to lend their support can send a message to Benji.Schwartz@mail.house.gov.



We continue to advocate for inclusion in all communities across the United States.

Letter to Political Parties Urges a Repeal of Muslim Ban among other Requests

Last week, a [joint letter](#) to all national political parties was released requesting that they include repealing the Muslim Ban and reversing the all-time-low cap on the annual number of refugees admitted into the United States as signature issues in their 2020 party platforms. FAN signed on as well as a number of Franciscan groups, communities, and organizations.

The joint statement is in advance of the 2020 national party conventions held by the Democratic, Republican, Green, and Libertarian Parties. During these conventions each political party updates their party platform, which embodies the principles and strategic goals of the party for the next four years.

Read the text of the letter along with the list of signers [here](#). If your community or organization signed, we thank you for your advocacy!



Advocacy and Education on Cameroon from Franciscan Sisters in Wisconsin

The [Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration](#) based in La Crosse, Wisconsin hosted a Town Hall event last week to help advocate for peace for the people of Cameroon, especially those impacted by the current Anglophone Crisis. The event served not only to educate attendees about the crisis, but invited them to join FSPA and Friends of Cameroon as they advocate for justice, stability and viable peace as social conditions worsen in Kumbo.



Attendees of the event were urged to [sign this petition](#), urging officials in the U.S. Department of State to strengthen their efforts in de-escalating the Anglophone crisis and make further effort to build a lasting peace in Cameroon. We urge our members and friends to [sign the petition](#) as well.

[Click here](#) to see videos from the Facebook Live broadcast, a local news report of the event, and a mayor-to-mayor exchange between the mayors of La Crosse, Wisconsin and Kumbo, Cameroon. **Please pray for Cameroon using the pictured Thea Bowman prayer.**

This Mother's Day, Honor Mothers by Acting to Stop Separation of Immigrant Families

On Mother's Day we honor the mothers in our families and act on behalf of mothers and children separated at the U.S.-Mexico border. The U.S. administration's policy of separating migrant families has been a chaotic disaster. Even nine months after the administration rescinded its separation policy, it is possible that more children have been separated than the official count of 245 due to the failure of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to keep accurate records.



Mother's Day is a particularly significant time to draw attention to the suffering inflicted on mothers and children separated from each other or who are living under family detention. We invite our members and friends to [use this resource](#), developed by FAN's own Sr. Marie Lucey and Sr. Maria Orlandini for the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#). It contains prayers, a story and an example action you can do this Mother's Day to honor those who have been separated from their families.