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Reflection Date: May 13, 2018: 7th Sunday of Easter

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## Love and Unity

This Sunday, most Catholic dioceses will proclaim the Gospel for the [Ascension of the Lord](#), however, in my home diocese of Bridgeport, CT we will celebrate the [7th Sunday of Easter](#) keeping the tradition of Ascension Thursday as a Holy Day. In preparing for this reflection, I read the readings for both days and I heard the Lord speaking to me in both of the second readings.

In the first letter of John (used for 7th Sunday of Easter) we hear, “No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection...” 1JN 4:12 Simply put, this phrase says all we need to do to acknowledge God who dwells within each person, is love. It sounds simple, but can be quite difficult for us to love. For me, the act of receiving Eucharist at mass each week gives me the strength to continue to love, even when it’s difficult. During Mass, I say this prayer to myself during the consecration: ‘Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of the Eucharist to serve as a constant reminder of your presence within each one of us.’



In the letter to the Ephesians, (used for Ascension of the Lord) we hear “grace was given to each of us...to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith” EP 4:7, 12-13. This phrase points us toward our purpose. Again, we are called to recognize the grace given to each of us manifested in our God-given gifts. We are to support and uplift each other’s gifts, using them for the greater good. As we are all put on this Earth at this moment in history, we are all called to build up the body of Christ and be *unified in faith with others*.

With these two directives, to recognize Christ in everyone we meet and to build the body of Christ in our lifetime, we are energized to take our faith in to the streets and build the Kingdom on God here on earth.

Janine Walsh  
FAN Communications Coordinator

### **Suggested Action:**

Write a love letter to someone in your life. You don’t have to send it, just put down on paper your thoughts toward someone you love to remember why they’re so important to you.

### **Suggested Petitions:**

For all those suffering mistreatment or lack of respect, may they be lifted up with the dignity of Christ, we pray...

May our hearts burn with the passion of working together toward justice for the greater good, we pray...

**Collect Prayer: (Taken from Ascension Mass during the day)**

**Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,  
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,  
for the Ascension of Christ your Son  
is our exaltation,  
and, where the Head has gone before in glory,  
the Body is called to follow in hope.  
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**

## **Join Us As We Celebrate 10 Years of the Franciscan Action Network**

Saint Francis is attributed with saying, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

How time flies! Ten years ago about 150 Franciscans and Franciscan hearted people gathered in Baltimore for a meeting which resulted in the creation of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). FAN was commissioned to present a unified Franciscan voice for peace and justice in Washington, D.C. Since the early days, FAN has grown into a well-respected organization. Watch & share this [video](#) of some of our accomplishments and check out our [10th Anniversary webpage](#) to see more.



We are striving to do what is impossible with your help and the help of God and St. Francis and St. Clare. [Please consider investing in the future of FAN](#) and help us continue to bring the Franciscan voice to Washington, D.C. and across the country.

## **Take Action: Call Congress to Vote No on Farm Bill**

[Faith in Public Life](#) hosted a webinar last week focused on defending our neighbors from devastating cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP.) If you missed it, a recording and other resources such as the slide presentation, as well as message memos, fact

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sheets, and an op-ed are available for you at these links:

[Webinar recording](#)  
[Resources](#)

**We urge all members to call your Representatives in Congress** right away and tell them to vote no on the Farm Bill because of its cruel cuts to SNAP.

FIPL has provided this number to Call 1-844-390-0619. It will provide you with suggested values-based talking points and connect you directly to your Representative's office.

## Food and Water Watch Webinar on Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is gaining momentum and popularity. Unfortunately, factory farms, loggers and landfills are lining up to profit by trying to convince the public and policy makers that their waste is clean renewable energy. At the same time, tradable renewable energy credits are undermining efforts to create truly clean renewable energy.



**Join Food and Water Watch for a webinar this Thursday, May 10, at 8pm ET/5pm PT.** [“Defining Renewable Energy: How Polluters and Wall Street Are Trying to Hijack the Renewable Energy Movement.”](#) You will hear an overview on how poorly defined standards are not only threatening to undermine renewable energy development, but also impacting public health and the environment. You can register here: <https://fwaction.us/RPSwebinar>

## Tell Congress to Honor Mothers, Pregnant Women in Detention

Last week, 58 faith-based organizations including FAN and 189 faith leaders [sent a letter](#) to the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) expressing shock and outrage about ICE’s decision to eliminate the presumption that ICE should not detain pregnant women. This was a response to the announcement in March that more than 500 pregnant women had been detained.

Representatives of the organizations expressed deep concern about detention conditions saying this policy is not pro-life. FAN’s own Sr. Marie Lucey was quoted in a [Catholic News Service](#) article. We want to thank our institutional members and individual members who signed the letter and urge continued outreach on this issue.



As we approach Mother's Day, it is critical that we make our voices heard and tell our national leaders to honor immigrant moms and protect family unity. No one benefits when mothers and their families cannot be together on Mother's Day or any other day. Join the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) in a National Call-in day this Wednesday, May 9th. **Call your mom, and then take 5 minutes to call your Members of Congress.** You can also [sign this petition](#) to honor all moms this Mother's Day.

**CALL YOUR SENATORS & REPRESENTATIVES: [Click Here](#) or Call 866-940-2439\***

*\*Call 3 times to be connected to your 2 Senators and 1 Representative*

Sample Script: *"I'm your constituent from [CITY/TOWN], and [as a person of faith], I urge you to honor all moms this Mother's Day by supporting policies that protect and unite refugee and immigrant families. I call on you to protect the refugee resettlement program, stop the detention of pregnant immigrant women, defund harmful immigration enforcement that separates children from their moms, reject efforts to curtail family immigration, and offer dreamers and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders a path to citizenship, without compromising family unity or undercutting other communities. I value the sanctity of the family and believe Congress should act to bring families together, not keep them apart."*

You can also [tweet at your Members of Congress](#). Please click here for [sample graphics](#).

## In Miami? Check out a Film Screening on Gun Safety

FAN has been made aware of an upcoming film screening in Florida of the award-winning documentary film 'Newtown', chronicling the aftermath of the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting. Following the film will be a town hall meeting featuring students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and three local civic leaders to discuss gun violence prevention. The topic they will cover is what local communities could do about gun violence, if not for state firearm preemption laws that block local action in 43 states. According to [Everytown](#), these preemption campaigns aim not only to tie the hands of local officials, but to intimidate and punish those who attempt to reduce gun violence through local law.



**What can YOUR city  
do about GUNS?**  
Come find out.

**Film Screening & Town Hall Meeting**

**Saturday, May 12 at 10:00 AM**  
Coral Springs Center for the Arts  
Multipurpose Room  
2855 Coral Springs Drive  
Coral Springs, FL 33065

We offer this event as an example of something you can do in your community to look at the issue from a local perspective. Be sure to [let us know](#) if you are planning something in your community.

## Take Action with the Poor People's Campaign on May 14th

In just under two weeks, the [Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral](#)



[Revival](#) will launch [40 Days of Nonviolent Direct Action](#). On May 14, the Campaign will launch its first nation-wide event of the season with nonviolent moral direct actions in over 30 state capitals.

The goal is to force a serious national examination of the enmeshed evils of systemic racism, systemic poverty, ecological devastation and the war economy during a key election year. There will be protests at more than 30 statehouses and the U.S. Capitol demanding a massive overhaul of the nation's voting rights laws, new programs to lift up the 140 million Americans living in poverty, immediate attention to ecological devastation and measures to curb militarism and the war economy. We will hold teach-ins to learn more about these issues and how we can organize to transform our nation's political, economic and moral structures.

We urge our members to join an event near you and take action. [Learn more here](#).

## Signatures Delivered to Senator's Office in Missouri

FAN was made aware of an action last week in Missouri, where over 5,000 signatures were delivered to Senator Claire McCaskill's office in St. Louis. The signatures were gathered to urge the Senator's vote against the nomination of Gina Haspel as director of the CIA due to Ms. Haspel's connections to torture.



Though not able to speak directly with Senator McCaskill, her very capable and knowledgeable aide, Jo Middleton, did spend considerable time with the sisters who delivered the signatures. She said they were "very important as Claire comes to a decision on the confirmation vote."

A press release was sent to all the greater St. Louis area major newspapers, radio and tv stations though there was no actual coverage when the signatures were delivered.

The attached photo is of the delivery. From left to right:

Jo Middleton, Aide to Claire McCaskill  
Sister Mary Ann McGivern, Sister of Loretto  
Sister Renita Brummer, Franciscan Sister of Our Lady of Perpetual Help  
Sister Roberta Hudlow, Sister of Loretto

Great work, sisters!