

Publication Date: June 4, 2018

Reflection Date: June 10, 2018: 10th Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake...

I've always found the gospel for this [Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) difficult to hear, especially the text that says, "Jesus came home with his disciples. Again the crowd gathered, making it impossible for them even to eat. When his relatives heard of this they set out to seize him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." The scribes who had come from Jerusalem said, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,' and 'By the prince of demons he drives out demons.'" I

try to imagine being present, prayerfully placing myself in Jesus' hometown and hearing these condemning and disparaging remarks. How could they say such things?

Perhaps you have been the unfortunate victim of condemning and disparaging remarks or rumors made about you. If so, you know the intense feeling of pain, which can be debilitating and demeaning. I'm reminded of Francis of Assisi and how he grew through his conversion experiencing the condemnation of others. Francis' own father, Pietro Bernardone, was what today we would consider abusive. After Francis returned, defeated from battle and imprisonment in Perugia, he began behaving more and more strangely, choosing to spend time in silence, in caves and walking around Assisi filthy and dressed in rags. His former friends and the people in the town thought he was crazy. Francis' biographer, Thomas of Celano, wrote, "The townspeople threw stones and mud at him: "The noise of that ridicule echoed here and there." (First Life, Chapter V). When this news reached Pietro, he became convinced that his son had lost his mind. He dragged Francis home and locked him in a small cell. Who knows how long he might have stayed there if not for his mother, Pica, who released him.

Yet Francis persevered through all this because of his conviction that it was God working through him and calling him to live the gospel and to see the presence of the poor and suffering Christ in the leper, in the outcast and in those people, who the social norms discarded as if they were garbage.

We know that Clare of Assisi also had to deal with the reproach of her family as she followed Francis and embraced a life of radical poverty. As Clare came of age to marry, her uncle Monaldo began to consider an appropriate husband for her. His concern was not so much for the welfare of Clare but for the wealth, status and honor her impending marriage could bring to their family name. Clare however resisted and chose to join Francis and the brothers in living evangelical poverty. As Clare stole away on Palm Sunday night to join Francis and the brothers, Monaldo and other family members tried to bring her back but without success. Later as Clare and the Poor Ladies began to form their life of prayer, simplicity and absolute poverty they were



met with great opposition. This opposition not only came from family members but from bishops and the pope himself. They were seen as being weak idealistic woman and much too literal in their desire to follow the poor and crucified Christ. Yet, despite all this they too persevered.

In his most recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis writes, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus himself warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance. He reminds us how many people have been, and still are, persecuted simply because they struggle for justice, because they take seriously their commitment to God and to others." Pope Francis continues to state, "Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people "utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (Mt 5:11). At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous. Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness."

As Franciscans we are called to a radical living of the gospel. We are called to incarnate the suffering and crucified Christ and to humbly recognize the suffering and crucified Christ in our sisters and brothers who are poor and marginalized by our society. We truly become the brothers, the sisters, the mothers of Christ when in our struggle for gospel justice, we withstand the persecution and ridicule of others, to welcome the immigrant, the refugee and those who are unwanted. May we continue to faithfully live our Franciscan call of gospel justice, doing the will of God, as the brothers and sisters and mothers of Christ present in our world today.

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board President

Suggested Action:

If you haven't yet, take time this week to read and reflect on Pope Francis' [Gaudete et Exsultate](#).

Suggested Petitions:

May our call to live the radical demands of the gospel burn our hearts to action on behalf of the poor and marginalized, we pray...

May those who are cast aside by society feel the loving embrace of Jesus, we pray...

Collect Prayer

**O God, from whom all good things come,
grant that we, who call on you in our need,
may at your prompting discern what is right,
and by your guidance do it.
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 Fast and Pray with the Poor People's Campaign

This week of the [Poor People's Campaign](#) carries the theme of The Right to Health and a Healthy Planet, focusing on Ecological Devastation and Health Care.



Keeping this theme in our hearts, over 1,100 people will be joining today's [day of fasting and prayer](#).

Some things to remember as we begin our fast: The health of our bodies relies on adequate food and care. We fast in solidarity with the poor, who may not have access to either. The health of our environment relies on conscientious humans willing to clean and care for our air, water, vegetation and oceans. We fast in solidarity with our Mother Earth and recognize our role in both causing harm and revitalizing the environment. We fast in solidarity with those who face discrimination and hatred because of the color of their skin or their religion or their sexual orientation. We fast in solidarity for those who fear the other and see their fear turn into hatred. We fast that they may open their hearts and be transformed to love.

[It's not too late to join us in today's fast and prayer with the Poor People's Campaign.](#)

FAN Board Members Participate in Franciscan Common Ground Conference

Franciscan Action Network Board Members, Kelly Moltzen and Sister Maryann Mueller (pictured along with Felician Sister Dong Hong Marie Zhang) participated in Franciscan Common Ground, A Conference on Migration on Saturday, May 19th at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in New York City.



The purpose of the conference was to find a Franciscan voice to migration. Speakers included David Couturier, OFM. Cap., who spoke on *Migration, Childhood and Trump's Metaphors of Disenchantment: A Franciscan Critical Discourse Analysis* and representatives from the Legal Aid Society, Franciscan's International and Immigrants' Rights Advocates.

Take Action: Leave Comment for New EPA Transparency Rule

Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) an extension of the comment period on the proposed rule, “Strengthening Transparency in Regulatory Science.” The public hearing for this proposed rule will be held on July 17, 2018 in Washington, D.C. The extension of the comment period gives the public the opportunity to provide [valuable input](#) about how EPA can improve the science underlying its rules.



The proposed rule aims to establish a clear policy for the transparency of the scientific information used for significant regulations. It is important that the best available science serve as the foundation of the EPA's regulatory actions. This proposed rule will require that underlying scientific information be publicly available for independent validation.

With today's extension, the comment period is open through August 16th. We urge our members to leave a comment by clicking the blue "Comment Now" button in the upper right corner of [this page](#).

Start Planning: June 20th is World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is quickly approaching on June 20, 2018.

Last week, we let you know about the Justice for Immigrants' [World Refugee Day Toolkit](#). This wonderful resource offers advocacy suggestions, talking points and prayer resources along with helpful suggestions that will help you to plan events in your local community.



This week, we also offer this new faith toolkit from the Interfaith Immigration Coalition for World Refugee Day: [Top 5 Ways Faith Communities Can Take Action for World Refugee Day](#). It contains many resources about ways to plan a successful action along with a link to the [map of events](#) happening across the country. If your event is not yet on the map, please share what you're doing by [clicking this link](#).

Take Action: Sign on to Letter of Support for Extension of TPS to Yemen

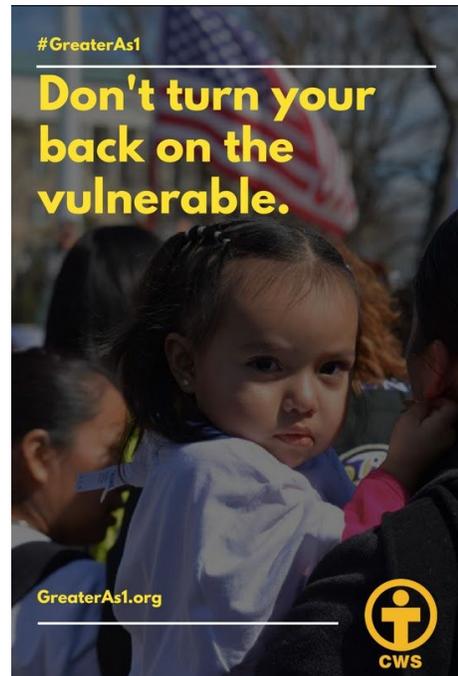
Our friends at [Church World Service](#) have developed a letter for faith leaders to sign on to show their support of a request for an extension of Temporary Protected Status for people from Yemen. We urge members and friends to sign on. The deadline to sign on is **close of business on Friday, June 8th**:

Faith Leaders: Sign On Today! We invite faith leaders across traditions to [sign on to this letter](#) urging the administration to extend Yemen's TPS designation for at least another 18 months. Failure to extend TPS for Yemen would mean turning our backs on the vulnerable Yemenis whom we pledged to protect, as the country suffers from the catastrophic impact of the ongoing civil war.

Offering protection to the most vulnerable is a pillar of our American values. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is a U.S. program designed to protect people from being returned to harm, and the administration will decide by July 5th whether to extend TPS for Yemen. There are approximately 1,100 Yemenis living in the United States with TPS today. Yemen was first designated for TPS in 2015 in response to the escalating violence in the country which erupted in the summer of 2014 and has escalated to a devastating civil war. According to the United Nations, the conflict has killed 10,000 people, and Yemen currently faces public health crises such as mass hunger, the spread of diseases, and damaged infrastructure which continue to plague the country.

We need to send a clear message that the faith community wants to see the administration extend Yemen's TPS designation for at least another 18 months and support a permanent, legislative solution for all TPS holders. Together, our collective advocacy places the faithful call to love our neighbors into action.

Faith leaders [sign on to this letter](#) today!



Apply to Join a Pilgrimage to Assisi in 2019

[Pace e Bene](#) is an organization built to foster a just and peaceful world through nonviolence education, community-building, and action. Deriving its name from the phrase St. Francis and St. Clare used as a greeting meaning "Peace and All Good", Pace e Bene is hosting a one-week pilgrimage of peace, prayer and nonviolence to Assisi, Italy June 23-30, 2019.



Pilgrims will help celebrate Pace e Bene's 30th anniversary by joining this powerful pilgrimage led by Rev. John Dear and Dr. Ken Butigan. Join in this once-in-a-lifetime experience to study the life of St. Francis, pray for peace, build community, celebrate Pace e Bene, and deepen your commitment to Gospel nonviolence for the journey ahead and peace work to come.

[Click here to apply](#) and learn more details about the trip. **Applications are limited to 30**

pilgrims and the deadline for applying is June 15th.