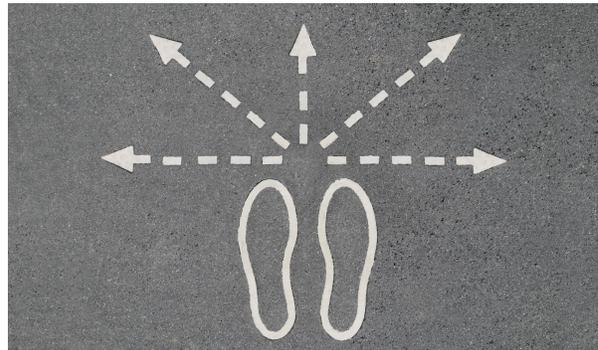


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Reflection Date: July 1, 2018: 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Choices We Make

It has been a troubling few weeks. We have seen children being taken from their parents and placed in cages. We have seen the pictures, heard the audio tapes of the children crying for their mothers. We have even heard our leaders try and use the Bible to justify their actions. We have heard our president claim that our borders are being overrun by these criminals and use the term 'infested', as if these children were insects. Commentators on some TV stations claim these children are 'illegal.' In whose eyes are these children illegal? Certainly not in God's eyes.



In the first [reading this Sunday](#) from the Book of Wisdom it says: "For he fashioned all things that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, and there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the netherworld on earth, for justice is undying." (Wis 1: 14-15) I often wonder when God looks at the Earth, what does God see? Does God see an imaginary line drawn between the US and Mexico? I am pretty sure in Heaven there is not a 'US' and a 'Mexico', only God's beautiful and wondrous creation.

We often hear the claim that "**those people**" come here illegally so they should be punished. Again, when God looks at us does he see us and "**those people**"? At one point in our history, slavery was legal, so was the holocaust, genocide, segregation, and stealing native american children from their parents. Legality has nothing to do with justice. Jesus challenged the law on a regular basis. He lived outside the power structure and in the margins. What do we do when we are faced with a moral dilemma, what choices do we have?

The Franciscan theologian, Blessed John Dun Scotus teaches us that the will not only has the capacity for choice, we can freely choose or reject to make a moral choice. Franciscan scholar, Sr. Mary Beth Ingham describes this dilemma in her book *The Harmony of Goodness: Mutuality and Moral living according to John Dun Scotus*. When faced with a moral decision we can utilize our experience, our intuition, our understanding of moral reasoning, and our learned moral knowledge together to formulate a decision of what we should do. However because we have the ability to choose, even though we clearly understand what we should do, we are free to choose otherwise, either by choosing something inappropriate or by not choosing at all. We can choose not to choose. Which is what most of us choose. Dr. Vasko in her book *Beyond Apathy; A Theology for the Bystander* states "To be a Christian is to take sides with those who are marginalized, dehumanized and subject to violence. Whether we like it or not neutrality isn't an option. In the face of violent activity, to hide behind the mirror of ignorance is to take sides with the powers that be."

In our second reading from 2 Corinthians it says; “but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their needs, so that their abundance may also supply your needs, that there may be equality.” (2Cor 8:13-14) It is pretty clear what the apostle Paul is saying in this statement. You would almost think that Paul was a socialist. On Father's Day, Rev. Jacob C. Ledwon, pastor at St. Joseph University Parish in Buffalo, NY in his [homily](#) said, "You may think to yourself... 'I don't come to a church to hear about politics.' Well if you do not want to hear about politics don't ever read the Bible because the Bible is a political document. Don't ever look at a crucifix, because Jesus died as a political prisoner."

St. Bonaventure tells us that how we choose and what we choose makes a difference – first in what we become by our choices and second in what the world becomes by our choices. So we each have to answer a simple question: Do we chose to do what is right, just, and moral? Do we choose to take a path where we hoard our abundance while others go without, or do we choose not to choose?

Patrick Carolan
FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

This week, we urge you to take 10 minutes and [watch Rev. Jacob C. Ledwon's homily](#). Sit with his message and wrestle with what God is saying to you.

Suggested Petitions:

For all our decision makers and elected officials. May their choices, made on behalf of their constituents, follow the teaching of the Gospel message. We pray...

For all migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others displaced from their home countries by war, persecution, and injustice. May they find forever homes in welcoming communities. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**O God, who through the grace of adoption
chose us to be children of light,
grant, we pray,
that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error
but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.
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.

Recapping a Busy Week of Advocacy for Immigrants and Refugees

We saw much activity about the issue of immigration last week. We prayed, rallied, and advocated on Capitol Hill for our migrant sisters and brothers. An executive order aimed at stopping children from being separated from their parents but opening the door to indefinite family detention was signed by the President. [FAN spoke out against this EO](#). Here are just a few of the events:



Tuesday saw a beautiful number of women of faith across multitude of denominations participate in the [Women of Faith rally](#) in front of Customs and Border Patrol protesting the policy of separating parents and their children at the border. Srs. Marie and Maria joined friends from the Sisters of Mercy, Leadership Conference of Women Religious and others. Check our [Facebook page](#) for great photos.

On Wednesday, LA RED, the immigrant justice campaign of [Faith In Action](#) organized an event at the Capitol Rotunda where over 170 people came together to pray for the children who have been separated from their families at the border. Mylar blankets, like those being given to the children in border detention centers, were passed out to kids who were at the event representing the detained children. The event was held to call attention to the need to reverse the administration's "zero tolerance" policy which continues to criminalize asylum seekers. See photos of the event on our [Facebook Page](#).

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC), of which FAN is a member, developed a [letter](#) that was sent to all congressional offices expressing opposition to two House bills that were slated to be voted on late last week. The vote has been postponed. The two bills fail to meet the IIC's principles for immigration and border reform. Read the letter in its entirety [here](#) and see the next block to take action.

On World Refugee Day, also Wednesday, the UNHCR annual "[Global Trends](#)" study reported that 68.5 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced by the end of 2017. The refugee crisis is now the largest in history, surpassing even the years following World War II. See the next block to take action.

Take Action: What can you do about Family Separation?

Photo Caption: Interfaith event at Capitol Rotunda, praying for separated families.

Even with the president's executive order, which does not solve the crisis at the border, we urge members and friends to continue to take action for migrants and refugees. Here are some suggestions:



As we mentioned, it was announced last week that House GOP caucus and GOP leadership decided to postpone immigration vote on the compromise bill. We urge our members to **call your Representative at 1-888-436-6478** and urge them to vote against the 'compromise immigration bill.'

[Click here](#) to call your 2 Senators and 1 Representative and urge them to do everything in their power to see the administration resettle at least 45,000 refugees in 2018 and commit to resettling at least 75,000 refugees next year. A sample call script is available [here](#).

The USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services campaign has a new [Family Separation resource page](#) with resources and suggested actions including this one pager, [Supporting Separated Children and Families](#).

A new [Interfaith Immigration Toolkit](#) has been developed and updated with new information and ways to take action.

Law enforcement leaders expressed grave concerns on a press call, where they called for a plan to reunite separated children with their families and objected to potential indefinite detention. You can [listen to the call here](#).

FAN's Patrick Carolan Featured on Vice News

We wanted to share some exciting news with you.

HBO's news series, [Vice News](#) aired a piece last week on Franciscan Action Network with interviews of our executive director, Patrick Carolan and footage of the ACT Against Racism Rally held in April.



Patrick discussed St. Francis' views on climate and his meeting with EPA director, Scott Pruitt. In case you missed it, [click here to watch the June 13th episode online](#).

"Rise for Climate Action" Webinar Invite from GreenFaith

Our friends at [GreenFaith](#) sent this invitation for people of faith to join a webinar **TODAY** at one of two times to learn about the Global Climate Action Summit this September.



The next big moment for people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to stand up for our precious planet is this September, when state and local leaders from around the world will meet in San Francisco, California for the [Global Climate Action Summit](#) (GCAS).

This is our time to rise. We're excited to invite people of faith from around the world to join a webinar on **Monday, June 25th at either 1:00 p.m. ET or 7:00 p.m. ET** to learn about an incredible set of actions that will give us a chance to rise for climate action, jobs, and justice.

[Register for the 1:00 p.m. ET webinar on Monday, June 25th.](#) (10am Pacific time)

[Register for the 7:00 p.m. ET webinar on Monday, June 25th.](#) (4pm Pacific time)

Register even if you can't join us, and we'll send you the link to watch at your convenience.

What Does the Trump Administration's Executive Order Mean?

Last week, President Trump issued an executive order calling for a halt to the separation of children and families at the border. While some claim this as victory, advocates like FAN, in reading the language of the order, are less enthusiastic. We released this [statement](#) on Friday. We also offer these words from our friend and partner, Ann Scholz, (pictured, third from right) the Associate Director for Social Mission of the [Leadership Conference of Women Religious](#) (LCWR), who sums up our concerns nicely:



It appears that the pressure of the people has had some effect on President Trump. The good news is that our moral outrage has at least forced the President to admit that ripping children from the arms of their parents is not politically sustainable. The bad news is that the president's executive order is not a solution to the immorality of U.S. immigration policy. While we've clearly shown that even President Trump must acknowledge the power of the people, we still have much more work to do.

It's time to take a deep breath, step back, and give careful consideration to what the [executive order](#) does and does not do. I think we need to be very careful about reading this as a solution. As you well know, things are often not as they appear. In many ways the President's executive order simply trades family separation for the indefinite incarceration of immigrant families. Instead of protecting children, the President has directed his administration to jail them along with their parents in prison-like conditions.

I am afraid that President Trump's executive order:

- *Does not end the "zero tolerance" and that so long as the administration chooses to criminally prosecute 100% of parents, children will have to be separated from, or indefinite incarcerated with their parent.*
- *Does not include a plan to reunite with their parents the 2300 children already in government custody.*
- *Threatens the child welfare protections of the Flores ruling.*

I am very afraid that the president's order merely transforms a mass family separation crisis into a mass family incarceration crisis that will:

- *Threaten the well-being of families, especially children.*
- *Cost taxpayers millions of dollars.*
- *Line the pockets of for-profit prison corporations like CoreCivic and GEO Group.*

I am very much afraid that the executive order:

- *Does nothing to challenge the Attorney General's attempt to limit immigrants' rights under US and international law to seek asylum.*
- *Does not address the other policies of this administration that have been breaking up families since President Trump took power including:*
 - *ending Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA);*
 - *ending Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for many countries;*
 - *banning Muslims;*
 - *reducing eligibility for asylum;*
 - *slashing the number of refugees admitted;*
 - *conducting workplace raids; and*
 - *making every undocumented immigrant 'a priority' for deportation.*

I'm afraid that the executive order does not provide for the consideration of proven alternatives to immigrant detention including:

- *Intensive case management that resulted in 90-97%% appearance rates*
- *Bonding*
- *Electronic monitoring*
- *Provision of legal representation*

President Trump's executive order is not a solution. Let us all promise to continue to stand up and speak out; to make noise; and to work diligently to hold the U.S government and others accountable.