

Publication Date: July 16, 2018

Reflection Date: July 22, 2018: 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time:

How do we hear the voice of Christ, our Shepherd?

We hear throughout our readings for this [Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) of the importance of having or being good shepherds. This may conjure up images of a shepherd surrounded by sheep or some other animals. Often, we as believers and followers of Jesus are considered the 'flock'. Perhaps we have heard this term used by pastors and bishops as they speak about their ministry of tending and guiding their flock. My concern in using this terminology and image of a shepherd and the flock is that we might have the tendency to see the shepherd with power over or being better than the flock. This image fits well into our Catholic sense of hierarchy which has been handed down through the centuries and has often led to the faithful 'flock' being very passive with the feeling that the role as faithful followers is to 'pray, pay, and obey'.



I believe this strong hierarchical mindset led to the problem that the prophet Jeremiah addressed in the first reading, "Woe to the shepherds who mislead and scatter the flock of my pasture, says the LORD. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, against the shepherds who shepherd my people: You have scattered my sheep and driven them away. You have not cared for them..." Jeremiah is speaking, not simply to the religious leaders of his time, but to the kings and rulers of the Israelite people. For the Israelites there was no separation between their religion and their government as they were a people called by God. To be the people of God meant to live in faithfulness, truth and integrity, but the shepherds of Israel, the kings and rulers, had become self-indulgent and self-absorbed. Their lack of compassion and care for those they should have been serving spread, as bad behavior often does, among other leaders and among the people themselves so that inequity, prejudice, oppression and injustice began to distort the hearts of God's people. In the end, Jeremiah reassured the people that God would appoint those who would shepherd them so that they need no longer live in fear and violence.

We know and believe that Christ is the Good Shepherd. As a good shepherd Jesus spent his days not only leading and guiding the people, he was attentive to help his disciples grow in understanding what true pastoring and servant leadership was to look like. We know too how Jesus condemned the leaders of his day, the Scribes, the Pharisees and Sadducees for their oppressive and 'heavy handed' ways with the people. Perhaps this was why the great numbers and crowds of people were coming to Jesus and seeking him out.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians lets us know the type of shepherding Christ calls forth in those who will follow. Through his death and resurrection Christ became our peace, calling us to be people of peace while breaking down walls of hatred and hostility. In Christ, we are created anew and called to witness the presence of God's love by our lives of compassion, nonviolence

and by carrying the cares and the burdens of others, especially those who are marginalized, immigrants, refugees, and people who are oppressed and treated with disdain or spoken of as if they were animals.

Mark's gospel reminds us of how Jesus Christ was moved with pity as he saw the vast crowd of people gathering to see and to hear him. Are we aware of and attentive to the numbers of people and the crowds that are searching for justice, compassion, refuge and safety from oppression, hatred and violence? Can we have the same mind and heart of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ? Can we hear Christ calling to us in the shouts and cries of our brothers and sisters? Let us not remain uncaring and deaf.

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world." – C. S. Lewis

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN President

Suggested Action:

This week, take time to meditate on your attitudes toward those in "the margins" of society. Keep yourself honest but don't pass judgement on yourself, simply become aware of your feelings. Then read [Mark 6:34](#) and sit in silence, listening to God's response.

Suggested Petitions:

For those shepherds who have in some way misled their flocks. May their hearts be open to hearing the cries of the poor. We pray....

For all those who cry out, looking for a voice to speak up for them. May they find what they need in welcoming, open communities. We pray....

Collect Prayer:

**Show favor, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.
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 Tomorrow for Break Bread Not Families Fast

This year we have seen many immigration policies that degrade immigrants and take away the dignity we believe is afforded each human being. You may have [read in the news](#) recently about a 24-day fast started by several activist groups which has many



prominent participants, including the Kennedy family, actor Martin Sheen, and many Congressional Representatives.

The fast started on Sunday, June 24th and is set to go on for 24 days symbolizing the approximately 2,400 migrant children that have been separated from their parents. Tomorrow, July 17th is the last day.

Franciscans are no strangers to fasting. As a way of acting out our faith, the staff of FAN decided to join the effort together and we invite you to **join us in fasting on Tuesday, July 17th as you are able**. There is still time to **sign up to fast at [Breaking Bread Not Families](#)**, one of the organizations coordinating the fast. If you will be fasting with us, please [let us know](#).

Save the Date: Campaign Nonviolence Week of Actions

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The night before he was killed, he told the crowd in Memphis, "The choice is no longer violence or nonviolence; it's nonviolence or non-existence."

Fifty years later, we are struggling more than ever between nonviolence or non-existence. Through our [Campaign Nonviolence National Week of Action](#) every September, tens of thousands of us have chosen nonviolence and taken to the streets to call for a new culture of nonviolence.

On Sept. 21, 2018, International Peace Day, join Campaign Nonviolence for an evening of reflection on five years of the Campaign and the next steps forward. The following day, Sept. 22, 2018, will see a rally at the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument at 9am ET and a silent march to the White House.

Find more information on these actions on the [Pace e Bene website](#), including speakers, schedule of events, and registration information. We hope you can join us during the week of actions this September.



**CAMPAIGN NONVIOLENCE NATIONAL
CONVERGENCE, MARCH, & ACTION**

September 21-22, 2018, Washington, D.C.

**Nonviolence or Non-Existence:
Choose Nonviolence!**

Interfaith Toolkit to Oppose Nomination of Ron Mortensen for Head of Refugee Admissions

On May 25, 2018, President Trump nominated Mr. Ronald Mortensen to serve as Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) - a critical position overseeing the office that provides assistance to refugees and displaced persons overseas, as well as the operations of



the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). This position requires the political and diplomatic acumen to administer humanitarian assistance and leverage refugee resettlement as a key foreign policy tool. This position requires confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Immigration advocates are working together to educate people on the need to stop this confirmation. Information about Mr. Mortensen and his anti-immigrant/refugee track record is [available here](#).

Our interfaith partners developed this [mini-toolkit](#) to help faith communities to respond to the nomination of Mr. Mortensen, who would (if confirmed) oversee the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program within the State Department. It contains several links to faith letter sign-ons, sample scripts to use when calling Congress and sample press statements and letters to the editor for you to send to local media outlets.

We urge members and friends to continue to [raise your voice](#) on behalf of those who rely on us to do so.

Catholic Climate Declaration Accepting Individual Signers

On June 18th, the third anniversary of the release of *Laudato Si'*, the Catholic Climate Covenant announced that nearly [600 Catholic institutions](#) had signed on to say that “Catholics Are Still In” on the Paris Agreement. That number continues to grow and we are so thankful that many of our Franciscan parishes, communities, and schools are a part of it.

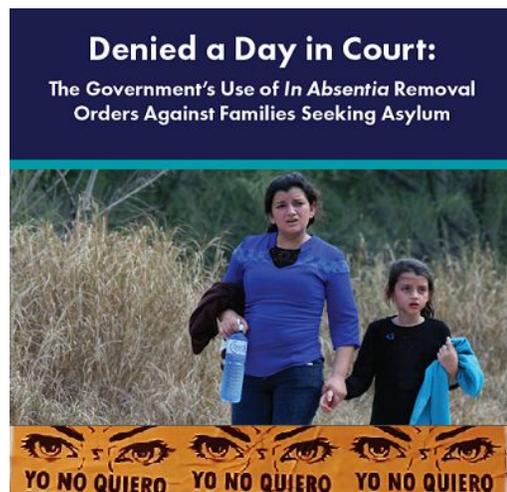
**CATHOLICS
ARE STILL IN**



We are happy to let you know that the [Catholic Climate Declaration](#) is now open to **individual sign-ons**. This declaration expresses the U.S. Catholic community’s call to climate action, arising from our theological foundation, proclaimed to all within our one human family. You can [read and sign the declaration here](#).

Report: Asylum Seekers in US Find Difficulty Obtaining Legal Representation

Starting in the summer of 2014, the United States began experiencing an unprecedented influx of Central American families who were fleeing violence and seeking humanitarian assistance and safety. Most of these families were from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Large numbers of families, *unable to obtain legal representation* and navigate a complex immigration system, were deported by the federal government, often back to the violence they had fled, even after having passed a credible fear interview with an asylum officer. The reason for deportation often was sanctioned by the use of 'in absentia' removal orders issued to families



upon their missing an immigration court hearing.

Centro Presente, Alianza Americas, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Economic Justice jointly conducted a week-long fact-finding mission in El Salvador and Honduras. Both countries recently had their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation cancelled. [This report](#) describes the violence and poverty deported TPS recipients will be facing when they get back to their home countries.

The Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP) at the Urban Justice Center and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), released [this report](#) which highlights the high rate of unrepresented families, discusses the obstacles families face in attending their hearings, explains how the immigration system fails families seeking asylum, and provides policy recommendations for how the Administration and Congress can address these shortcomings.

We encourage our members who work within this issue to keep educated by reading both of these reports.

Save the Date for FAN's 10th Anniversary Award Celebration

This year, the Franciscan Action Network continues to celebrate our 10th Anniversary. We hope you will save the date for our annual award celebration where FAN's board and staff will honor several of our friends from our partner immigration advocacy organizations.

Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served and music will be provided by [The Carolans](#), an Irish/Folk Music group.

When: Thursday, November 15, 2018

Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Where: St. Francis Hall Washington, D.C.

Tickets: \$100/person (discount available for vowed religious)

We hope you can join us to support, honor and uplift the great work of [CASA](#), [NAKASEC](#) and the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#).

