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Reflection Date: August 25, 2019 - 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## What is Good News?

This Sunday, the response for our [Responsorial Psalm](#) is from Mark 16:15 “Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.” The last couple of weeks it has been hard to find “Good News.” What with the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton, the shootings of police officers in Philadelphia, the ICE workplace raids in Mississippi, the continued separation of children from their parents at the border, the unrest in Hong Kong, it is kind of hard to think of any Good News. I often ask myself, ‘What is that Good News that Jesus told us to preach?’ Is it about something and someplace far away in the distance? Is the Good News that, at some point (if we are good) we get to go somewhere else? It is awfully hard to tell the world something that we really don’t fully understand ourselves.



Our theology teaches us that Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins so we could get into Heaven. Maybe this is the good news; because we were damned by the sin of Adam, Jesus had to come and save us and now when we die, we can “go to Heaven.” Whatever we do on Earth is only important insofar as it helps us get to Heaven. Is that the Good News?

Blessed John Duns Scotus said, “The Incarnation of the Son of God is the very reason for the whole Creation. To think that God would have given up such a task had Adam not sinned would be quite unreasonable! I say, therefore, that the fall was not the cause of Christ’s predestination and that - if no one had fallen, neither the angel nor man - in this hypothesis Christ would still have been predestined in the same way.” If Scotus is right then Jesus didn’t come to save us from original sin. Maybe, just maybe, the “Good News” which we seemed to have lost over the past 2000 years, is that the Kingdom of Heaven is here. The good news isn’t that Jesus came so we can go somewhere else but he came to create the kingdom here on earth.

In our first reading it says: “and I come to gather nations of every language; they shall come and see my glory.” Imagine if we were telling the world, every nation, all people the Good News, not that they can go to Heaven at some point, but rather that Jesus came to create the Kingdom of Heaven. They can stop worshiping at the foot of the cross and do as Jesus commanded and pick up their cross to be co-creators with God in building the Kingdom of Heaven right here on Earth. Now that is Good News.

Peace and All Good,  
Patrick Carolan  
FAN Executive Director

**Suggested Action:**

Quietly contemplate what heaven on earth would look like. List specific things that would exist. Open your heart to the Lord and ask His help.

**Suggested Petitions:**

May we have hearts opened to be trained by God the father as his precious sons and daughters. We pray...

May we strive to "enter through the narrow gate" and be found strong enough to pass through. We pray...

**Collect Prayer:**

**O God, who cause the minds of the faithful  
to unite in a single purpose,  
grant your people to love what you command  
and to desire what you promise,  
that, amid the uncertainties of this world,  
our hearts may be fixed on that place  
where true gladness is found.  
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**

## **This Week's St. Clare Pledge Ask: Demand There be No Vote on NAFTA 2.0**

Democrats in Congress are demanding critical improvements to the NAFTA 2.0 deal that was signed last year. But the corporations that stand to benefit like big pharmaceutical companies are still pushing for a vote on the deal as-is, possibly as soon as September. Here is an [article](#) to get you informed.

The current NAFTA 2.0 deal has several provisions that need examining:

- Delays generic drug competition, which guarantees pharmaceutical companies will profit by locking in high drug prices
- Labor and environmental terms are too weak to stop more job outsourcing
- Allows Big Oil to attack Mexican climate and environmental policies



All these details are ample reason to hold off any vote until agreements can be reached. We

urge our members to remember your [St. Clare Pledge](#) and take action today. Use [this tool to call your members of Congress](#).

## Catholic Momentum: Weekly Actions to End Child Detention

After the [ICE raids in Mississippi](#), where children were left to wonder where their parents had been taken, it is imperative that we continue our work on behalf of those whose lives depend on our action.

We are proud to announce the next National Action will happen in Newark, NJ on Wed. Sept. 4th. We are excited as **Cardinal Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R. will be joining us**. [RSVP to attend here](#) and please share the [Facebook event](#) with all your friends..



Impelled by the Gospel, we continue to call on our communities to **Pray and Act**. Find resources and ideas for vigils [here](#).

We are inspired by the **Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn** who recently spent a week ministering to migrant refugees at Casa de Refugiado and in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. [Read about their experiences here](#).

Here are some more **local actions** you may think about taking:

- **Attend a [Town Hall](#) meeting:** Elected representatives are home for August recess and hosting town hall meetings to hear the concerns of the people they represent – that’s you! Enter your zip code [here](#) to find a town hall meeting near you.
- **Visit your elected representative’s** local office: during the month of August to petition for action on behalf of the children detained. Here are some [tips to help you plan](#) your visit.
- **Have on hand and distribute** as needed: copies of the [statement](#) on the appalling conditions of child detention made by Catholic Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration.
- **Almsgiving:** Consider supporting organizations in the diocese of El Paso and Rio Grande who are directly supporting those impacted by detention:
  - [Annunciation House, El Paso](#)
  - [Catholic Charities, Rio Grande](#)
  - [Hope Border Institute](#)

Please [let us know](#) what is happening in your community to end child detention.

## Take Action: Make a Comment to Save SNAP

Food assistance is at risk--again.

After Congress recently rejected cuts to our most important food assistance program (SNAP), the

**COMMENT TODAY TO STOP THE LATEST PLAN TO TAKE AWAY CRITICAL FOOD ASSISTANCE**



**FOR 3 MILLION PEOPLE**



Administration is now proposing to implement a second SNAP benefits cut through executive action. [We need your help once again.](#)

Under the current law, more than 40 states choose to provide SNAP to families with more savings than otherwise allowed by SNAP rules, and to allow SNAP benefits to working households with somewhat higher income but with significant expenses for shelter and child care. This current policy option is known as “Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility” (or “Cat EI”). The Trump Administration is proposing to eliminate these options for states. If enacted, this would eliminate SNAP benefits for 3.1 million individuals and take free school meals away from 500,000 children in those families.

FAN has joined the Coalition on Human Needs and other partners in coordinating an effort to gain as many comments about this proposal as we can. We must make it clear that these cuts would harm struggling people. Please [take action and make a comment](#) here. **The 60-day comment period ends September 23rd.**

## Take Action: Join Strike With Us Campaign for Climate

Climate change is the biggest threat to the future of our lives, country, and world. Following in the footsteps of [youth all over the world](#), a campaign called [#StrikeWithUs](#) has started to organize climate strikes to take place all over America. On September 20th, three days before the UN Climate Summit in NYC, **young people and adults will strike all across the US as part of a global #ClimateStrike** to demand transformative action be taken to address the climate crisis.

FAN is helping to coordinate the faith community and promote participation. A [Facebook Working Group](#) for people of faith has been created to easily share resources and information. We invite you to join. As part of our [Living the Change](#) commitments, we urge all our members and friends to take action. Sign up to participate in a climate strike near you.

We urge our members and friends to [check the interactive map](#) to find a strike near you. If you don't see one, consider hosting your own strike. Be sure to [sign up for updates](#).



## Take Action: Tell Walmart to Stop Selling Guns

On August 3, a white supremacist killed 22 people and wounded dozens more at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, just days after a Walmart employee killed two colleagues inside the Southaven, Mississippi store.



In the wake of these two horrific acts, Walmart executives [offered](#) their prayers, but have no plans to stop selling guns. In fact, Walmart is one of the country's largest gun retailers. Additionally, in states where it is legal to do so, Walmart also allows shoppers to open carry. In recent years, the retail giant has taken gradual measures to address its gun policies, however more needs to be done to curb the national gun violence crisis. It's time to do what our federal government won't.

We urge our members and friends to [sign this petition](#) to Walmart demanding they stop selling guns and ammunition immediately.

## Save the Date - FAN Annual Award Benefit: Nov. 7th

Many of you may have heard by now that our intrepid leader of the past 10 years, Patrick Carolan will retire as Executive Director at the end of the year. In order to celebrate this momentous occasion, **we are honoring him with the FAN award at our annual benefit on November 7, 2019.**

Patrick has lived this organization, nurtured and grown it so well, we want to send him out with a bang! We hope you will save the date and [consider joining us in Washington, DC.](#)

Beer, wine, and heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served and dress is casual. There will be auction opportunities and lots of fun. [We hope you can make it.](#)

Thursday, November 7, 2019  
6:00pm  
St. Francis Hall Washington, D.C.  
Tickets: \$100/person  
(discount available for vowed religious)



## Sultan and the Saint Screening in India is a Hit

The Franciscan Action Network has been working for more than 2 years on a project promoting the docu-drama, [The Sultan and the Saint](#). Produced by our friends at [Unity Productions Foundation](#), the film is a powerful depiction of Muslim-Christian encounter as told through the story of St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan of Egypt.



This year is the 800th anniversary of this historic meeting in 1219. To celebrate, FAN has reinvigorated our efforts to have the film screened all over the globe. Last week, we received a report from the coordinator of one such screening in India, Fr. Victor Edwin SJ. [Read about it on our blog page.](#)

If you'd like to host a screening in your parish or community, please [let us know](#) and we will get you started.