

Am I Meek and Humble of Heart?

Our readings on this [Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) speak of the need for good and humble hearts.

The beautiful reading from the Book of Sirach seems a good guide for how we should conduct our lives. “My child, conduct your affairs with humility, and you will be loved more than a giver of gifts. Humble yourself the more, the greater you are, and you will find favor with God.” Unfortunately, this is not the lesson that we hear encouraged and taught in our society and culture today.

All too often we get caught in the “ego”, we thrive on competition, rivalry and personal success. These attitudes often breed conflict, enmity and distrust. We tend to live in a culture of conflict where people want to protect what they feel is rightfully theirs, protect the things that they have worked hard and long to acquire.



The Letter of Paul to the Hebrews suggests that perhaps this culture of conflict has been with us for a long time and has been shaped by how people have imaged and imagined God. Time and time again the ancient Israelite people, those brought into the covenant relationship with God through the great prophets, Abraham, Moses and Isaiah, turned away and hardened their hearts. Often this hard-heartedness led to people creating their own image of God and limiting God to their people and their tribe. Paul, writing to their descendants, the Hebrews, reminds them that they are called to dwell in the city of the living God, in a new and heavenly Jerusalem, brought about through Jesus Christ. Paul’s vision of living Christ, living community in relationship with all people, was so much more inclusive and expansive.

In today’s gospel we sense a very observant Jesus who was invited to dine in the home of one of the leading Pharisees. Considering the culture and custom of that time, it is easy to imagine how the seating arrangement worked. Is it really any different in our current milieu? Often today, people still get caught up with the ego, the “places of honor”, identifying those who are acceptable and those who are unacceptable, the misfits.

This timely parable calls us to “check our ego at the door” and be attentive with hearts open to see ourselves in relationship, as one with others. We are called to have the mind and heart of Christ Jesus who humbled himself, becoming incarnate in our human flesh. Christ becomes incarnate in all human flesh, in the flesh of the poor, the flesh of the crippled, the flesh of the oppressed, the bullied, the unwanted and in the flesh of all those who are marginalized. May we humbly grow in seeing Christ enfleshed in ourselves, in all people and in all of creation.

Richard Rohr, OFM expressed this so well, “It’s a gift to joyfully recognize and accept our own smallness and ordinariness. Then you are free with nothing to live up to, nothing to prove, and nothing to protect. Such freedom is my best description of Christian maturity, because once you

know that your “I” is great and one with God, you can ironically be quite content with a small and ordinary “I.” No grandstanding is necessary. Any question of your own importance or dignity has already been resolved once and for all and forever.” ([Radical Grace: Daily Meditations](#))

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Meditate and pray this week on the status of your heart: How often do you find yourself with thoughts that are not humble?

Suggested Petitions:

Like St. Francis, may our hearts be humbled in the presence of others, who are made in Christ’s image. We pray...

May our desire for meekness overcome any societal pressure to become overbearing or tyrannical. We pray...

Prayer for Humility: Author unknown.

**Lord Jesus, when you walked the earth,
Your humility obscure your Kingship.
Your meekness confused the arrogant,
Hindering them from grasping your purpose,
Your nobleness attending to the destitute.
Teach me to model after your eminence,
To subject my human nature to humility.
Grant me with a natural inclination
To never view myself greater than anyone.
Banish all lingering sparks of self-importance
That could elevate me greater than you.
Let my heart always imitate your humility.**

Amen

This Week’s St. Clare Pledge Ask: Ask your Rep to Sponsor the DFA Amendment

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that we must not serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24) This message is hard to hear in our government today.

Vast majorities of the American people want the government to lower drug prices, raise the minimum wage, protect all of God’s Creation, deliver health care to all and more, but action is stalled



because those demands conflict with the interests of a corporate class superpowered by the *Citizens United* decision. A **call-in day to Congress on Thursday, September 5th** has been coordinated by good governance partners to encourage more co-sponsors on [H.J. Res. 2](#), the House resolution version of the amendment.

With 800 cities and towns, and 20 states calling for an amendment - representing 141 million Americans, 46% of the U.S. population - the idea of overturning *Citizens United* has tremendous popular support. 47 Democrats in the Senate already signed on as cosponsors and now efforts are being shifted to the House of Representatives, where currently there are 135 cosponsors.

To make our democracy work and ensure our government responds to the will of the people, rather than the mega-donors, we must overturn *Citizens United*. **Call your Representative at 202-224-3121 and ask that she/he cosponsors the Democracy For All constitutional amendment to overturn *Citizens United*.** Be sure to [let us know](#) how it went.

Together We Can Prevent Gun Violence

Perhaps, at last, demand for gun regulation has reached a tipping point. After every mass shooting since Sandy Hook, we hoped that Congress would act. It didn't, so we experience one mass shooting after another in addition to gun violence on our streets every day and increasing number of gun suicides. After the 2018 elections, several bills were introduced in the House by Democrats but they never made it out of committee and even if they passed the House would be doomed in the Senate.

say **NO** to
#WeaponsOfWar.



Last week, after the El Paso and Dayton massacres, President Trump indicated he might support background checks, but then he flipped to be more in line with the NRA. But while Congress and the President fail to act, it seems that more people are rising up to demand legislation to help stem the tide gun violence.

Here are a few examples of people power in just the past week.

- In DC, FAN staff have participated in the [Recess Rally](#), and joined other members of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence in visiting congressional offices. While these visits have not been very encouraging, the people power in states and cities across the country offer hope and models of what groups and communities of people have the ability to do.
- Three religious congregations of sisters, FAN member Sylvania Franciscans along with Sisters of Notre Dame and Ursuline Sisters had a [commentary](#) published in Toledo Ohio's The Blade, demanding laws to end firearm violence: ban assault weapons, require universal background checks for all gun sales, provide funding for gun violence prevention research, make trafficking in weapons a federal crime.
- Moms Demand Action, Students Demand Action, and Everytown Survivor Network showed up in force at [recess rallies in all 50 states](#) and Washington, DC over the August 16-18 weekend to demand that legislators pass gun safety legislation.
- Everytown Law [won a major federal court ruling](#) requiring the Bureau of Alcohol,

Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to provide data on gun violence, overturning the Tiahrt Rider passed in 2003 at the urging of the gun lobby to withhold data and hinder research into firearms used in crimes and suicides.

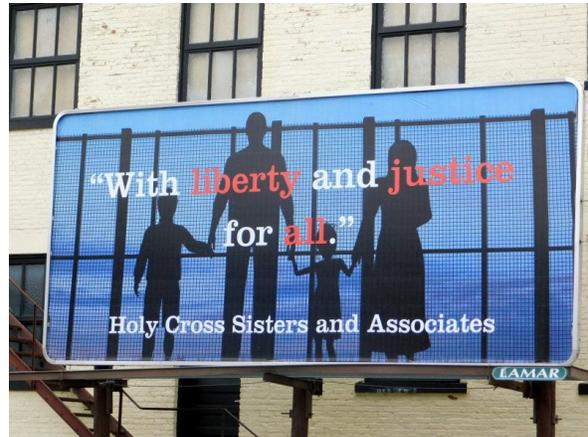
- The inspirational youth from the March for our Lives movement introduced a comprehensive agenda to end the gun violence epidemic: A Peace Plan for a Safer America. [Read more about it here.](#)

We can all do something!

“With Liberty and Justice for All” Billboard Erected

We want to congratulate our friends, the [Holy Cross Sisters](#) and Associates in Merrill, Wisconsin who let us know that the planned billboard drawing attention to the plight of immigrant families has finally been erected outside the post office. Here is an excerpt from the press release:

“With liberty and justice for all,” is the theme of a billboard that has been erected across from the post office in Merrill, Wisconsin. It is a sign that the Holy Cross Sisters and Associates hope will draw attention to the plight of immigrant families who come to our country. In addition, the same message can be found on the back of T-shirts that have been purchased by sisters, associates and friends.



Sister Pat Cormack, provincial for the USA Province headquartered in Merrill, said: “We join women and men across the USA in expressing our concern for immigrant families who come to our country. Our Catholic Faith teaches us that every creature receives the gift of Life from our God and, as such, has dignity and is to be treated with respect. Catholic Social Teaching reminds us of the moral obligations to respect life from womb to tomb.”

The Holy Cross Sisters have been holding a public prayer service every Wednesday morning at 9:40 in Holy Cross Chapel at Bell Tower Residence Assisted Living in Merrill, Wisconsin. “We ask God to remind us that we are called to be persons of mercy and compassion just as Jesus was,” Sister Pat said. The message on the billboard will be displayed for a 12-week period.

Take Action: Join a Climate Strike Near You

Climate change is the biggest threat to the future of our lives, country, and world. The [Amazon is on fire](#) and the consequences could affect the entire globe.

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

A circular logo with a black background and a red glow. The text "CLIMATE STRIKE" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters. Below it, "SEPT 20" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a white rectangular box.

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. Click here to [check the interactive map](#) to find a strike near you. If you don't see one, consider hosting your own strike.

FAN is helping to coordinate the faith community and promote participation. We invite you to join the [Facebook Working Group](#) for people of faith, created to easily share resources and information. As part of our [Living the Change](#) commitments, we urge all our members and friends join an action in your community. [Let us know where you are](#) and we will try to connect you with other Franciscans.

One suggestion for dual participation: After your Climate Strike, invite your friends and family over for a [Living the Change Supper](#) in your home or at your place of prayer or worship. Developed by Living the Change, these suppers are delicious plant-based meals that bring people together to talk about why they care about climate change and why behavior change is one important part of our response. [Download the Supper Guidebook](#) to help you plan.

Catholic Climate Covenant Releases Feast of St. Francis Program

The Catholic Climate Covenant has announced its 2019 Feast of St. Francis Program, "[We Are All Connected: Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#)" is now available. This year's program complements and accompanies the Vatican's Amazonian Synod and focuses on integral ecology, environmental and climate justice, and lifting the voice of indigenous communities. The program contains prayers, readings, a short video, and suggested activities.



To access the full program, [click here and fill-out the form](#). You will then receive an email with the links to the resources.

Inspired by the example of St. Francis, patron saint of ecology, the Catholic Climate Covenant produces a free educational program to help faith communities explore how it can better care for creation and the poor.

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 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: 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.