

Publication Date: January 20, 2020

Reflection Date: January 26, 2020 - 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Called by Jesus to the Peripheries

As I was preparing to write my reflection for [this week's Gospel](#), I came across this Angelus (Reflection and Blessing each Sunday at noon in St. Peter's square) by Pope Francis for the same Sunday in 2017. I liked it and decided to give Pope Francis the space in this week's Newsletter. The Charism of the Third Order Franciscans is Ongoing Conversion, a call to a daily transformation of our way of thinking and living; the words of Pope Francis invite us to do just that.



"Today's Gospel passage (Mt 4:12-23) recounts the beginning of Jesus' preaching in Galilee. He leaves Nazareth, a village in the mountains, and settles in Capernaum, an important center on the lakeshore, inhabited largely by pagans, a crossroads between the Mediterranean and the Mesopotamian inland. This choice indicates that the beneficiaries of his preaching are not only his compatriots, but those who arrive in the cosmopolitan "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Is 9:1): that's what it was called. Seen from the capital Jerusalem, that land is geographically peripheral and religiously impure because it was full of pagans, having mixed with those who did not belong to Israel. Great things were not expected from Galilee for the history of salvation. Instead, right from there — precisely from there — radiated that "light" on which we meditated in recent Sundays: the light of Christ. It radiated right from the periphery.

Jesus' message reiterates that of the Baptist, announcing the "kingdom of heaven" (v. 17). This kingdom does not involve the establishment of a new political power, but the fulfillment of the Covenant between God and his people, which inaugurates a season of peace and justice. To secure this covenant pact with God, each one is called to convert, transforming his or her way of thinking and living. This is important: converting is not only changing the way of life but also the way of thinking. It is a transformation of thought. It is not a matter of changing clothing, but habits! What differentiates Jesus from John the Baptist is the way and manner. Jesus chooses to be an itinerant prophet. He doesn't stay and await people, but goes to encounter them. Jesus is always on the road! His first missionary appearances take place along the lake of Galilee, in contact with the multitude, in particular with the fishermen. There Jesus does not only proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God, but seeks companions to join in his salvific mission. In this very place he meets two pairs of brothers: Simon and Andrew, James and John. He calls them, saying: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (v. 19). The call reaches them in the middle of their daily activity: the Lord reveals himself to us not in an extraordinary or impressive way, but in the everyday circumstances of our life. There we must discover the Lord; and there he reveals himself, makes his love felt in our heart; and there — with this dialogue with him in the everyday circumstances of life — he changes our heart.

The response of the four fishermen is immediate and willing: "Immediately they left their nets and followed him" (v. 20). We know, in fact, that they were disciples of the Baptist and that, thanks to his witness, they had already begun to believe in Jesus as the Messiah (Jn 1:35-42).

We, today's Christians, have the joy of proclaiming and witnessing to our faith because there was that first announcement, because there were those humble and courageous men who responded generously to Jesus' call. On the shores of the lake, in an inconceivable land, the first community of disciples of Christ was born. May the knowledge of these beginnings give rise in us to the desire to bear Jesus' word, love and tenderness in every context, even the most difficult and resistant. To carry the Word to all the peripheries! All the spaces of human living are soil on which to cast the seeds of the Gospel, so they may bear the fruit of salvation."

May God open our hearts to hear daily: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"

Sr. Maria Orlandini, OSF
FAN Director of Advocacy

Suggested Action:

Take time to reflect and ponder when did you feel called by Jesus to do/be something different? Which peripheries are you called to go to?

Suggested Petitions:

For those who live at the peripheries in today's world, especially immigrants at our southern border, may they be treated with dignity and respect. We pray...
That we may answer the call of Jesus to ongoing conversion. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.
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 Saturday, We will Take the Polar Bear Plunge

This Saturday, January 25th, the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) will once again team up with the [Chesapeake Climate Action Network](#) (CCAN) and take part in the Polar



15th annual "Keep Winter Cold"
**POLAR BEAR
PLUNGE**

January 25, 2020

Bear Plunge at National Harbor just outside of Washington, D.C.

As part of FAN's commitment to care for all of creation a member of our staff or board has participated in this annual event to #KeepWinterCold. Five years ago, it was our executive director Patrick Carolan and board member Fr. Jacek Orzechowski along with a group from St. Camillus Parish in Silver Spring, MD. Watch a [video of their plunge here](#).

This year, FAN's Plunge team will be: our new Executive Director, Steve Schneck; our Director of Campaigns and Development, Jason Miller; and FAN friend and food justice advocate, Patrilie Hernandez. These valiant people will brave the icy waters and #TakeThePlunge! **Will you join them?** You can plunge in your community or support FAN's plunge by donating.

Donating to the plunge is easy. [Click here to make a donation](#) to our team or if you prefer not to donate online, you can donate directly to FAN via check:

Franciscan Action Network
P.O. Box 29106
Washington, DC 20017

Be sure to write "Polar Bear Plunge" in the memo line.

Thank you so much for your support and prayers as we advocate for all of God's wondrous creation. If you happen to be in the D.C. metro area and want to watch Steve, Jason and Patrilie take the plunge, you can join us at 10am on Saturday January 25th. [Send us an email](#) to let us know that you'll be joining us--we will save you some hot chocolate!

Lenten Booklets on St. Maximilian Kolbe from Franciscan Media

Experience this coming Lenten season through the eyes of the saint of Auschwitz: [Maximilian Kolbe](#). Through daily reflections and prayers as well as quotes from St. Maximilian and his biographers, you'll develop a deeper understanding of his faith, his devotion to Mary, his capture and confinement at Auschwitz, and his loving sacrifice.

Commissioned in part to honor the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, this [compact booklet](#) features the words of one of the great Franciscan saints of the 20th century. It is perfect for slipping into a pocket, wallet, or purse, to take St. Maximilian's words with you throughout the Lenten season.



This [booklet is sold in packs of 10](#) for gifting to your family, friends, prayer circle, parish, or other group. The more you buy, the more you can save off the list price of \$2 per booklet! [Click here to order](#).

As Tensions with Iran Increase, Franciscans Call for Peace

Just over 800 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi crossed the battle lines of the 5th crusade to work for peace with Egyptian Sultan Malik al-Kamel. With an increase in tension and violence between the U.S. and Iran, Franciscans all over the country are following in our patron's footsteps and calling for peace.

Last week, you may have seen our emails asking all our members and friends to contact both their [Representatives](#) and [Senators](#) to urge Congress to work for peace. The staff of FAN also joined Franciscans from Holy Name Province at a prayer vigil in front of the White House to pray for peace. (Pictured)



Additionally, the Franciscan Friars (OFM) of the U.S.-6 Provinces signed onto a [statement to all Members of Congress](#) calling for diplomacy and peacemaking.

From the statement:

Actions of violence will only exacerbate the situation, leading to increased violence, hatred, and discord between the U.S and Iran. The way of peace is not easy, yet we believe it will result in lasting security and justice for the people of Iran and the United States.

We are proud to join with Franciscans all over the country in our efforts to promote peace. **As we remember Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. today, we encourage our members and friends to find prayer services or events in your area and continue to spread his message of love and peace.**

Applications Open for the Faithful Climate Action Fellowship

Over and over, the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) has made statements about the climate crisis as a moral issue, reminding people that inaction is unacceptable. Time is running out and as people of faith, we must encourage bold action among our leaders, both within the church and at the Capitol.

To contribute to this effort, FAN has joined several creation care partners in developing the [Faithful Climate Action Fellowship](#). Inspired by young people like Greta Thunberg and all those spearheading the Climate Strike rallies, this campaign will recruit young religious leaders across the country to spur their faith groups to enter the conversation

faithful
climate action
fellowship

and push for bold action. The 10-month program will consist of joint study, leadership training, and action beginning in March and continuing through to the end of the year.

Ideal fellows will be aged 18-24 years, demonstrate active grassroots leadership connections in their respective home faith communities, and possess a passion for climate action. Each fellow will receive a \$500 stipend upon completion of the program. If you or someone you know fits this description, apply for a spot on the [Faithful Climate Action Fellowship](#) team.

For more information and to submit an application, [click here](#). **Applications are due by February 14, 2020.**

Save the Date for Ecumenical Advocacy Days National Gathering

This year's [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) (EAD) will be quite special as the weekend will take place just after the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. EAD 2020 is scheduled for April 24-27, 2020 and will explore the intersection of climate change and economic injustice with the theme "[Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored.](#)"



Around the world, the most marginalized communities disproportionately affected by hunger, poverty, and the structural history of colonialism and racism are experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis most profoundly. Women and children in these communities suffer the most. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis recognized the double injustice of climate change and poverty. We join him and the growing chorus of various faith leaders who are raising their voices against these injustices.

As we have for the last 10 years, FAN will be at EAD as an exhibitor and will host a gathering of all Franciscans in attendance. [Registration is open](#) and we do hope you will plan to join us in Washington, D.C. If you are interested in coming but it is outside your budget, please [contact us](#) as we have some limited funds to support our network's involvement in EAD and we are excited to have you!

Faith 4 Asylum Campaign: Stop the Inhumanity

January 29th, 2020, marks the anniversary of the first asylum seeker sent back to Mexico under the [MPP/Remain in Mexico policy](#). Asylum seekers are migrants who flee their homes due to fear of violence or persecution. U.S. and international laws state that anyone has a right to apply for asylum in the United States, but this policy change prevents

A graphic banner for the Faith 4 Asylum Campaign. It features three small images: a group of people holding a banner that says 'END MPP', a person standing with arms outstretched, and a person sitting. The text 'INTERFAITH IMMIGRATION COALITION' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the banner, there is a call to action: 'SAVE THE DATE JANUARY 29, 2020' and a description of the event: 'Nationwide Prayer Vigils to Mark 1-year since Asylum-Seekers forced to "Remain in Mexico," and to Launch our #Faith4Asylum campaign.'

asylum seekers from waiting for their hearings in safety in the U.S. Instead, they are forced to wait in locations in Mexico where they face violence, extortion, and kidnapping. During this year at least 636 people have been victims of rape or assault or kidnapping or even murder, including 138 children.

To mark this anniversary, the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) will launch a campaign called [#Faith4Asylum](#) to stop this inhumanity and call for January 29th to be a national day of prayer and action. FAN will join with IIC and other faith partners at a vigil in Washington, D.C. and we invite our members and friends to hold a prayer service in your community on that day. Together, we will call for an end to U.S. government policies like Remain in Mexico that harm asylum-seekers and reject their sacred humanity. [Sign up to host or attend a prayer vigil here!](#)

We invite you to visit the [#Faith4Asylum website](#) for opportunities to endorse the campaign, sign the People's Pledge, submit details about your prayer vigil, and find resources to help you plan.