

Publication Date: February 3, 2020

Reflection Date: February 9, 2020 - 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

“A city set upon a mountain cannot be hidden”

Image by [Heidelbergerin from Pixabay](#)

The readings for Sunday Feb. 9th, the [Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), are good ones for those of us who try and witness the Gospel Values in the Marketplace. In fact the Gospel is one that has been used by our founding Fathers and Sisters at the establishment of Plymouth Colony. Since I am from the area of that foundation I recognize words that were often repeated by various mayors, governors, and Church Leaders in the Greater Boston area. The words were used time after time to encourage speaking truth to Power and to engagement in political thought and agendas.



It speaks about a different vision that has a foundation on the Word of God and the moving of God's Spirit among those who have accepted the Gospel.

I think of these words again and again whenever there is a moment for believers to stand and point to the moral foundations that our nation was built from. We see the value of these words when the faith community stands with those who feel they have no voice in the public forum. We also see how at times these words are used by people with different agendas. It is then that we realize how important it is to speak the truth to power and how our involvement in the public forum is so important.

My prayer and hope is that this righteous stand is one that does not exclude, but embraces “the other.” Our countries' history, especially from that historical fact of a city on a hill, has at times excluded the “other.” The ‘other’ being the natives already living on the land that our ancestors arrived in. The ‘other’ being those who have sought refuge and safety for their families, but do not have documents and are looked at as trying to take something from those who are already here. The ‘other’ as someone of a different race, creed, or belief.

In the first reading from Isaiah, we see that only when we take action can the Glory of God be seen in our midst. Only when we embrace the ‘other’, feed the hungry, give comfort to the affected, can the Light rise from us in the darkness. Only when we think “Yes we can”, will the Spirit of God be free to move and work among us in power.

Let us all pray that we will see the Light of God in what we say and what we do.

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
FAN Board Vice President

Suggested Action:

Consider who is labeled as ‘the other’ in your community. Say a prayer for them and ask God how He wants you to intercede on their behalf.

Suggested Petitions:

May all the faithful to Christ be a shining light example to the rest of the world. We pray...
May our righteous stand always reflect Jesus’ message and include and embrace ‘the other’.
We pray...

Collect Prayer:

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care,
that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace,
they may be defended always by your protection.
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

Take Action: As your St. Clare Pledge, Urge Congress to Pass NO BAN Act

On the 3rd anniversary of the Muslim Ban last week, amid threats from the administration to expand the ban, Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) committed to a markup on the [NO BAN Act](#) in the House Judiciary Committee and a vote on the floor of the House. In the Senate, Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) introduced an important [resolution](#) recognizing the anniversaries of the refugee and Muslim ban, urging Congress to defund the MPP/Remain in Mexico policy, and calling for the enactment of the [Senate’s NO BAN Act](#).

As you may know, the NO BAN Act is legislation that would terminate the administration’s refugee, Muslim, and asylum bans and ensure that no one is banned from our country based on religious or nationality-based discrimination.

This week, as your [St Clare Pledge](#), we urge all our members and friends to join us in calling on all Members of Congress to **cosponsor and pass the NO BAN Act** ([S.1123](#) / [H.R.2214](#)) and urging Senators to join as original cosponsors of the [resolution](#). **Call Congress at (202) 224-3121 today.** You may choose to use the **sample script** provided here:



“I’m your constituent from [CITY/TOWN], and as a person of faith: I urge you to stand against

hate and cosponsor the NO BAN Act (S.1123 / H.R.2214). This bill would ensure that no one is banned from our country based on religious or nationality-based discrimination.

FOR SENATORS ONLY: *I also urge the Senator to sign on as an original cosponsor to Senator Blumenthal's resolution marking the third anniversary of the refugee and Muslim ban, urging Congress to defund the harmful Migrant Protection Protocols, and calling for the enactment of the NO BAN Act.*

In the last three years, the administration has repeatedly tried to ban refugees, asylum seekers, and Muslim neighbors from the United States. My community is still feeling the negative impacts of these immoral and wrongful bans that continue to tear apart families. No one should be blocked from entering the country just because of their faith tradition or where they come from. My community welcomes refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants, and I urge you to do the same."

Unheard Voices: A Faith Perspective on Money in Politics

Faithful Democracy Marks 10 Years of Citizens United

FAN is a dedicated leader of [Faithful Democracy](#), a multifaith, collaborative effort of congregations, faith-based, and good governance advocacy organizations taking a hard look at the state of our democracy. Recently, Faithful Democracy issued a [Voters Covenant](#) which outlines our advocacy plans for the year.

Throughout 2020, Faithful Democracy will roll-out **Unheard Voices**, a series of bimonthly toolkits, webinars, and other activities to educate and engage people of faith on the path to create a just democratic system. November 2019 saw the release of the [introduction](#) which explains what we hope to accomplish with this toolkit and the first chapter which looks at [Voting Rights and Disenfranchisement](#).



Today, we are excited to share with you **Chapter Two: [Money in Politics](#)** which takes a deep look at money in our political system and how it has affected many social justice issues.

Keep watching FAN's [Faithful Democracy](#) webpage and our e-newsletter & social media pages for new chapters as they become accessible.

On **February 6, 2020 at 3pm ET / 12pm PT** a Faithful Democracy webinar on the new chapter will be hosted by the Presbyterian Church, USA. [Click here to sign up](#). If you can't make it, [register anyway](#) and you will receive a recording of the webinar.

Anniversary of MPP/Remain in Mexico Policy Prompts Numerous Protest Actions

Photo courtesy of Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns

Last Wednesday, groups across the United States and in Mexico held demonstrations, prayer vigils, and other actions to mark the one year anniversary of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)/Remain in Mexico policy. Their demand is an end to this program that endangers, rather than “protects,” migrants’ lives.



FAN participated in the [vigil held in Washington, DC](#) on the steps of the United Methodist Building. Many personal asylum stories were shared, which were very moving. Church World Service staff member Bilal Askaryar told the crowd gathered that asylum saved his family who fled Afghanistan.

The Hope Border Institute has published two new reports detailing the effects of this policy on the borderlands community and on migrants returned to Mexico. The first is the [Remain in Mexico Situation Report](#) which provides original research accomplished by Hope Border Institute. The second prepared in collaboration with Stanford Law School Mills Legal Clinic is the [Report on the Human Rights Violations of Migrants in Mexico](#).

Franciscans Call for Consistent Ethic of Life at March for Life

In what has become an annual tradition, the Franciscan Action Network joined the annual March for Life rally in Washington, D.C. on Friday, January 24th.



FAN staff and interns joined other Franciscans under two banners, one urging “Choose Life - Not War” against military action in Iran, and another promoting a consistent ethic of life beyond birth. Several news articles were written about the march with comments from FAN friends Fr. Jud Weksnar, OFM and Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM. In particular, [National Catholic Reporter](#), the [Crux](#) and [Religion News Service](#) included great comments that explained why the Franciscans were there promoting a consistent ethic of life. The group handed out flyers and signs outlining the USCCB’s consistent ethic of life position. The Franciscans were well received.

Gun Violence Survivors Week Feb 1-8

This week is National Gun Violence Survivors Week. Beginning Feb. 1st, at events throughout the country, Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers will honor survivors and discuss solutions to the gun violence crisis that affects our communities. [Find an event near](#)



[you](#).

Gun violence is a major public health epidemic that is killing 100 people per day. We've got to figure out the root causes and how to prevent the next tragedy before it happens. We need a [National Bureau for Gun Safety](#).

In 1966, as a response to rapidly increasing numbers of motor vehicle-related injuries and deaths, the National Highway Safety Bureau (NHSB) was created to promote and implement safety technology and practices, such as seat belt use, as well as to support research into causes and contributing factors. Now, we must use this same strategy to look at gun violence. As a way to honor all victims of gun violence, [sign this petition today](#) and urge Congress to create a National Bureau for Gun Safety.

FAN Comments Included in Amicus Brief

Franciscan Action Network was one of 40 interfaith organizations to file an [amicus brief](#) last week in opposition to the government's efforts to end protections of the Flores settlement agreement and authorize indefinite detention of some immigrant families. The brief was filed pro bono by the law firm Morrison and Foerster.



An Amicus brief (or 'friend of the court') is a legal document filed with a court by an organization or group with a strong interest in the subject matter of a lawsuit, but that is not a formal party to an action and requesting a particular outcome.

This brief represents a powerful and united statement by people of faith and we are proud that our comments were included in [Argument B](#). FAN and several of our institutional members who also filed amicus briefs are grateful to the law firm Morrison and Foerster for its filing on our behalf.

Two Weeks Left to Submit Applications 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

faithful
climate action
fellowship

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 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.**