

Publication Date: March 25, 2019

Reflection Date: March 31, 2019 - Fourth Sunday of Lent

Discovering God's Lost and Found

In the [first reading](#) from Joshua this week, we hear that God had removed the “reproach of Egypt from you.” After being freed from slavery, lost in the desert, and discovering the Promised Land, the people of Israel were able to sustain themselves from the land, and so God stopped sending them the manna from heaven which helped them to survive the journey and the desert.

The people celebrated Passover once again from the yield from the land of Canaan.

On the fourth Sunday of Lent we are called to Rejoice for what was lost will soon be found! In the Psalm, we hear again to taste and see the goodness of the Lord. We are reminded that God has answered our prayers in the past and will continue to do so in the future. But we are only human, who especially at this moment in history and time think only of the present moment. We spend a lot of time trying to plan our lives, allocate our time, and our days in an ordered manner. However, more so than not, our plans seem to be overwhelmed by events in history and even by our whimsical moods so we keep trying other methods, hoping for a perfect solution or plan.

That's why in the Gospel the words “NEW CREATION” should ring out loud and clear and hopefully echo in our hearts! For what was lost has been found! That's not a story, but a fact!

Why is there such a false sense of sophistication, seen as ironic detachment or plain old cynicism, that sees our lives as misery and discomfort? So, why is it that suffering is more real than God's love? Perhaps it has something to do with what Jesus describes in the parable? Paul “implores is” to be “reconciled to Christ”, to be a “new creation”.

Somehow we have to realize that what we lost in the midst of everything is the understanding that God loves the other, that God loves the sinner, but not the sin. How do we know that? Besides what is said in Scripture?

Because, God loves you just as you are and is very hopeful that His love will make you into a “new creation”!

In our current discourse on issues, we need to discover and be reminded of this over and over again. I remember so well in community organizing, being told that we need to remember there are no permanent enmities nor are there any permanent allies.

It is when we try to understand God's love for those with whom we disagree that we discover we have become a “new creation” ourselves.



Reflect on the parable of the two sons. Do you find yourself near to or far off from God?

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
FAN Board Member

Suggested Actions:

This week, consider what must you do to be at home with God?

Suggested Petitions:

May we be faithful to our mission through Jesus to love as he loved, to care for the sick, poor, and under-served. We pray...

May we gratefully utilize our God-given gift of Reconciliation this Lent so we may be found worthy. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**O God, who through your Word
reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion and eager faith
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations to come.
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 To Support Migrants and Refugees

The Trump administration set a new record-low refugee admissions goal for fiscal year 2019 at 30,000. As we approach the halfway point of the fiscal year on March 31st, people of faith have a moral responsibility to hold the administration accountable for slashing the refugee program by 75 percent. What's worse, right now, we are only on track to resettle 21,000 refugees this year.

Our friends at Church World Service have developed two comprehensive resources: a [Liturgical Resource](#) for use on Sunday, March 31st to highlight the issues and an [Action Toolkit](#), with sample scripts for a **Call-in Day Wednesday, March 27th** and many other ways to take action. We urge all our members to download these guides for prayer and action.



Additionally, [Justice for Immigrants](#) is hosting a briefing on Capitol Hill at 10am on March 28th to inform Members of Congress about the intersection of Catholic Social Teaching and migration policy with a focus on humanitarian relief efforts, root causes, enforcement policy and legislative support. Briefings such as this are effective ways to inform our elected leaders of the issues important to their constituents. **We urge all our members to [call your Representatives in Congress](#) and encourage them to attend this briefing.**

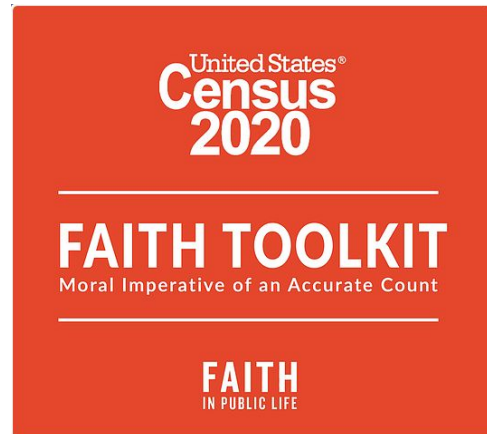
Spread the Word in your Faith Community About the 2020 Census

FAN friends at [Faith in Public Life](#) (FIPL) are urging communities around the country to commit to spread the word about the 2020 Census to ensure all people are counted.

From FIPL: *We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status, are made in God's image. Our divinely granted dignity demands equal recognition.*

From March 29-March 31, faith leaders will begin preparing their communities for the upcoming 2020 Census. The census only happens once a decade and determines critical funding and representation for our communities to flourish. Let us celebrate our dignity through spreading the word about the census to ensure all of our communities gets counted.

We urge you to download these resources and spread the word via the [Census Sabbath Weekend Webpage](#) and the [Faith 2020 Census Webpage](#).
[Faith Flyer/Bulletin](#)
[Faith Census Toolkit](#)
[Citizenship Question Sign-On](#)



Kickoff Webinar for People of Faith for a Green New Deal - March 28

As people of faith, we know the need for loving, compassionate, just climate action is urgent. That's why we support the Green New Deal. We support the Green New Deal because it offers a vision, urgency and ambition that matches the crisis we face. Our friends at GreenFaith are hosting a [webinar](#) just for people of faith.



We hope you can join us for this [kickoff webinar](#) on **Thursday March 28 at 8pm ET / 5pm PT**. Get the facts and learn more about how you can join with other people of faith to spread the word and become part of the

movement to make the Green New Deal reality.

It is expected that Senator McConnell will call for a vote on the Green New Deal early this week. **We urge you to [sign the petition](#) of support if you haven't already.** Our response to climate change must meet the scale of the problem, following clear moral values of love, justice, and compassion. We urge you to join in the movement.

U.S. Needs to Follow New Zealand's Example and Ban Assault Weapons

Last week, the prime minister of New Zealand [announced](#) it will ban all military-style semi-automatic weapons, high capacity magazines and also fund a national buyback program. **This after only six days** had passed since the brutal, senseless killings of innocent people in two consecutive mass shootings. The U.S. still has not taken action after multiple killings by guns, including assault weapons.

I say **NO** to
#WeaponsOfWar.



「CAMPAIGN AGAINST ASSAULT WEAPONS」

Senator Diane Feinstein's assault weapons ban legislation has only [28 Senators](#) who have cosponsored and just [191 House of Representative Members](#) have cosponsored Representative David Cicilline's companion bill in the House. You are encouraged to check the list of signers in both Senate and House, and **call your congresspersons**. Urge them to sign if they haven't; thank those who have signed.

Assault weapons were banned in the U.S. from 1994-2004. It's high time we ban them again. Please help us ban #WeaponsOfWar in America by joining the Campaign Against Assault Weapons by [signing this petition](#).

LCWR Standing Against Racism Social Media Campaign

The Global Concerns Committee of the [Leadership Conference of Women Religious](#) (LCWR) invites you and your congregation, to participate in their upcoming Standing Against Racism social media campaign, April 3 – May 15, 2019.



The campaign was created to help facilitate their resolution to *"go deeper into the critical work of creating communion, examining the root causes of injustice and our own complicity, and purging ourselves, our communities, and our country of the sin of racism and its destructive effects."*

(From 2018 Statement of Recommitment)

The hope is that the campaign will help promote a message of communion and inspire those who see the messages online. The social media campaign will feature images and quotes from LCWR assembly presentations and publications related to this critical work. **Each Wednesday from April 3rd to May 15th**, LCWR will post one of these messages on their Facebook and Twitter pages. We invite you to post it on your own social media sites or to simply repost the LCWR message.

If you haven't already done so, follow LCWR on [Twitter](#) at @LCWR_US and @lcwrpic; and like their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/lcwr.org. Then, simply watch for the Standing Against Racism posts beginning April 3rd and share them on your page. It's that simple. We hope you'll join us.

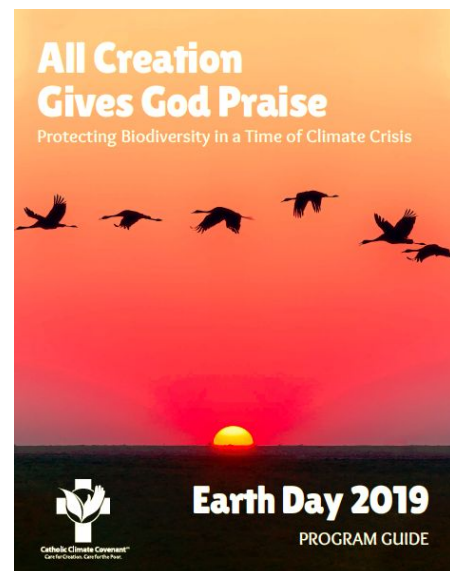
Catholic Climate Covenant Earth Day Program Now Available

The [Catholic Climate Covenant](#)'s 2019 Earth Day Program, "All Creation Gives God Praise: Protecting Biodiversity in a Time of Climate Crisis" is now available to download. [Click here to download the program](#).

Because of human activity, we are witnessing the demise of more and more species. We must ensure the ability of all creation to remain a vibrant chorus of praise to the Creator.

The Covenant recently hosted [this webinar](#) in which they explored why the Earth Day Network chose the theme of "Protecting Our Species" and all the wonderful resources and toolkits that they have available. Additionally, the recording delves into the Covenant's Earth Day program and how you can facilitate a program in your parish, school, or religious community.

This year, [Earth Day](#) (April 22nd) falls on Easter Monday. Therefore, we invite you to celebrate Earth Day anytime during the Easter season, or on a day of your choosing.



In SW Ohio? Take Part in Upcoming Cincinnati Sultan and the Saint Screenings

The staff and board of the Franciscan Action Network were heartsick at the news of the two consecutive mass shootings at mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. While we mourn with the families and friends of those lost to senseless violence, we remain steadfastly hopeful in our quest for peace between Muslims and Christians.

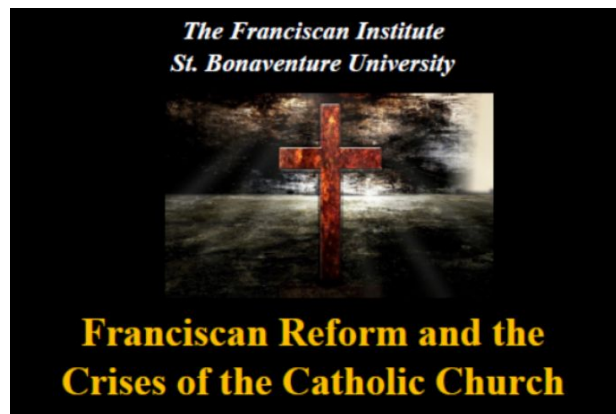


As a celebration of the 800th anniversary of the meeting, the Franciscan Friars in Cincinnati, OH are having three screenings of the docu-drama, [The Sultan and the Saint](#), beginning April 1st. We urge members and friends to [order your DVD copy of the film](#) and host your own screening as a way to educate and advocate for peace through Muslim-Christian collaboration and cooperation.

As another way to take action, consider signing on to this [coalition letter](#) supporting the National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants Act (NO BAN Act) which over 150 organizations (including FAN) have so far signed on to. The letter is open to national, local, and state groups. **Deadline for signatures is March 29th.**

Ignatius Brady Lecture: Franciscan Reform and the Crisis of the Catholic Church

The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University has announced the keynote speaker for the 2019 Ignatius Brady OFM Lecture. Joseph Chinnici, OFM PhD will speak on *"Faith, Reform, and Mission When the Church Becomes an Obstacle"* on April 12th and 13th at St. Bonaventure University. **Attendance is free and the university will be [live-streaming the speech online](#).**



The Ignatius Brady Lecture is funded by the St. John the Baptist Province (Cincinnati, OH) in memory of an illustrious member of the province who was one of the most outstanding scholars of Franciscan thought in the twentieth century.

Catholic Charities USA Needs Assistance at our Southern Border

[Catholic Charities USA](#) reached out to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious recently with an urgent request for help. Due to the rapid release of migrants happening along the border, Catholic Charities agencies in the region are being directly impacted with large influxes of people which exceed their capacity.



Border agencies need help to assist these individuals and families coming across the border. Catholic Charities USA is deploying as many staff as possible from other Catholic Charities agencies around the country, but that is still not adequate to the need. **If there are women religious who are able to volunteer to**

help where needed, please contact Kristan Schlichte at CCUSA
(KSchlichte@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org) at 703-236-6240.