

Embracing the Call to Witness Love

As we prepare to celebrate Eucharist this week and reflect on the readings for the [feast of the Ascension](#) the phrase, the question, that stands out is "...why are you standing there looking at the sky?"

We can only imagine the dynamic experience of Christ's Ascension. Artists through the centuries have depicted the scene with Jesus rising up into the clouds. Others have painted Jesus surrounded by heavenly hosts of angels. All of these are the artists' attempts to capture this significant event. Yet, we have no visual, only the words and the testimony of those who were present.

"Christianity without
discipleship is Christianity
without Christ."
Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Luke wrote, "Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God."

His words are simple and uncomplicated - Jesus parted from them and was taken up to heaven. We also hear of the simplicity of the Apostles' experience and their response - they did him homage and returned to Jerusalem.

What becomes evident in this writing is that too often we might look for and focus on the dynamic experience of the Ascension event as expressed by artists. In our lives, do we spend our time 'looking at the sky,' gazing, watching, looking for Christ? The two divine messengers who questioned the disciples seemed to say, Stop looking up at the sky. There are so many things to do!

Our following Christ goes far beyond 'looking up at the sky'. Our discipleship is an internal and communal dynamic, captured by Luke as he wrote, "...they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God." The feast of the Ascension calls us to discipleship, to make the values of the gospel, the values of mercy and compassion for all people, peace, justice and the integrity of creation visible and vibrant in our world.

This is the gift of the Ascension and of the Spirit. The Christ who once walked this earth continues to be present and dynamic in us. Let us live and be Christ's disciples with our eyes and hearts focused on the needs of others and alert to the cries for justice.

Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

This week, consider how you are called to discipleship. What does it mean for you in your life? How can you bring the Gospel message to people in your life in a concrete way?

Suggested Petitions:

For all Christian people, may the Ascension of our Lord Jesus increase our awareness of the dignity of every human life. We pray...

For all those who are in need of hope. May the gift of the Holy Spirit dwell deep in their hearts and help them to trust firmly that God offers them eternal happiness and the means to obtain it. We pray...

Collect Prayer (from the Feast of the Ascension, Vigil Mass)

**O God, whose Son today ascended to the heavens
as the Apostles looked on,
grant, we pray, that, in accordance with his promise,
we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth,
and we with him in heaven.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.**

Amen

FAN Staff Participate in Prayer Vigil for Children's Deaths at the Border

Last week, FAN staff participated in a [prayer vigil on Capitol Hill](#), where interfaith leaders came together to mourn the young lives lost at our nation's border, after coming here for safety and protection. Attendees prayed for the administration to finally see the inherent humanity of the lives of migrants and to act to change these inhumane policies.

FAN's Associate Director, Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF contributed a lament to the occasion which can be found on our [blog page](#).



Final Chance to Sign the Petition: Tell Congress to Tackle the Climate Crisis Now

The Climate crisis is a global threat and our faith calls us to action. The current administration dangerously continues to deny the issue, claiming the science isn't real.

In response to the U.S. being pulled from the Paris Agreement, Congress has introduced the [Climate Action Now Act](#) -- legislation that would prohibit the Trump administration from using any funds to withdraw from the agreement and require the administration to submit a detailed plan to Congress on how the United States will meet its climate obligations. The House passed this legislation on May 2nd and now it heads to the Senate.



We must recommit to the goals of Paris Climate Agreement if we want to ratchet down carbon pollution and stave off the worst impacts of the climate crisis. We urge our members and friends to [sign the petition to Congress: Tackle the climate crisis and pass the Climate Action Now Act](#).

Wear Orange: National Gun Violence Awareness Day June 7th

On January 21, 2013, Hadiya Pendleton, a high school student from the south side of Chicago, marched in President Obama's second inaugural parade. One week later, Hadiya was shot and killed on a playground back in Chicago. Soon after this tragedy, Hadiya's childhood friends decided to commemorate her life by wearing orange, the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others.



**#wearorange weekend
starts june 7**

June is Hadiya's birth month and 5 years ago, a broad-based coalition asked people nationwide to join in what Hadiya's friends started for the 1st National Gun Violence Awareness Day. **We invite our members and friends to join in the 5th National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 7th. Wear orange and demand a change.**

Organizations and communities can [sign on here](#) to participate and host an action. Get more information and find events near you at [Wear Orange](#). FAN staff members will join in a powerful event on the grounds of the [Washington National Cathedral](#), where the façade will be lit up in orange at 8pm on June 7th, in honor of National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

Last Chance to Take Action: Sign this Petition to End

the Muslim Ban

For the first time since the Muslim Ban was issued, Congressional Democrats have introduced legislation in both the [Senate](#) and [House](#) to combat these atrocities. The National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants (NO BAN) Act would immediately rescind the Muslim ban as well as President Trump's asylum ban and refugee ban, definitively ending these discriminatory abuses of authority by the Trump administration.

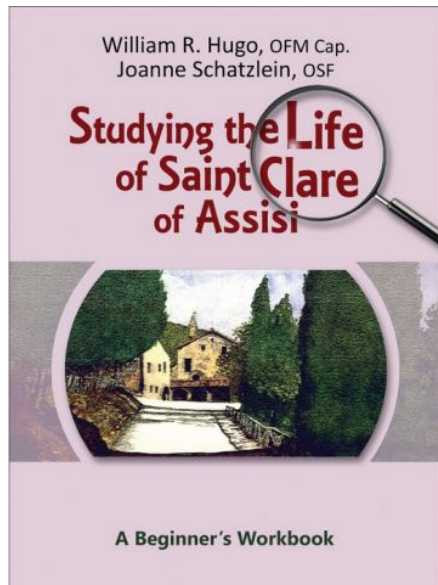


FAN has partnered with several good governance organizations in issuing [this petition](#) to put an end to the racist and harmful ban on travelers to the United States from five Muslim-majority countries. This ban continues to keep families separated and serves only to entice fear in the 'other.' We hope you consider joining this effort and [sign the petition to end the Muslim ban](#).

New Publication: Studying the Life of Saint Clare of Assisi

FAN was recently made aware of a new publication, [Studying the Life of Saint Clare of Assisi](#), by William Hugo, OFM Cap. and Joanne Schatzlein, OSF.

Published by [New City Press](#), this one-of-a-kind resource helps readers discover St. Clare through a series of crisp chapters that first teach about the sources for St. Clare's life and writings and then apply that knowledge to manageable topics from her life. The book provides also an important introduction to feminine spirituality and religious life options for Medieval women and has been successful with high school graduates and Ph.Ds. It works for anyone who wants to do a guided study of the life of St. Clare of Assisi using primary sources. Those benefiting from this unique approach include Franciscans of all kinds, especially those in formation programs, students of medieval or female spirituality, historians of religious life, women and men working in Franciscan ministries, former pilgrims who have visited Assisi, and anyone wanting to learn how different people in the history of the Church responded to its changing circumstances.



"*Studying the Life of Saint Clare*" helps readers understand the Franciscan intuition in ways that move beyond St. Francis of Assisi. [Order your copy here](#).

Diocese of Reno, NV Hosts Screening of *Sultan and*

the Saint and Interfaith Dialogue

The [Life, Peace, & Justice Commission of the Diocese of Reno, NV](#) recently held a screening of the *Sultan and the Saint* DVD followed by panel speakers and interfaith dialogue among the participants.



Although there was a smaller-than-hoped-for crowd, the 50 in attendance included Catholics, other Christians, Muslims from the Northern Nevada Muslim Center, and young Muslim university students. They had a panel of speakers which included Father Chuck Durante, Pastor and Vicar General of the Diocese of Reno; Imam Abdelaziz Elsheikh of the Northern NV Muslim Center; Dr. Cihangir Arslan of the Rumi Club of the University of Nevada Reno; Rawdha AL Salihi of the Northern Nevada International Center; and Rita Sloan, Coordinator for the Life Peace & Justice Commission for the diocese of Reno.

The night was a success with comments from participants such as: "We should do this kind of thing more often!"; "This is the best event we have ever done!" and "I'm so glad I came; what a good evening it has been!"

We urge all our members and friends to host a screening this year in celebration of the 800th anniversary of this historic meeting. [Order your DVD copy](#) of the *Sultan and the Saint* here.

World Refugee Day - National Grassroots Mobilization Webinar

Wednesday, June 20 is [World Refugee Day](#) - a day when we honor the courage and resilience of refugees, recognizing the hardships they have faced, the new lives they have created, and the positive impact they have on our communities. Historically, the United States has been a leader in protecting and resettling refugees. However, with global need at its highest, the Trump administration has reversed our nation's traditional role in welcoming people seeking freedom, safety and refuge.



Please join in a [National Grassroots Mobilization Webinar](#) on **Wednesday, May 29th at 2pm ET / 11am Pacific** to learn more about the state of play for refugee resettlement and how we can leverage World Refugee Day for advocacy and action. Speakers will include refugees themselves, organizers and policy experts, and communications specialists. Attendees will hear about tools and resources available -- including a series of state-based resources -- and highlight ways you can get involved.

[Please register for the webinar here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email

containing information about joining the webinar.

Additionally, we share with you this podcast, created during [RCUSA Advocacy Days](#) for the Episcopal Migration Ministries' [Hometown Podcast](#). You can find the episode called "[Advocacy Days 2019](#)" [here](#) and click to listen on your computer.

Save the Date: "Shine the Light" Conference on Human Trafficking

With the success of last year's inaugural Human Trafficking Conference, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd National Advocacy Center have opened registration for the 2019 "[Shine the Light](#)" Conference on Human Trafficking, to be held on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, June 26.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required, so please do not delay. Please register online at bit.ly/traffickingconf or by calling the [National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd](#) at (301) 622-6838. There is no fee for the conference and a boxed lunch is included. The morning will consist of an overview of human trafficking and panel presentations on both sex and labor trafficking perpetrated domestically and overseas. Legislative visits will be arranged for the afternoon of June 26 for those who express interest.



[Click here for more details on speakers and to register.](#)

Take Action: Make a Call for Kenneth Azurdia Hernandez

Last week, more than 400 people have signed [signed a letter](#) and called ICE to help stop the deportation Kenneth Azurdia Hernandez. For over a year, this Guatemalan asylum-seeker has been detained and separated from his mother, partner, and two preschool sons who now live in Washington, DC. Just hours after Kenneth was told he would be deported at 11 p.m. last Monday night, he was informed his deportation had been delayed! **Now we urge calls to escalate our efforts for a Stay of Deportation.**



Take a moment to **call the Atlanta ICE Regional Field Office at (404) 893-1206**. Ask to speak with Field Office Director Sean Gallagher. Here is a sample script: "I am a person of faith and I urge you to reinstate/issue an ICE Stay of Deportation for Kenneth Azurdia Hernandez to halt his deportation. Kenneth's A# is: 216-274-390." Once you have made your call, [let us know how it went](#).

Kenneth and his partner Yeslin are deeply grateful for so much love and compassion from the community. **Please take a moment this week to demonstrate the power of faith and community values of love.**