

Is this the Kingdom Jesus Had in Mind?

These past few weeks we have heard the terrible stories and seen the pictures in the news about how migrant children are treated in detention facilities. Our conscience, our very being should be outraged hearing the reports of the inhumane conditions that children live under while in the custody of the federal government at the border. As the USCCB said in a recent statement: "horrific images of Oscar Martinez and his daughter Angie Valeria who drowned in the Rio Grande



Valley while attempting to flee persecution and enter the United States. This image cries to heaven for justice." As Christians we should be angry and enraged. But we hear also from folks like Fox & Friends' co-host Brian Kilmeade who [said](#) "Like it or not, these are not our kids. Show them compassion, but it's not like he's doing this to the people of Idaho or Texas. These are people from another country." Or Congressman Burgess who suggested that it is not our problem and the children can just leave if they do not like the facilities. We are talking about children as young as one year old.

We also hear from folks, claiming to be Christian, that they are here illegally so they deserve whatever happens to them. Except of course [seeking asylum is legal](#). Asylum seekers must be in the U.S. or at a port of entry to apply for, or request the opportunity to apply for asylum. You cannot apply for asylum, then when it is approved, come to the US. You first have to come to the US and then seek asylum. This is not only US law but international law as well. So when we hear people who claim to be Christian say they should 'follow the law', we should remind them that these asylum seekers **are** following the law.

Can we really claim to be a moral people while allowing these horrific conditions? Can we claim to follow the Gospels? Do we believe that Jesus would say its their fault they should not have come here? In our [second reading this week](#), Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, "For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation." Consider: what is that new creation that Paul speaks of? Earlier in the same letter (Gal 5:4), Paul says bluntly: "You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." Our Gospel reading from Luke ends with Jesus telling us that "The kingdom of God is at hand for you." (Lk 10:9) I am pretty sure this is not the Kingdom Jesus had in mind when he said that.

Patrick Carolan
FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

Consider the cruel treatment being inflicted on migrant children at our border and pray on how you can advocate for them.

Suggested Petitions:

May we intentionally pray to the Holy Spirit, discerning how we intend to deepen our connection to God. We pray...

May we work toward coming together and, in unity, go into the world and build God's Kingdom on Earth. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
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

What Can We Do About Raids and the Humanitarian Crisis at the Border?

The FAN staff is heartbroken by the ongoing humanitarian crisis at our border and with potential ICE raids across the country. Many have asked what they can do to help our immigrant sisters and brothers. ***All actions start with prayer. But as Christians and Franciscans we are called to do more.*** After praying here are some suggestions on what to do next:



- **Educate yourself and educate others**

Recently, Sr. Marge Wissman, a sister of St. Francis of Oldenburg, IN and FAN board member, went with several others to the border town of Laredo, TX to help at asylee processing center there. We encourage you to read about her very personal experiences and look at the many photos of people she encountered on [this blog post](#). You can share her post via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

In response to the President's [threat](#) that his administration was preparing to deport "millions" of immigrants, FAN issued this [statement](#), decrying the rhetoric used to instill fear in many immigrant communities. Additionally, the Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez, Bishop of Austin and Chair of the USCCB Committee on Migration, issued this [statement](#) urging a "focus on the root causes in Central America that have compelled so many to leave their homes..."

- **Call your members of Congress**

Our members of Congress need to hear from us on a regular basis. Calling them weekly is one of the most important actions constituents can take. Let them know that you are outraged by the humanitarian crisis on the border and by ICE raiding our communities. **Capitol**

Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

- **Take Action**

[Lights for Liberty](#) is a coalition hosting candlelight vigils all over the country on Friday, July 12th. Grab a candle and [find a vigil near you](#).

The [Washington Post reported](#) in an article on July 21st that "[ICE] is planning to use hotel rooms as temporary staging areas to detain parents and children until all the members of a family are together and ready for deportation." This [petition](#) is a call to all major hotel chains to publicly commit that they won't be help facilitate mass round-ups of our immigrant neighbors. Please [take a moment to sign](#).

- **Donate**

Sr. Norma and Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley is in need of [support at their Humanitarian Respite Center](#). *(Be sure to indicate as such in the dropdown.)* You can also [find additional organizations to donate to here](#).

- **Additional Resources**

It was reported the deportation raids have been delayed two weeks to allow for negotiations on Capitol Hill regarding immigration reform. Many organizations prepared emergency response resources for immigrant communities and their advocates. Here are a few:

- The [Justice for Immigrants resource page](#)
- The [National Council of Jewish Women](#)
- HIAS has developed [this video](#) which includes stories from people who have been granted asylum in the United States; some historical context for our asylum system and much more.
- [Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. Statement on ICE Raids](#)
- [Families Belong Together Statements from Kids in Detention Centers](#)

FAN Attends the Annual Franciscan Federation Conference

The [2019 Franciscan Federation Conference](#), held in St. Louis June 21-24, was attended by FAN staff members, Sisters Maria Orlandini and Marie Lucey (*pictured, far right*), quite a few FAN institutional members of religious congregations and the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Federation is composed of Franciscans who follow the Third Order Rule (TOR).

With the title, "A Call to be Saints, Founders and Prophets," Michael Blastic, OFM and Mary Elizabeth Imler, OSF offered presentations on Franciscan writings addressing contemporary issues which stimulated table conversations. An interesting and challenging presentation on "Communicating with Young Adults," was given by Patrick Cousins, Campus Minister with St. Louis University. The members unanimously approved a Resolution developed by the Federation JPIC Committee, "Welcoming the Refugees, Immigrants, and Asylum Seekers," committing themselves to specific actions during the coming year.

FAN was mentioned several times by presenters, and several members said in conversation how much they appreciate the work of FAN and the weekly newsletter.

Conventuals Host JPIC Summer Service Learning Immersion Program

FAN's president, Fr. Mike Lasky, OFM Conv. is spending time this summer with five of friars in formation, participating in a JPIC summer service learning immersion program. The program is designed to help the friars in formation to mirror Francis' preferential option of ministry to lepers, those on the margins of his society, through reflection on catholic social teaching in the context of our Franciscan life and ministry with the poor.



The friars have been [blogging about their experiences](#) since May 31st. The first post, "[A Rising Tide Lifts all Boats](#)", sets the context of their summer and highlights the blessing/dedication of the new Franciscan Center in Shamokin/Coal Township PA.

We ask our members and friends to please continue to follow the [blog postings](#) throughout the summer and (in your kindness) post words of encouragement to our friars in formation. Peace and All Good.

Shine The Light Human Trafficking Symposium

On June 26th, Sisters Marie Lucey and Maria Orlandini along with FAN intern Henry Estrada attended a symposium on Human Trafficking, titled "[Shine the Light](#)," sponsored by the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, DC Baptist Convention, and



the USCCB.

Panels addressed both sex and labor trafficking, with survivor advocates included in the panels. Following the panel presentations, participants made advocacy visits on the Hill, urging support for **Savannah's Act, S.227/H.R. 2733**, which addresses the vulnerability of Native American women to human trafficking, and strengthens the federal government to respond to the high numbers of missing and murdered American Indian and Alaska Native women. Advocates also asked for co-sponsorship of the **Central American Women and Children Protection Act, S. 1781** which in the House, has been moved into a larger bill, **U.S.- Northern Triangle Enhanced Engagement Act, H.R. 2615**. Legislation would authorize appropriations for the State Department for the next three years to provide assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to increase protection of women and children in their homes, with NO funds going directly to the governments.

[Click here](#) to visit the trafficking portion of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd website for many resources.

Gun Violence Prevention in the News

Three organizations have united to encourage Americans to carry flags at half staff during Independence Day celebrations. Last week Change The Ref, March For Our Lives, and the Brady Campaign announced the launch of the [Half Staff Project](#) to call attention to summertime's notorious spike in gun violence. [Click here](#) to get more information and find a link to purchase half-staff flags and pins.



Recently, a 60 Minutes [segment](#) evaluated the lethality of AR-15s, the weapon used in some of the worst massacres in recent memory. The report explains what makes it so deadly.

On this note, some legislation updates are here:

- The Parkland & Orlando families are trying to pass a constitutional amendment (ballot initiative) to ban assault weapons in Florida. [More information here](#).
- Senator Diane Feinstein (D-CA) & Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI-1) have each introduced legislation on [Assault Weapons Bans](#) in both houses:
 - Senate Bill 66: [Assault Weapons Ban of 2019](#)
 - House Resolution 1296: [Assault Weapons Ban of 2019](#)

We urge our members and friends to share this information and continue to call your elected officials to urge their support for these measures.

Care for Creation: Focus on Plastics

As a part of our commitment to [Living the Change](#), FAN's executive director, Patrick Carolan recently penned [this blog](#), connecting the common prayer to St. Anthony of Padua (patron saint of lost items) to our environment.



This week we invite our members and friends to consider what they might have ‘lost’ in terms of caring for God’s wondrous creation, with a focus on one aspect: plastic. Here are several links for inspiration.

- [Plastic Free July](#) is a global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution by taking a pledge to reduce personal plastic use and waste.
- [The Story of Stuff Project](#) takes this pledge one step further in their work to educate communities, companies, and countries in a push to break free from plastic.
- The Guardian has a new series, “[United States of Plastic](#)” which reveals what happens to our plastic waste and explores the global consequences of our addiction to it.

We urge you to explore this topic further and take action in your community. [Let us know](#) if you have a story or event about caring for creation.

Citizenship Question Rejected by Supreme Court but Work Still to be Done

As people of faith, we believe that everyone counts in the eyes of God, so everyone must count in the eyes of the nation. In 2018 the Trump administration authorized the addition of an untested and dangerous citizenship question to the 2020 Census — a move that could spur severe undercounts of communities of color and immigrants. Incorrect census numbers have a direct impact on a community. A community isn’t fully counted in the 2020 Census will miss out on political representation, money for children’s classrooms, jobs, and health care centers **for the next 10 years.**



The Supreme Court [did the right thing](#) last week in rejecting the Trump administration’s citizenship question, which would have left millions of immigrants and people of color uncounted in the 2020 Census. FAN released [this statement](#) in response to the two decisions released.

Even though the citizenship question has been struck down, many communities are still justifiably afraid of this administration. Faith leaders must work together to ensure that everyone in our congregations and communities is counted. Our friends at [Faith in Public Life](#) have a comprehensive [Census page](#) with resources and information. Additionally, we encourage you to check out [Census Counts](#), a collaborative campaign involving more than 15 national organizations and dozens of community partners to make sure that the 2020 Census is fair and accurate.

