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Reflection Date: July 14, 2019 - 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## Will you See the Image and Likeness of God?

God is merciful. When you consider the mission of FAN, he threw me an easy softball regarding reflecting on his Word and its connection with all of us who support bringing about a more just and peaceful world.

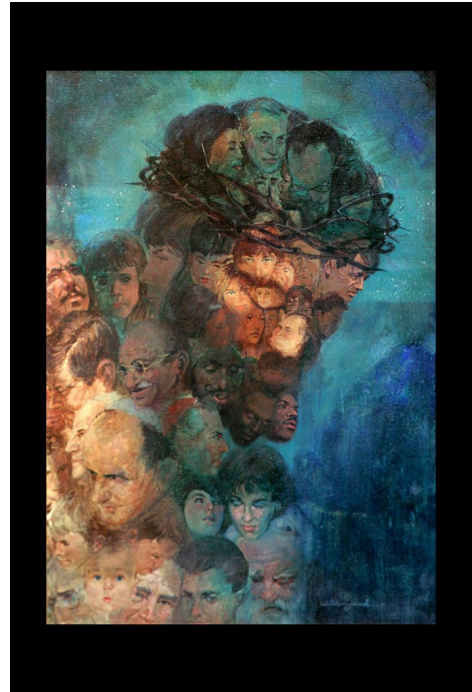
The [reading this week](#) from Deuteronomy chapter 30 sets the tone. Moses addressed the people “If only you would heed the voice of the LORD, your God and keep his commandments and statutes” he continues a few verses later saying that the commandments of God are already in your hearts you only have to carry it out. What a great testament to the natural law, that law that is in our hearts because every person is created in the image and likeness of God.

The Gospel reading is from Luke, 10. The Good Samaritan. I could probably just end the reflection here. The story sums up our call as Christians, Franciscans, and quite frankly, the call to all women and men regardless of creed. We know this story so well. It is often quoted as a call to action and a call to conversion of heart in the care of our fellow human beings. Prior to the story, a scholar of the law tells Jesus that the law is summed up by “You shall love the LORD your God...and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus lets him know that this is right thinking.

I found it very striking as I prayed over this reading. Jesus did not identify the man who was beaten and robbed as coming from any particular background, he simply identifies him as “a man”. I think our minds, conditioned to read the scriptures from a Judeo-Christian perspective, immediately identify him as Jewish. The priest and the Levite ignore his need. The outsider, the Samaritan, comes to his aid. So, who is this man?

I’m going to answer that question by referring back to the reflection I wrote for the [3rd Sunday of Advent](#). This man is “All people. The immigrant. The migrant worker. The person exploited by human trafficking. The falsely accused. The persecuted. The LGBT community. The republican. The democrat. The soldier. The peacemaker. The protester. The person who disagrees with me. The corporate executive. The homeless person. The sick. The orphan. The Muslim. The Hindu. The Buddhist. The Atheist. The Pharisee. The Saint. The Sinner.”

Will you be the Samaritan, the outsider who provides aid to those in need regardless of their creed or background? Will you see the Image and Likeness of God in those who are suffering and look after their needs?



I want to identify one such Good Samaritan. On June 2, 2019, I was horrified to read about the plight of the Good Samaritan, Scott Warren, of Ajo Arizona. Scott is on trial and facing up to 20 years in prison for providing water and clothing to two individuals from Honduras who crossed the border and were in need of water. He is charged with the crime of “harboring undocumented aliens.” The act of giving drink to the thirsty and clothing to the naked could land him in jail. Yes, in these United States of America, the home of the brave and the land of the free, Scott’s freedom is in jeopardy for being one of the “brave”.

“This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.” -Elmer Davis

Jesus taught that the world hated Him and would hate us too if we follow him. He also taught that his kingdom is not of this world. Sisters and brothers, we belong first to the kingdom of God which has no boundaries. We may live in a world that hates us for living the Gospel, we may feel overwhelmed by the politics and power that needs reform to become more just. What are we to do? We may not as individuals be able to change the macro issues that cause some to lack the basic essentials of life, but we can care for those who God puts in our path. Christians living out their faith in the ordinary circumstance of life changed Rome, the most powerful country in its day. Live your faith in the everyday circumstance of life; that will convert hearts. Over time, we will not need legislation and big government to address the ills of society because there will be an army of converted hearts living the Gospel. However, legislation and government support of freedom and liberty are essential, and so the mission of FAN continues to be the second foot of serving those in need; helping to create a just and peaceful society by advocating for changes that can, at the macro level, reduce the number of those individually in need.

David Seitz, OFS  
FAN Board Member

**Suggested Action:**

Take time this week to consider the actions you can take to care for those God puts in your path. Pray for the grace to be brave, like Scott Warren and the Good Samaritan.

**Suggested Petitions:**

May we come to see our neighbor in everyone we encounter and love them as God loves us, we pray...

May we be open to the teachings of the Lord and may our hearts yearn to carry them out as Jesus intended, we pray...

**Collect Prayer:**

**O God, who show the light of your truth  
to those who go astray,  
so that they may return to the right path,  
give all who for the faith they profess  
are accounted Christians  
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ  
and strive after all that does it honor.**

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: Urge Congress to End Private Prison Tax Breaks

The [images](#) of the deplorable conditions in which migrant children are being held seem to keep coming. Many migrants at our southern border are being detained in private prisons which, under current law, are rewarded through tax breaks.



For-profit institutions have every incentive to keep their beds full so they can get future contracts. The more people imprisoned, the higher the profits. In order to lower operating costs, these facilities cut corners, hiring fewer employees and paying and training them less, which often results in higher rates of assaults and in-fighting. Because of the crackdown on unauthorized immigration through its "zero tolerance" policy, the Trump Administration has created a boom for the private prison industry.

Under current laws, private prisons receive special tax exemptions because they are considered real estate investment trusts (REIT's). A [new bill](#) proposed by Sen. Ron Wyden would strip the private prison industry of this ability. FAN has partnered with several other organizations in this a [petition](#) urging an end to tax breaks for private prison companies.

Take action today and [sign this petition to demand Congress put an end to private prison tax breaks](#).

## OFM's Release Latest Edition of "Contact": A JPIC Newsletter

[Contact](#) is a quarterly bulletin of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation efforts of the Order of Friars Minor. The publication is full of articles and updates on the justice and peace efforts of the Order from April to June. [Read it here](#).

The bulletin is offered as an open space where folks can share stories and information on their JPIC ministries. Story submissions can be sent to [pax@ofm.org](mailto:pax@ofm.org)



## More Questions than Answers for DACA Recipients

## and Over the Census Citizenship Question

In an instance of “good news and bad news”, last week two decisions were announced regarding the fate of the Citizenship question on the Census and the DACA program.

One week after being blocked by the Supreme Court, the Trump administration abandoned its efforts to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. As the deadline for getting the forms printed was looming, the Census Bureau was ordered to start printing forms without the question. However, it appears the Trump Administration is not completely relinquishing the fight as [NPR reported](#) the Department of Justice has been "instructed to examine whether there is a path forward" to include the question.



Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is a program instituted by the Obama Administration which temporarily removes the threat of deportation for certain undocumented immigrants who arrived as children and also grants them authorization to work. The Justice Department announced in 2017 it was ending the program, a move which was then challenged in federal court. The fate of DACA is again in limbo after the Supreme Court [agreed late in June](#) to hear the case in its next term, which begins in October. A ruling in this case likely won't come before the start of 2020.

We will continue to monitor both of these issues and update our members.

## JFI Webinar: Why People are Leaving Honduras

In March of this year, Sr. Maria Orlandini, joined a delegation of faith leaders *Q & ^ a D* who traveled to Honduras to learn more about the root causes driving migration of people from the region. You can [read about her personal experiences](#) here. Additionally, the Jesuit Conference recently [released this statement](#) denouncing the government abuses in the country.



**On Wednesday, July 10 at 2:30pm EDT / 11:30am PDT** the Justice for Immigrants will host members of the faith delegation as they share their learnings and insights. [Register to join](#) the JFI Webinar: **Root Causes, why people are leaving Honduras.**

To join the July 10 webinar simply:

Sign-on at [bit.ly/CADelegationTrip](https://bit.ly/CADelegationTrip) to see the video.

**Call 917-338-1451 and enter the PIN: 619 595 to hear the audio.**

