

Standing Firm in Faith Despite Adversity

[Sunday's first reading](#) from Habakkuk makes the statement: "How long, O LORD? I cry for help but you do not listen! I cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not intervene. Why do you let me see ruin; why must I look at misery?" How many of us have felt this way? We often feel abandoned by God. I imagine over the years all those people bound in slavery cried out but felt abandoned. Why doesn't God intervene? As a boy I was sexually abused by a Catholic priest. I still ask God the question: "Why didn't you intervene? How could you have let this happen to me?"



I have heard priests give homilies about suffering being part of God's plan, how we may not understand why but on judgement day we will understand our suffering was a key part of the kingdom. I cannot believe a God who is the epicenter of love, who created us in love could be so cruel as to allow what happened to me or what is happening today to children on the border, or to children who are trafficked and sold into sex slavery.

Some of our theology teaches us that creation was a one time static event. God created perfection and nothing has changed. By this logic, my suffering was just a means to help bring us back to that perfection. Nothing from God's creation is changing. But we know that everything is changing. The theologian John Haught in his book *Resting on the Future: Catholic Theology For an Unfinished Universe* suggests a different story. He suggests that our universe was not a finished product the moment of creation but rather an unfinished universe. Or as Sr. Ilia Delio, OSF puts it, "If we take the future as our starting point for thinking about God, creation, and humanity—then *everything* we know must change or rather be realigned to an evolving universe, including our theologies, philosophies, economic and political systems, cultural matrices—in short, our planetary life." If Haught and Delio are correct and the universe is constantly changing and evolving, then my and your suffering and pain is not part of some master plan by a cruel God. Rather it is part of the suffering of growth that happens with the creation of a new Heaven.

In our second reading from 2 Timothy we are told: "I remind you, to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control." Think about what that means. Acting in a spirit of cowardice during this time of crisis that we live in. In my nine years as executive director of FAN I have been constantly attacked by some people. I have been accused of acting in league with satan, of not being Catholic or Franciscan. I even had one person say he hoped my son would be killed by Muslim terrorists then I would understand the need for a Muslim ban. These people are not acting out of love; they are cowards.

The reading goes on to say “So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God.” The strength that comes from God is love. Love of all creation and all creatures. If we do not act out of love we are not following the teachings of Jesus.

Peace and All Good,
Patrick Carolan
FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

Take a step in living out your faith this week by signing a petition or making a call to your elected officials on behalf of immigrants or refugees.

Suggested Petitions:

Help us to have courage and strength to live out our faith in the world. We pray...
May we always rely on the strength and wisdom of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**Almighty ever-living God,
who in the abundance of your kindness
surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you,
pour out your mercy upon us
to pardon what conscience dreads
and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.
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

This Week's St. Clare Pledge: Make a Call for Refugee Resettlement

Last week, [reports](#) surfaced that the administration intends to set the refugee admissions goal for next fiscal year at 18,000– the lowest level in U.S. history, and released a new [executive order](#) that permits state and local officials to block resettlement in their communities. This is disgraceful.

By law, the administration must consult with Congress by the end of



September, prior to setting the refugee admissions goal. That means today is the last day to raise our voices.

If you have not done so already, **as your [St. Clare Pledge commitment](#), we urge our members and friends to make calls to your Members of Congress TODAY** and urge they strongly condemn this horribly low admissions goal. [Click here](#) to see a full list of House and Senate Judiciary Committee Members, who are in charge of consulting with the administration. [Phone numbers and a sample script can be found here](#).

Take Action: Sign Petition urging Senate to Act on Climate Change

The [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) has launched a campaign during the Season of Creation which FAN has joined on as a participant. By providing opportunities designed to inspire Catholics who may have never before expressed concern about climate change, we hope to create an unprecedented collaborative effort across the US Catholic community to generate a resounding Catholic call to climate action that Congress and American society will hear.



To that end, we urge all our members and friends to [sign this petition](#) calling on the Senate to act on climate change. Once you've signed, **please share the petition with others**. Your faith voice is needed to uplift our shared moral responsibility to care for our common home.

Sign up to Pray on Jubilee Weekend, Oct. 18-21

Our good friends at [Jubilee USA](#) work on economic policies to ensure that resources get to the most vulnerable communities. Last week, they sent us this message and we encourage our members and friends to sign up to pray during [Jubilee Weekend](#), Oct. 18th-21st.



We need your faith community to pray with us and help us move Congress to shine a light on the abuses of anonymous shell companies.

Here are two ways to participate in Jubilee Weekend 2019:

1.) [Sign-up](#) your faith community to offer one prayer during your religious service the weekend of October 18th - 21st. Join Jewish, Christian, Muslim and other faith communities as we pray for transparency legislation to protect the vulnerable. You can find sample prayers, petitions and service resources in our Jubilee Weekend 2019 packet [here](#).

2.) Please have your faith community members send messages to Congress asking them to support the Corporate Transparency Act. You can:

- Send your Members of Congress emails through our website [here](#)
- Print our petition [here](#) and send it to us at Jubilee so we can deliver the signatures to Congress
- Print and send our postcard to us to be delivered to Congress [here](#)
- Contact kate@jubileeusa.org for help writing a letter of endorsement for the Corporate Transparency Act from your faith community.

You can participate in one or all of these actions and you are welcome to take action multiple times.

Join us for our Third National Catholic Action for Immigrant Children in El Paso, TX

Images of immigrant children separated from family and detained in unsanitary, unhealthy conditions have outraged the nation. The faith community has decried this treatment of immigrant children and families not only as a violation of human dignity and rights, but also contrary to religious teachings and the sacred call to care for all people. In Washington DC (*bottom*) and in Newark (*top*), we said loudly and clearly *Stop the Inhumanity!* We next bring our message to a border state.

In **El Paso, TX on Saturday, Oct. 12th from 3pm-7pm**, people from around the country will be joining Hope Border Institute and the Latinx Catholic Leadership Coalition in solidarity as they lift up their local concerns about the immigration system, access to asylum, and racism. We will renew and amplify our call for this Administration to end the abuse, trauma, and detention of migrant children. The event will include prayer, ritual, and a call to action and risk by Catholic leaders.

Anyone from around the country is invited, even those who are not Catholic. **Click here to [RSVP to come to El Paso](#).**

You are also invited to join us for a Teach-In, [Jornada por la Justicia](#), from October 11-13, 2019. Organized by Hope Border Institute and the Latinx Catholic Leadership Coalition, the teach-in will be a three-day gathering of a powerful network of Catholic Latinx organizers, labor leaders, scholars and activists to make real change through concrete action. It will feature workshops, leadership tools, strategy sessions, coalition building, nationally recognized speakers and direct public action. **Those at the teach-in will be joining us for the Oct. 12th public action.**

If you can't make it to El Paso, please consider attending or registering a [local solidarity action](#).



October is Respect Life Month: Find Resources in this Toolkit

October is Respect Life Month, a time for Catholics to reflect more deeply on the God-given dignity of all human life. Beginning on Respect Life Sunday (October 6th, 2019), Catholics across the United States will recommit themselves to the work of uplifting this core tenet of our faith.



**CATHOLIC
MOBILIZING
NETWORK**

ENDING THE DEATH PENALTY.
PROMOTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE.

[Catholic Mobilizing Network](#) has developed this [toolkit](#) with easy-to-use resources designed to assist Catholic parishes, dioceses, and individuals as they advocate for a culture of life. Inside you'll find: prayer service templates, bulletin pieces, social media resources, advocacy actions and more.

Click here to download the [Respect Life Month Toolkit](#).

How the U.S. built the World's Largest Immigration Detention System

Last week, FAN staff joined a faith led rally on Capitol Hill (*pictured*) to call for an end to child and family detention, and to reduce funding for deportation, detention, and border militarization. We assisted in delivering letters to Senate offices addressed to Congressional leaders and signed by nearly 6,000 people in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Thank you to those of you who signed.



Also last week, a timely article was published by [DHS Watch](#) just as hearings were held in the House examining the growing use of immigration detention, as well as reports of inhumane conditions in those detentions, and poor accountability structures, among other topics. The article points to a [series of videos](#) with former immigration officials, legal advocates, and victims of the current family separation policy that provides a thorough explanation of how our country went from detaining fewer than 3,000 immigrants on any given day in the 1970s to more than 50,000 today. The series, called [Detained: How the U.S. built the World's Largest Immigration Detention System](#) was jointly produced by The Guardian and The Marshall Project.

Still Time to Get Tickets for our Annual Award Benefit

There is still time to [get your tickets](#) for our annual award benefit where we will honor and thank Patrick, our executive director for the past 9 years. Patrick epitomizes the characteristics we look for in our honorees:



someone whose work reflects the values and charisms of St. Francis of Assisi while not a professed Franciscan. Patrick has lived and loved FAN, nurturing, growing, and building it in to the well-respected organization we are today.

We hope you can [join us on Nov. 7th from 6p-9p in St. Francis Hall in Washington, D.C.](#) Beer, wine, and heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served and dress is casual. There will be auction opportunities and lots of fun.

If you're not able to make it, **we invite you to consider [buying a ticket and donating it back to someone who wants to come but can't afford the ticket price, like a religious sister.](#)** Please [let us know](#) if you have any questions. We hope to see you there.

Will You be Ringing Bells for Peace This Friday?

The Franciscan family in Belgium reached out to us directly to tell us about their effort to [ring bells for peace](#) this Friday, **October 4th at 2pm**, when the Islamic Friday prayer begins. Bells will be ringing in almost 500 places in Belgium and abroad as a call for reconciliation inspired by the encounter between Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan Al Kamil 800 years ago. We hope all our members and friends will [register to be a part of this peaceful event.](#)

Franciscan Call 4 Peace



Additionally, this effort includes an invitation to religious communities to come together with other communities of another religion to simply meet each other in peace. In different Belgian cities, Muslims and Christians will come together to meet each other. Already [170 actions in 13 different countries worldwide are registered.](#)

We invite all our members and friends to participate. More information can be found at the website: www.franciscancall4peace.org