

The Holy Family Were Refugees

As we begin our [Advent journey this Sunday](#), I cannot help but think of the journey of the children, women and men forced to migrate. In September the number of migrants globally reached 272 million, outpacing the growth rate of the world's population.



At the end of our Advent journey we look forward to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Sometime during this Advent season, perhaps we could contemplate some of the experiences this baby Jesus would encounter would he be born on this earth some two thousand years later, in 2019. Being born in poverty there undoubtedly would be times when he would experience hunger and not have clean water to drink. He likely would receive minimal education, if any at all.

We know that the Holy Family fled to Egypt out of fear of the possibility that their son would be murdered. If born today that possibility still exists. Jesus would be one of the millions forced to migrate, leaving him vulnerable to being trafficked for sex and/or labor or the extraction of a body organ.

If the child Jesus and his family arrived at the southern border of the United States, he would be forced to live in a crowded and dangerous camp for refugees. If Jesus was one of the few migrants currently allowed to cross into the United States, it is possible that he would be separated from his parents and sent to live in an unsafe, crowded and unsanitary prison-like conditions.

We believe that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. How we treat any child, woman or man is how we treat Jesus. If we ignore or turn our back on the plight of the most vulnerable in our society, we ignore or turn our back on the image and likeness of God. As we begin our Advent journey, let us be more aware of how we encounter the image and likeness of God in each person we meet. Let us ask God to help us as we “walk in the paths” (Is 2:3) of the most vulnerable in our world.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
FAN Member and Past Board Member

Suggested Action:

Contemplate the idea of being forced to migrate from your home to another country, for the safety of your family. What fears arise? Where would you go? How would you want to be treated?

Suggested Petitions:

For all Christians, during this time of preparation. May we put aside our differences and increase and abound in love. We pray...

For those people forced to migrate for their family's safety. May they find welcome and peace. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
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

Next Month: National Vigils to #EndGunViolence

“What kind of a world is this?”

This is the question [from a student](#) at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, CA, the site of the most recent school shooting on Nov. 14th. Two students lost their lives and many were wounded. The incident is the 30th shooting attack at a school this year, according to [Everytown for Gun Safety](#).

Our question is, when will this end?

As people of faith who believe every life is a sacred image of God, we must challenge the policies that need to be changed to alleviate this sort of violence.

We urge all our members and friends to [host an End Gun Violence vigil or an event](#) in your town or city. These vigils serve to showcase our faith and deepen our resolve to continue advocating for change. FAN staff will join in the National Vigil to End Gun Violence in Washington, D.C. this December, which serves to anchor all the events across the nation. Won't you join us? To facilitate your planning, download the [2019 National Vigil Toolkit](#). Check to see if there is already a vigil planned near you and find [more information here](#).

As people of faith, we urge our members and friends to lift up the issue of gun violence prevention during your house of worship's time of prayer over the weekend of December 12-15. [Click here for a helpful toolkit](#) with a list of resources available to help you and your house of worship get started.



Remember Franciscan Action Network this Giving

Tuesday

When so much attention is given to what makes us different, generosity is what brings people together. We're proud to be part of the [#GivingTuesday](#) global movement for generosity. This #GivingTuesday we're celebrating what brings us together: our common humanity.

Franciscans are everywhere. Communities of Sisters, Friars, Seculars, Anglicans, Lutherans, Eccumenicals and the Franciscan-hearted have joined FAN staff, both virtually and personally, at hunger fasts for immigration and refugees, marches and rallies on climate, and ongoing advocacy for gun violence prevention. [Help us continue this important work by making a donation on Giving Tuesday, December 3rd.](#)



Right now, our human family might appear more divided than ever. But together, as one Franciscan family, we can advocate with our marginalized sisters and brothers, and in doing so, put into action our belief and commitment to our common humanity. We can also share what treasure we may have to further help advocate and organize. Generosity is a universally held value that brings us together and making connections is what Franciscans do best! We can work together as one Franciscan family to generously continue to transform public policy here in the United States. **Help us lift up and celebrate those values that bring us together and create joy by [donating \\$25, \\$50 or \\$100 to Franciscan Action Network.](#)**

Take Action: Comment on Proposed Increase of Fees for Citizenship Applications

On November 14th, USCIS [proposed](#) increases in fees for citizenship applicants and a new fee for asylum seekers alongside the decrease of fee waivers. If finalized, these massive changes will transform access to naturalization, safety and stability for millions. It could extinguish the dreams of all but the most wealthy and privileged.



It is up to us to stand up now, together, and remind USCIS that we are a nation of immigrants. The American dream belongs to all of us, no matter how much money we have in our pockets. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) has provided an [easy-to-use link to leave comments](#) opposing the increased fees.

The normal comment period of 60 days for proposals has been reduced to 30 days, **ending December 16th.** Please [use this tool today to comment](#) and ask others to comment during this time of Thanksgiving and Advent.

Register for the Faith, Politics & The Common Good

Summit

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that we can not serve God and money. (Matthew 6:24) After hearing God's call to "rebuild His Church" a young St. Francis famously renounced his wealthy merchant father and all his worldly possessions. Our faith teaches us that we must recognize each person as a gift from God, and that we must emphasize the importance of the essential humanity and dignity of each person.



Pope Francis calls us to "meddle in politics" and we interpret this concept as a requirement that all Americans must have an equal say in the public square. To that end, the good people at [Vote Common Good](#) are hosting a [Faith, Politics & The Common Good Summit and Presidential Forum](#) from January 9-11, 2020 in Des Moines, Iowa.

The summit consists of training for citizens, faith leaders, community organizers and activists, and political candidates on engaging in civic life, and the Common Good. The evenings will include a Candidate Forum, where Presidential, Senate, Congressional, and State candidates will share their perspectives on the intersection of faith, politics, and the common good.

Don't miss out on this unique opportunity! Pricing goes up after December 1st, so [reserve your spot today](#).

Faithful Democracy Webinar: A Faith Perspective on Voting Rights

FAN is a dedicated leader of [Faithful Democracy](#), a multifaith, collaborative effort of congregations, faith-based, and good governance advocacy organizations taking a hard look at the state of our democracy. Recently, Faithful Democracy issued a [Voters Covenant](#) which outlines our advocacy plans for the next year.

People of faith demand
free and honest elections to
determine the will of the people.

*Faithful Democracy 2020:
Restoring the Voters Covenant*

Beginning today and throughout 2020 Faithful Democracy will roll-out **Unheard Voices**, a series of bimonthly toolkits, webinars, and other activities to educate and engage people of faith on the path to create a just democratic system. Click here to see the [introduction](#) which explains what we hope to accomplish with this toolkit. Today the first chapter is available and looks at [Voting Rights and Disenfranchisement](#). Keep watching FAN's [Faithful Democracy](#) webpage and our e-newsletter & social media pages for new chapters as they become accessible.

On **Dec 5, 2019 at 2pm ET / 11am PT** Faithful Democracy will host a webinar on the [Faith Perspective on Voting Rights](#). Please join us as we discuss current issues of voter

suppression and the importance of restoring the Voting Rights Act. This webinar will explore the impact of voter suppression on communities of color, as well as equip attendees with resources needed to join in the fight against voter suppression. [Click here to register.](#)

Creating a fairer, more representative democracy will always be a work in progress. Our democracy has never been perfect, but now is a pivotal moment to protect the democratic ideals of our nation and ensure that all Americans have an equal say in the democratic process.

Campaign for Climate: Join Climate Strikes and Fire Drill Fridays

On Nov. 29th and Dec. 6th, young people and adults will strike all across the United States and world to demand transformative action is taken to address the climate crisis. To learn more, sign up to host a strike, or receive updates, check out strikewithus.org.

The strikes build on the momentum of September 20th Climate Strike, the largest youth-led climate mobilization in US history. Inspired by Greta Thunberg when she said, “Our House Is On Fire”, actress and activist Jane Fonda has moved to Washington, D.C. and is leading weekly demonstrations called [Fire Drill Fridays](#) on Capitol Hill to demand that action by our political leaders be taken to address the climate emergency we are in.



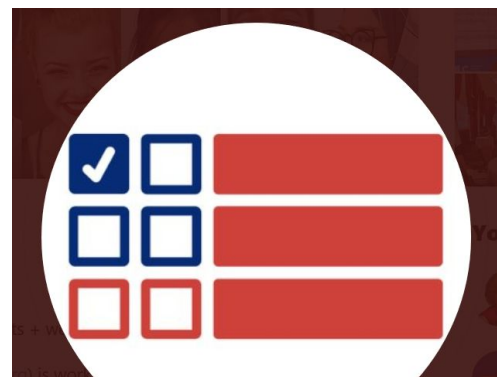
FAN is honored to be a part of the Fire Drill Friday rally on December 6th which will hold a theme of migration, human dignity and climate. As a signer of important proposals such as the [Lofoten Declaration](#) and in collaboration with the organizers at [Strike with US](#), together we will bring forth a message that caring for the climate is a moral issue.

If you're coming to the rally in DC, please [RSVP here](#). If you're going to a climate strike in your community, please [click here and tell us where you are](#). We will announce all the solidarity events happening nationwide at the DC rally.

Available Resource: African American Faith-Based Voter Toolkit from Census Counts

[Census Counts](#) is a collaborative campaign working to make sure that the 2020 Census is fair and accurate. The campaign works to educate stakeholders and the public about the importance of a fair and accurate census to our communities, families, and children—and to make sure that the Census Bureau has the money and leadership to do the job right.

They have developed an [African American](#)



[Faith-Based Voter Toolkit](#) designed to help clergy and lay leaders educate voters, particularly historically underrepresented voters in key states. While this toolkit is designed primarily for use by National African American Clergy Network (NAACN) of denominational & independent church leaders and Sojourners community partners – any group or individual may utilize this as a resource to assist voters.

We invite you to check out all the [resources on the Census Counts website](#) and talk to your community or congregation about the importance of the 2020 Census.

Justice Articles and News Items of Interest

Several interesting articles and pieces of information we thought may be of interest to our readers:

- Pax Christi International released this [statement](#) on the Occasion of Pope Francis' Visit to Japan.
- An interesting Op-Ed from Tom Reese at the National Catholic Reporter on [What the US bishops can learn from the Amazon synod](#).
- Last week, a jury [returned not guilty verdicts](#) on both counts of felony harboring in the felony re-trial of Dr. Scott Warren for offering food, water, clothing and beds to two men in Ajo, Arizona.
- A federal judge [blocked four federal executions](#) scheduled for December
- Each year the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary develop a [prayer service for World AIDS Day](#). We invite you to use this resource to join in prayer on Dec 1 for all who have been touched by HIV and AIDS. The Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns are hosting a 24-hour vigil; [click here to sign up](#).

