

Finding Acceptance in a World of Opposites

The purpose of Advent is to welcome Jesus. In order to fulfil this we must reach out to welcome one another or we really don't welcome Jesus. All the readings for this [second Sunday of Advent](#) center on reconciliation and the conditions set down by Jesus. As stated in the second reading "Welcome one another as I welcomed you." (ROM 15:7)

Even John the Baptist who in the Gospel called the Pharisees and Sadducees a "brood of vipers" also adds that there is still hope for them because "God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones". Are there people in our lives who are like stones and we think we will never reach them? Are we stones?

Isaiah announces reconciliation in a symbolic way by using direct opposites: "the wolf and the lamb; the leopard and the goat; the calf and the young lion; bear and the cow; the lion and the ox." And the most direct opposite of all – a baby playing in a cobra's den. The Native Americans have a belief called the Rule of Opposites – opposite energies. Whenever we do something we need to consider the opposite also. This practice will help us achieve harmony and balance. Even though it may seem impossible but if we look closely, we can discover a place where our paths cross and we can agree or remain civil and disagree. It seems that the society we live in now is so polarized. Does this reading and this season encourage us to find acceptance of all in our hearts?



Where do we find the courage to do this? John the Baptist made it clear that he was here to give a baptism of repentance. He knew and always said that he was preparing the world for Christ and he never strayed from this message. He was preparing them for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is a baptism that signifies the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – the Fire of Love. This spirit will rest upon Jesus and anyone who receives his Baptism: the Baptism of the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge and fear of the Lord. Receiving this Baptism will help us have a change of heart toward many opposites with whom we sit. Then we will be accepting one another as God accepts all of us.

Sr. Marge Wissman, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

This week, take time to think about the times you have been unaccepting of an idea or person. Pray to the Lord to guide you towards acceptance using the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Petitions:

Jesus, may I respond to those who present an opposite view with the gifts given to me at my Baptism, we pray...

May we welcome one another as Jesus welcomed us, we pray...

Prayer:

**Loving God, as we journey through this season of anticipation,
give us the grace to recognize your presence among us
in all the opposites we encounter along the journey.**

Amen.

Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday: Please Remember FAN when you Donate

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.](#)**

New Advent and Epiphany Resource Available from

IIC

As we have entered the season of Advent we offer a resource developed by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, of which FAN is a member. [Ignite the Light](#) is a six part devotional series which offers a range of themes linking Advent season preparations with various asylum concerns. We invite you to [download it](#) and use the reflections, stories and prayers through Advent and Epiphany.

This Advent resource was created by the “[Holy Days & Holidays](#)” team at Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC), which consists of Sister Marie Lucey, Sister Maria Orlandini, Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Sister Ann Scholz, Sharon Baglyos and Sharon Stanley.



Virtual Workshop - The Call of Assisi: Towards a New Economy

A group of U.S. – based practitioners and students of new economic models that are the fruit of a culture of communion and solidarity are hosting a [Virtual Workshop / Video call](#) to foster learning and collaboration to transform our economy. FAN Board Member, Mr. Doug O'Brien is a Co-Convener.

The gathering, on **Monday, December 16, from 12 to 2pm ET**, was organized in anticipation of the [Economy of Francesco](#), a global gathering [convened by Pope Francis](#) in Assisi, Italy March 26 – 28, 2020 to inspire a new economy rooted in solidarity and care for our common home.

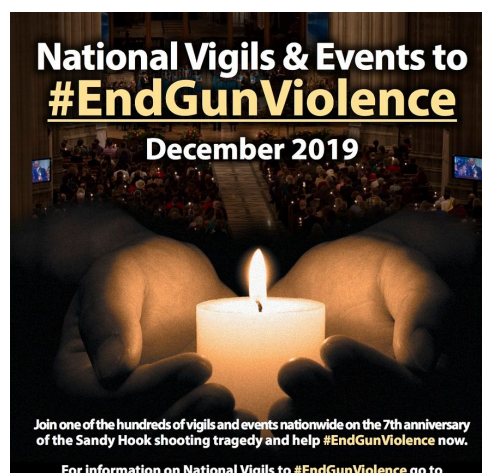


We urge all our members and friends to share this information and consider joining. [RSVP here](#) to receive follow-up with more details.

Join in a National Vigil to #EndGunViolence

Gun violence serves one purpose: to prematurely take life. As people of faith who believe every person is made in the sacred image of God, we must challenge the policies that need to be changed in order to alleviate this disease in our country.

The annual vigils to end gun violence help us to honor and remember those who have lost their lives to gun violence. They serve to showcase our faith, hold victims in the Light, 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 anchors all the events across the nation. Won't you join us? Check to see if there is a [vigil planned near you](#).

If you don't see a vigil in your area, consider hosting one. There are lots of resources to help you plan in the [2019 National Vigil Toolkit](#).

If you're unable to join a vigil and can't make it to D.C., 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.

Webinar on Proposed Increase in Fees for Asylum Seekers: Dec. 4th

Last week, we made you aware that the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [proposed](#) increases in fees for citizenship applicants and a new fee for asylum seekers alongside the decrease of fee waivers. If implemented, these new fees would increase the costs for immigrants and refugees seeking safety, legalization and pathways to citizenship. As a reminder, please take a moment to [use this tool today to make a comment](#) before **December 16th** opposing the increased fees.



Additionally, please join Justice for Immigrants for a webinar this **Wednesday, Dec. 4th at 2pm ET / 11am PT** when representatives from Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) will present information about the proposed new fee schedule. Webinar presenters will discuss how these proposed fees would negatively and disproportionately impact low-income and working-class immigrants and how you and your organization can take action. They will also have information on comment writing and other outreach strategies.

To join the webinar, login at <https://bit.ly/2qmRDWJ> or dial in at (917) 338-1451 using PIN: 297842#

Take Action: Denounce Paris Climate Agreement Withdrawal

Climate change is a global threat which continues to go unchecked by this administration. The Paris Agreement unites all countries to address climate change and environmental degradation.

In the two years since the United States was pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement our country has witnessed several devastating climate change-driven events including Hurricanes Florence and Michael and the California wildfires. [We have no time to take steps backwards](#).



The U.S. is the world's second-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, behind only China. Our planet is facing a climate emergency. We must do our part to care for our planet and our futures. [Sign this petition](#) denouncing the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement.

Invitation to Retreat for Christian Pastoral Leaders

We invite our members and friends to consider applying for a unique retreat series through the [Center for Courage and Renewal](#) called *[Flourishing in Ministry: Cultivating Trustworthy Relationships](#)*.

These retreats are open to all authorized leaders (minister/faith leader, clergy, pastors, deacons, elders, etc.) in local congregations or faith communities. The focus will be on nurturing one's own inner leadership and building supportive and trustworthy communities, honoring the spiritual wisdom tradition and theological language that emerges for each participant.



There are five different cohort series, each in a unique part of the country. Each cohort series will consist of three retreats (one 4-day event and two 3-day events) over a 13-month period, as well as small group peer learning calls in between retreats. [Learn more here](#).