

See How They Love One Another

Our concept and understanding of 'family' changes over the years due to many factors, one example being our cultural background. The older I've gotten, the more my memories and feelings have changed or perhaps a better way of saying that would be, they 'have evolved.' To many of us, our understanding comes from comparing our family to the family that American Culture shows us in and through our media and social connections. Living and working with a cross cultural parish and people from different and various financial conditions has brought me to a point of understanding. My family might have some flaws, but not as much as other families. Family life can be challenging and family is an invitation from God that can bring us to many places we would rather not go.



So, to all of us in the pews this week, our understanding of family is a little different from each other. So, let's now see through [this week's readings](#) how God intended it to be.

Sunday's Gospel tells us about Joseph having a dream and hearing that he must take his family and flee. Can you imagine having a dream like this and responding right away by taking those who you want to protect to a safe place? For some of us, this story reflects our family's journey to where we are today. We might not be fleeing from a King, but we did travel for a better place, or a better opportunity.

So, hang on because the invitation or challenge from God that we find in the second reading from the Letter to the Colossians is even more difficult to hear and to do. God is speaking to us to put aside our old selves and to live as a new person by submitting and changing how we speak and react to one another. God's call is to do this as a member of a family as well as a member of our Faith Community and even, (I know this is a real challenge) in our political and civic dialogues.

Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM says it so well, that in community there is friction. But it is a fact that friction is the foundation of the community, or the family. We grow together as a people when we can listen and understand our differences because then we can agree on common ground, common purpose, and a common place that is safe, secure and understanding. Love above all makes us of one mind and heart. It surely makes us into a holier family and community and offers us the chance to hear once again, "See how they love one another."

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Some thoughts to reflect on this week:

What are your dreams and how will you respond to them?

What are you willing to give up for peace and a better understanding of those you love?

Suggested Petitions:

For all families, that they find safety and love in the Lord. We pray...

For those with challenges in their family, that conflicts be resolved respectfully and with care to one another's feelings. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**O God, who were pleased to give us
the shining example of the Holy Family,
graciously grant that we may imitate them
in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity,
and so, in the joy of your house,
delight one day in eternal rewards.
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

FAN Wishes you a Merry Christmas and Peace and Justice in 2020!

The Staff (*pictured*) and Board of the Franciscan Action Network would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

We look forward to continuing our work with you for peace and justice in the new year.



Take Action: Tennessee Governor Agrees to Continue Welcoming Refugees--Thank Him!

Last week, Governor Bill Lee of Tennessee submitted written consent to continue welcoming refugees in the state. The governor cited his faith as one reason he chose to allow refugees to continue to be resettled. We know that many faith leaders [played a part](#) in urging him to make this decision, so thank you!



We also want to make sure he knows that Tennesseans and all people of faith support his decision to welcome refugees. The [Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights coalition](#) has a convenient thank you message [set up here](#). We urge all our members, both in Tennessee and around the country, to send a note of thanks to Governor Lee.

Join us: Reception in DC for FAN's new Executive Director

The staff and board of FAN are excited to be hosting a reception in Washington, DC to welcome our new executive director, Steve Schneck, PhD.

We urge all our DC area members to come and introduce yourself and your organization to Steve and have some fellowship with us. The reception will be January 7th at Busboys and Poets in Brookland. Click [here to RSVP](#).



Donate Today: Our Commitment to Advocating in the Spirits of Francis and Clare Hasn't Wavered

This year saw a number of changes for the Franciscan Action Network, as our Executive Director [Patrick Carolan is moving on after nine years](#)—we wish him all the best in his next adventure! We recently [introduced Dr. Steve Schneck, PhD as our new executive director](#). Steve is excited to start in January—you'll be hearing more from him in the new year.

What hasn't changed is our commitment to advocacy in the spirits of Saints Francis and Clare. This year we are quite proud of several great accomplishments and we

would not have been able to do it without the support of our members! Here's a small sample:



- Continuing to build our national grassroots capacity through our Franciscan Solidarity Tables, this year we brought on Nora Pfeiffer to lead the tables. *(Photo, top, right)*
- We continue to advocate in support of our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters. This year's highlight was organizing the Catholic Days of Action in Washington, D.C., Newark, NJ, and El Paso, TX. *(Photos, bottom, left and right)*
- As part of our ongoing commitment to creation care, this month, we risked arrest with Fire Drill Friday's Jane Fonda and helped show the connection between climate and migration. *(Photo, top, left and center)*

- Our Faithful Democracy coalition began to revitalize itself, celebrating the passage of HR1 in the House and urging the bill be introduced in the Senate. Senator Udall has been a big supporter of this legislation and we were proud to have him at an information session. *(Photo, bottom, center)*

We are asking if you can help us just one more time in 2019? [Make a year-end donation to FAN today](#) to ensure that we are able to continue our work advocating for immigrants and refugees, the environment, a fully functioning government, and organizing the entire Franciscan family all across the country.