

## Bringing Light to All People

The [Feast of the Epiphany](#) celebrates the discovery of Jesus. A discovery of Jesus by the ruling class with mixed reaction. For the Magi, it is an occasion of Joy and Wonder. They have seen the light! They wish to follow that light and encounter the new king, God's incarnation and their savior. While they did not have the understanding we have today, following the light of a star, finding a babe, and perhaps not fully aware of His significance, it is an example for all of us to seek and follow the light to Jesus.



For Herod and the rulers of Judea, the birth of the newborn king of the Jews is met with fear, jealousy and perceived as a threat to the status quo. Herod, a cunning king, sends the Magi on a mission. "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." (Mt 2:8) In hindsight, we know Herod's intentions. His homage to the newborn king is to have him killed and removed as an obstacle or threat to his earthly kingly power.

In our world today, the light of the newborn king is still met by many who hold power with fear, jealousy and tighten their grip against perceived threats. Those seeking to follow the light, the light of the Gospel, seeking the newborn king, Jesus, and shining that light into the "darkness that covers the earth" (Is 6:2) reveal to the world institutions of greed, deception, injustice, abuse of power, discrimination and exploitation of human persons and creation. The reading from Isaiah gives us hope. "Upon you the Lord will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen. Nations shall walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning." As Christians, and as Franciscans, we are called to follow the light to Jesus and shine that light into the dark places of the world. Admittedly, this is often met with resistance by those in power.

We are called to take the light to the people and their leaders. Psalm 72 from this week's readings is labeled as a prayer for the king. It sums up a leader's mission. "O God, give your judgment to the king; your justice to the king's son; That he may govern your people with justice, your oppressed with right judgment, that the mountains may yield their bounty for the people, and the hills great abundance, that he may defend the oppressed among the people, save the children of the poor and crush the oppressor." (Ps 72: 2-4) The psalm calls out one of the duties of the rulers, "show pity to the needy and the poor and save the lives of the poor. From extortion and violence he redeems them." (Ps 72:13-14)

Sisters and brothers, it is our duty to remind our leaders of their obligation to be servants and not exploiters. Let us pray for our leaders using the words of Psalm 72 and recommit ourselves to shining the light into the darkness of the world.

David Seitz, OFS  
FAN Board Member

**Suggested Action:**

Each day this week, pray for all elected leaders, using the words of Psalm 72.

**Suggested Petitions:**

For all those seeking to follow the light of Jesus. May they have the courage and fortitude to shine that light into the dark places of society. We pray...

For all those who turn from the light to hold on to power with fear and jealousy. May they remember that all power is bestowed only from God. We pray...

**Collect Prayer (From Vigil Mass):**

**May the splendor of your majesty, O Lord, we pray,  
shed its light upon our hearts,  
that we may pass through the shadows of this world  
and reach the brightness of our eternal home.  
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**

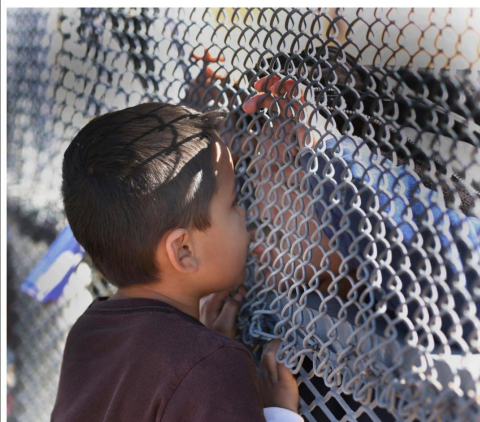
## **Get Ready for National Migration Week: January 5-11th, 2020**

January 5-11, 2020, the Catholic Church will celebrate [National Migration Week](#). The theme for this year's celebration is "Promoting a Church and a World for All," which reflects the need for Catholics to be inclusive and welcoming to all our brothers and sisters.

National Migration Week 2020 provides us an opportunity to focus on the most vulnerable of migrants, including DACA and TPS holders, who remain in precarious and uncertain situations. It is also a time to reflect on threats to migrant and refugee children, the littlest ones among us, particularly children who are detained or otherwise separated from their parents, unaccompanied migrant children, and those who are stuck waiting in Mexico for asylum in the United States.

The United State Conference of Catholic Bishops

National Migration Week 2020  
January 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020



Credit: CNS/Bob Roller

Promoting a Church and a World for All

(USCCB) has produced a toolkit of resources to promote participation in National Migration Week - [download it for free here](#). You'll find suggestions for prayer, community action ideas, sample letters to the editor and social media posts.

## Report Detailing GOP Tax Cuts Failing Workers and the Economy

It's been two years since the Trump administration passed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017. The Americans for Tax Fairness have released this detailed [report](#) showing the eight principal promises made about the benefits of the tax overhaul and how they have failed to come true. Here are just a few examples:

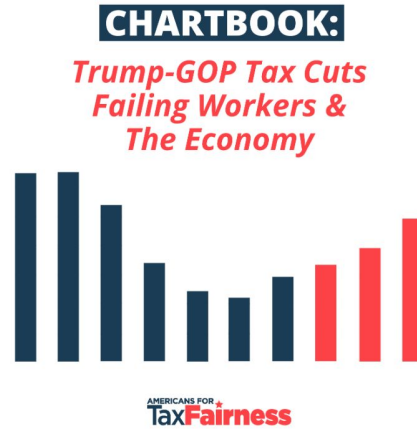
**PROMISE: IT WILL BE A MIDDLE-CLASS TAX CUT.**

**REALITY:** The richest 1% are getting an average tax cut that's 75 times more than the average tax cut of the bottom 80%—\$50,000 vs. \$645.

**PROMISE: WORKING FAMILIES WILL QUICKLY GET A \$4,000 TO \$9,000 RAISE.**

**REALITY:** Median family income rose just \$514 in 2018 and the annual growth rate in workers' wages has increased just 0.4% since the tax plan became law. Both of these are well below the increases that occurred during President Obama's last two years in office.

There is a [petition to Congress](#) to repeal the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 and instead implement a fair share tax system that works for everyone. We [urge you to sign](#).



## Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness

**Fact:** Human trafficking is frequently confused with human smuggling, which involves illegal border crossings. In [reality](#), this heinous crime does not require any movement at all. Women, men, and children can be recruited and trafficked in their own home towns and even their own homes.

National Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Day is recognized each year on January 11th. The patron saint is St. Josephine Bakhita, who was from South Sudan. Born in 1869, Bakhita was kidnapped and sold into slavery at the age of 7 and spent much of her life in captivity.



The Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange have put together a reflection and prayer calendar which extends from January 11th to St. Bakhita's feast day on February 8th. There are versions in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). We invite our members and friends to download and print a calendar and spend a few minutes each day in prayer to end human trafficking.

## 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](#).



## Will you help us accomplish our goals in 2020?

Last week, we let you know about what we accomplished together in 2019 as one Franciscan family advocating in the spirits of Francis and Clare, including a [leadership change](#) for us here at FAN. In 2020 we look forward to accomplishing some new initiatives alongside our daily work of advocating with those on the margins including:



- Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day & 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si: Working with faith organizations, labor unions, electric power companies, and business leaders in developing a plan for a “just transition” from fossil fuels to clean energy that is mindful of those who are often left behind.
- DC-based Catholic Coalition Election Issue Guide: Holding up Gospel values to inform decision making and the healing of current political divides.
- Continued growth of the [Franciscan Solidarity Tables](#): Bringing together the Franciscan Family and other Franciscan-hearted people on the local level, to better engage issues important to them and the work of FAN.
- Advocacy on Capitol Hill and in the streets of DC: bringing awareness to and advocating for various immigration and refugee issues, gun violence prevention, human trafficking, care for creation, and getting money out of politics.

[Can you help make our plans a reality in 2020? Make a year-end 501\(c\)3 tax deductible donation to FAN today.](#) Together, we can carry out the message, philosophy, and mission of St. Francis and St. Clare.

As always, we thank you for your continued support and prayers as we head into 2020 together as one Franciscan family, united in peace and justice in the new year.