

Embracing the Broken by Letting Go

[Image by Med Ahabchane from Pixabay](#)

In [this week's gospel](#), Matthew gives us an account of Jesus teaching the disciples about some of the commandments of their ancestors. At first glance at the text, the account seems to be one of Jesus just preaching the commandments as a way of not going to hell, but after a second glance and a little reflecting, the text dives much deeper.



At first, Jesus tells the disciples that those who follow the commandments will be called the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, while those who don't will be the least in the kingdom of heaven. Here, Jesus merely states that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Notice how Jesus never once in the text says that people will be sent to hell for not following the commandments, he just says that you won't enter the kingdom of heaven, which could be pointing towards the possibility of being sent to purgatory. This is a reminder to us of how great the love is that Jesus has for us. He recognizes that we as humans are not perfect beings, but He still loves us because we were made that way, so as Paul wrote in his letters, Jesus is showing us that nothing can separate us from his love.

Jesus then goes on to talk about some of the commandments, specifically killing, adultery, and lying. Again, Jesus does not condemn those who don't follow the commandments, but instead gives them lessons on what I believe is embracing imperfections and letting go of things. When talking about killing, Jesus says to be reconciled with whoever has done wrong to you or whoever you have done wrong to before going to the altar. In a way, Jesus is telling us to embrace the imperfections that we have or that someone else has by being reconciled with them. Reconciling with others is about understanding that we all have a little bit of brokenness and imperfection is us, but we still love each other. When Jesus goes on to talk about adultery and lying, he first tells the disciples to get rid of the things that cause us to sin by telling them to rip their eye out or cut their hand off. Jesus then tells them not to swear by anything, for we don't have the power to make a single hair black or white. These can be seen as messages of letting go of not only the bad things in our lives but also our own thoughts of being better than others. To discover and be who we truly are and meant to be, we must leave behind the things or people in our lives that do us no good. We must let go of the thought that we are or need to be smarter or better than everyone to strive and succeed, when in fact we are all here to help and grow with each other. Again, we are all imperfect and broken beings.

Saint Francis of Assisi was someone that throughout his life realized that the more he let go of things and the image that he and society wanted for him, the more he could embrace the brokenness of the world. Francis recognized that material possessions of the world were what separated him from the love of the world and being able to love all things around him. He saw

beauty in the lepers, the outcasts of the world, those who were shunned out of Assisi to live in their own village, while also embracing the beauty of all of creation. He loved animals and sought to make friends with them, because he knew that God existed in them. Francis gives us a perfect example of who we need to be in our world today. Like Francis, we must give up the societal norms and visions of greatness that society has and instead reach out to the outcasts and see the beauty in the broken. Our world is full of outcasts, including those living in poverty and those we don't call brother or sister because they come from a different place than us. There is brokenness in these people, just as there is brokenness in all of us, and there is beauty in them as well. We should never deny people the opportunity to live a better life. Francis dedicated part of his life to making the lives of the lepers, the outcasts, better as he recognized the beauty in the brokenness of society; we need to as well. Let us all strive to be a lifeline for everyone in our world, loving them, blessing them, and helping them live a life that they deserve to live. Don't curse or ignore them, rather embrace them and the brokenness that comes with them, knowing we are all broken somehow. Be the person that you needed at some point in your life. You are exactly what someone needs in their life.

Kevin Hamzik
Franciscan Postulant and FAN Intern

Suggested Action:

Ponder this week something you consider broken and try to see the beauty in it, as Jesus does.

Suggested Petitions:

May we be attuned to the law of the Lord and be willing to uphold it in society. We pray...
May we long for the truth of Jesus and have the courage to preach it in the public sphere. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**O God, who teach us that you abide
in hearts that are just and true,
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.
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

**Film *Just Mercy* offers an Opportunity to Address
Racism**

When the movie *Dead Man Walking* was released in 1995, you might recall how it became a defining moment in the American consciousness around capital punishment.



Similarly, the movie [Just Mercy](#) provides a teachable moment about racism, the importance of mission, and the promise of reconciliation. The film tells the stunning true story of young lawyer Bryan Stevenson and his history-making fight to exonerate Walter McMillian, a black man convicted and sentenced to death in Alabama for a crime he did not commit. We invite our members and friends to celebrate Black History Month by seeing the film and engaging in conversation with others.

The Catholic Mobilizing Network has created the [Just Mercy Catholic Study Guide](#) which offers a series of thoughtful reflection questions and supplementary resources online. This guide is meant to be used as an accompaniment to the film and offers viewers a way to explore the Catholic call to uphold the sanctity of life within the U.S. criminal legal system.

Additionally, the US Catholic Mission Association is sponsoring a [webinar](#) conversation about the film and the ways in which it can inspire action among Catholics to address the sin of racism. [Register to attend this Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 2pm ET / 11am PT.](#) See a list of panelists and get more information [here](#).

Faith Partners Offer Lenten Reflection Guides

Several faith organizations with whom we partner have developed Lenten reflection guides with a theme of caring for creation. We offer them here for your consideration.



The **Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns'** [2020 Lenten Reflection Guide](#) focuses on the topic of "ecological conversion." This guide offers a chance to reflect on your relationships with God, neighbor, and all creation. Readers will explore the interconnection of these relationships, consider how they are broken and in need of healing, and reflect on how God calls us to repentance and renewal on the journey towards the joy of Easter. [Click here to download the guide.](#)

The **Global Catholic Climate Movement** invites us to bring Laudato Si' into the Lenten season with their [Lenten Calendar for Creation](#). This week-by-week guide allows for reflection on our role in God's creation. The contemplations and actions help us repent of our ecological sin, cultivate ecological virtue, and take healing actions. [Click here to download the calendar for creation.](#)

Creation Justice Ministries' also have a [Lent Calendar for 2020](#). This resource offers a Christ and eco-centered spiritual reflection and/or an eco-justice action for each day of the

Lenten season. [Click here to request your Lent Calendar from CJM.](#)

The Latest Faith Based Immigration News and Updates

Much is happening surrounding the issue of Immigration and we want to bring our readers up to date with several newsworthy stories and reports below.

We thank Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso who issued this [statement](#) on the expansion of **Remain in Mexico** to Brazilians. [#Faith4Asylum](#) prayer vigils marking one year of MPP were held in Arizona, [Indiana](#), Louisiana, Massachusetts, [Minnesota](#), Montana, [New York](#), North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and [Washington, DC](#), as well as [virtually](#). FAN staff members attended the [vigil](#) in Washington, DC.



New reports are cropping up about the detrimental effects this policy is having on our fellow sisters and brothers:

- **Human Rights Watch** researchers released "[Deported to Danger](#)", a report which identifies cases of 138 Salvadorans who, since 2013, were killed after deportation from the United States, and more than 70 others who were beaten, sexually assaulted, extorted, or tortured.
- The **American Friends Service Committee's** U.S.-Mexico Border Program released "[Dismantling Asylum](#)," a report analyzing the inhumane "MPP/Remain in Mexico" policy.
- As we reported last week, the **Hope Border Institute** has also published two reports detailing the effects of this policy on the borderlands community and on migrants returned to Mexico. The first is the [Remain in Mexico Situation Report](#) which provides original research accomplished by Hope Border Institute. The second prepared in collaboration with Stanford Law School Mills Legal Clinic is the [Report on the Human Rights Violations of Migrants in Mexico](#).

In other arenas of the immigration debate, FAN was one of 40 interfaith organizations to file an [amicus brief](#) in opposition to the government's efforts to **end protections of the Flores settlement agreement** and authorize indefinite detention of some immigrant families.

At news of the addition of 6 new countries to the **Travel (Muslim) Ban**, FAN was one of many organizations that released [statements](#) in opposition last week. Advocates [visited](#) the offices of 23 congressional representatives who haven't signed on to the No Ban Act. The Penn State Law Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic (CIRC) has populated its [webpage](#) with resources on what they have labeled 'Travel Ban 3.0'.

February Issue of Stop Trafficking Newsletter:

Trafficking and Racism

As we celebrate Black History Month in the United States, it seems appropriate to reflect on the intersection of racism with human trafficking.

Almost anywhere in the world, victims of trafficking are disproportionately racial and ethnic minorities. The [February issue of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter](#) brings more attention to the racial disparity of trafficking victims, both in the United States and globally, and ensures that it not remain unknown—or ignored.



The February issue of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter may be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Clinton Franciscans Host Reflections for Season of Nonviolence

The Season for Nonviolence, launched at the United Nations in 1998, marks the annual 64 calendar days between the memorial anniversary of the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi on January 30 and that of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on April 4.

In celebration of the season, the Franciscan Peace Center has created a series of daily one-minute audio reflections about nonviolence recorded by the Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa. These reflections will be released daily throughout the Season for Nonviolence. The first reflection of the season had the theme of "Courage" and can be [accessed here](#).



Franciscan Peace Center

The recordings will be posted daily on the [Clinton Franciscans website](#) and on their social media pages of [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) and all the tracks are available for free on [SoundCloud](#). You can also [sign up here to receive the daily reflections via email](#).

Take Action: Sign Petition to Create National Bureau for Gun Safety

Gun violence is a major public health epidemic that is killing 100 people per day. We've got to figure out the root causes and how to prevent the next tragedy before it happens. We need a [National Bureau for Gun Safety](#).



In 1966, as a response to rapidly increasing numbers of motor vehicle-related injuries and deaths, the National Highway Safety Bureau (NHSB) was created to promote and implement safety technology and practices, such as seat belt use, as well as to support research into causes and contributing factors. Now, we must use this same strategy to look at gun violence.

As a way to honor all victims of gun violence, we urge our members and friends to [sign this petition today](#) and urge Congress to create a National Bureau for Gun Safety.

We Did it! We Took the Plunge!

January 25, 2020 saw crowds of enthusiastic plungers gathered at the National Harbor outside of Washington, D.C. for the 15th annual Polar Bear Plunge to #KeepWinterCold and Franciscan Action Network was there!

FAN's Plunge team this year was: our new Executive Director, Steve Schneck (*pictured, top, left*); our Director of Campaigns and Development, Jason Miller (*pictured, top, right*); FAN friend and food justice advocate, Patrilie Hernandez (*pictured, bottom*) and FAN Intern and postulant Tim Amburgey.



This year we have a lot planned in our continued mission to care for creation. One major commemoration will be a celebration of both the 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si* and 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Last year we were able to raise \$5,300.00 and we are excited to say, we have surpassed that amount! **Thanks to your generosity, we have raised \$5,498.00 so far!**

Won't you help us get to our goal this year of \$5,500? If you have yet to donate (or wanted to see the proof) you can [still do so here](#).

We managed to get some video of Jason's plunge, which you can watch by clicking on our social media pages below.

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

We can not thank you all enough for your continued support of FAN and our mission to care for all of God's beautiful Creation.