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Reflection Date: February 23, 2020 - 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Claim Your Holiness!

If asked to name an adjective describing yourself, I doubt if many of us would say “holy.” The men and women named on the liturgical calendar, THEY are holy. Each of us could identify people we know or have known whom we consider holy. But me? How blind or arrogant to call myself holy; I know myself too well. It’s easier to name my flaws and sins. Yet, [this week’s scriptures](#) tell us otherwise.

[Image by reenablack from Pixabay](#)



“Be holy,” the Lord charges Moses to tell the people, “for I, the Lord, your God am holy.” Paul writes to the Corinthians “...the temple of God, which you are, is holy.” The scriptures also make it clear in what holiness consists. “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18) In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us to go the extra mile, and to “love your enemies.” So, holiness is not about haloes or asceticism or sinlessness; it is about love. Even the capital letter Saints were men and women with human flaws and limitations, not without sin, imperfect human beings. They were lovers of God and of fellow human beings who evidently believed that the Spirit of God dwelled in them, as Paul taught. In different ways, they went the extra mile as Jesus instructed.

On Wednesday of next week we will be marked with ashes to remind us that we are human (humus=earth) beings, and we are encouraged to repent. Repentance does not mean wallowing in guilt or demeaning ourselves. Yes, we acknowledge our faults and sins and resolve to follow Jesus more closely, but perhaps this Lent we can also claim our holiness. We are loved by God and we are to be lovers of God, other human beings, and all Creation. In other words, we are called to be holy. We are holy. How about that!

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

On Ash Wednesday, thank God that you are of the earth, that you are loved, and name ways in which you go the extra mile. Claim your holiness.

Suggested Petitions:

That we may consider the implications of being holy temples of God. We pray...
That we may identify one way of going the extra mile during Lent. We pray...

Prayer by Joyce Rupp:

**I search for God, elusive, hidden God,
I long to dwell in the heart of Mystery.**

I search for my true self, more of who I already am,
knowing there's so much yet to be discovered.

I search for Home, always for Home,
unaware, of course, that I am already there.

Amen

Franciscan Action Network Website Getting a Facelift

We are excited to announce that visitors to the [Franciscan Action Network website](#) will soon notice some improvements.



The Board of Directors of FAN recently approved a website improvement project which has been in development since last fall. Some things you will notice are a more streamlined layout, improved readability across multiple devices, and a cleaner, brighter look.

We anticipate the launch of the new site by the end of the month. The web address will remain the same, www.franciscanaction.org. Check it out and [let us know](#) what you think.

This Week's St. Clare Pledge: Take Action in Support of the Asylum Seeker Protection Act

Recently, FAN staff participated in a [vigil](#) marking one year of the “Remain in Mexico/Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)” policy. This harmful program places tens of thousands of asylum-seekers in danger as they are made to wait in Mexico for their asylum proceedings. Reports of people in makeshift tents enduring freezing temperatures, of children losing their innocence witnessing and enduring violence and other human rights abuses, and of families being torn apart all showcase the inhumanity of this protocol.



Introduced by Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-TX), HR 2662, the [Asylum Seeker Protection Act](#), would completely and permanently defund the “Remain in Mexico” program.

As your [St. Clare Pledge](#) this week, we urge our members and friends to [call on your legislators today](#) to urge them to cosponsor and support this legislation to restore the integrity of our nation's asylum system. Our friends at the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee have an [easy-to-use email form](#).

As people of faith, we must speak out against the attacks on asylum seekers.

Fr. Sam Fuller, OFM Cap. Testifies in Support of Immigrants

Last week, Fr. Samuel Fuller, OFM Cap. from [St Anne-St Augustin Parish](#) in Manchester, NH testified in support of a state bill to study the effects of the state's immigration policies on the communities. He cited the importance of education and how wrong it would be not to study the effects of the policies, particularly given the national conversation of dehumanizing and criminalizing all refugees and immigrants.



Fr. Sam was accompanied by two teenagers from the parish who testified to the devastating effects the deportation of their father have had on their family, including ongoing stress at home and at school, bullying, and suicidal thoughts. The testimony concluded when Fr. Sam offered the committee a double sided page with the names of 35-40 families impacted by deportation or detention.

It was later reported to Fr. Sam that committee members were moved by the testimonies and that the bill was approved to be sent to executive session for a formal vote. **Thank You, Fr. Sam for your involvement!**

If you or someone in your community has a story of similar involvement, please [contact our communications coordinator, Janine Walsh](#).

Memorial Display Projects for Victims of Gun Violence

Gun violence in our nation is at an unacceptable level. So many lives have been touched by gun violence, but even as we educate and advocate for change, we recognize that healing is also necessary. Two very distinct projects have been brought to our attention which we share with you here.



First is the Soul Box Project: If you could save a life by folding two pieces of paper, would you do it? The [Soul Box Project](#) is a national community art project collecting handmade origami Soul Boxes, each representing one person killed or injured by gunfire in the U.S.

So far, more than 90,000 Soul Boxes have been collected from around the country and displays of thousands of Soul Boxes are exhibited in public spaces to illustrate the number of victims of gunfire violence, defense, accidents and suicides. In October of this year, the

largest [Soul Box exhibit](#) ever will be set up on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. If you would like to be a part of this historic event, [click here for more information](#). People from all over the country can participate.

Second is the [Gun Violence Memorial project](#): This memorial is a space of remembrance and healing for individuals impacted by gun violence created by [MASS Design Group](#) in partnership with several national gun violence prevention organizations. Launched in September 2019 at the Chicago Architecture Biennial, the memorial features four houses built of 700 glass bricks, inside of which are items donated by family members who have lost a loved one due to gun violence.

To highlight the national scope of gun violence in America and the urgent need to address it, Everytown for Gun Safety has partnered with Mass Design to create a mail-in process so that more Americans who have had loved ones taken by gun violence can participate in this beautiful memorial. [Click here](#) for instructions and more information.

There are plans to move the Gun Violence Memorial to an exhibition in Washington, DC in April 2020. The hope is to ultimately create a permanent, national memorial that honors the lives and narratives of victims of gun violence.

FAN Participates in Human Trafficking Awareness Intercultural Service

Washington Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville [celebrated](#) a special Mass for remembering survivors and victims of human trafficking at St. Camillus Church in Silver Spring, Maryland on Feb. 8th. Bishop urged the faithful present to pray and work to invoke change for the protection of those suffering due to human trafficking.

Prior to the Mass, FAN's own Sr. Maria Orlandini [offered](#) a short reflection on the life of St. Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of trafficked persons, and the importance of action against human trafficking today. "Our prayers... will not be enough unless we accompany them with the willingness to become aware and get involved with eradicating this evil."

After the Mass, an educational reception was held to share about the various anti-human trafficking organizations that work to eradicate human trafficking and also aid in the healing of victims. One such program we want to make sure you're aware of is [Labeling for Lent](#), a postcard campaign from Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAH).

CCOAH is asking seafood producers, distributors, and retailers to make public, through packaged product labeling, their efforts to fight human trafficking in their product supply chains. Through labeling, we as consumers can make educated purchasing choices that help eradicate human trafficking.

This year, the postcard will be addressed to [Sysco](#), the global corporation involved in selling,



marketing and distributing food and non-food products to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities, lodging establishments and other customers around the world.

To order Labeling for Lent Postcards, please complete the [Labeling for Lent Post Card Order Form](#). For more information, we offer two one-pagers: [Slave Labor in the Maritime Industry](#) and [From Catch to Plate](#).

Film *Just Mercy* offers an Opportunity to Address Racism

Last week, we let our readers know about a webinar being hosted by US Catholic Mission Association about the film *Just Mercy* and the ways in which it can inspire action among Catholics to address the sin of racism. We share with you here the [link to the recording](#) as a resource for those who couldn't attend in person.



Additionally, we offer again the [Just Mercy Catholic Study Guide](#) developed by the Catholic Mobilizing Network. This guide offers a series of thoughtful reflection questions and supplementary resources 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.

Register Today for Ecumenical Advocacy Days National Gathering

This year's [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) (EAD) will be quite special as the weekend will take place just after the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. EAD 2020 is scheduled for April 24-27, 2020 and will explore the intersection of climate change and economic injustice with the theme "[Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored](#)." **The EAD organizers have limited scholarship funds available for young adults and students ages 18-34, application deadline is Feb 22, 2020. [Click here for details and to apply](#).**



Around the world, the most marginalized communities disproportionately affected by hunger, poverty, and the structural history of colonialism and racism are experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis most profoundly. Women and children in these communities suffer the most. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis recognized the double injustice of climate change and poverty. We join him and the growing chorus of various faith leaders who are raising their voices against these injustices.

As we have for the last 10 years, FAN will be at EAD as an exhibitor and will host a gathering of all Franciscans in attendance. [Registration is open](#) and we do hope you will plan to join us

in Washington, D.C. **If you are interested in coming but it is outside your budget, please [contact us](#) as FAN has some limited funds to support our network's involvement in EAD and we are excited to have you!**