

## Who decides what is good and what is evil?

Image by [Dorothee QUENNESSON](#) from Pixabay

Our first [reading this week comes](#) to us from Genesis Chapter 3. After God created Adam and Eve, He tells them that all of creation is theirs to enjoy except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We know the story, Satan, who lies with the truth, convinces Eve that she will not die, as God foretold, if she partakes of the fruit from this tree. Satan, of course, was speaking of physical death and the death our first parents experienced was spiritual. Eve convinces Adam to do the same and the result is lost innocence. Immediately we see how sin, which is the turning away from God, affects our relationship with each other and our relationship with God. Eve points the finger at Satan; Adam points the finger at Eve; each began to exercise what we might refer to today as “plausible deniability.” Realizing they were naked, they sewed fig leaves together and made loin cloths. That is where the reading ends, however, if we continue to read just one verse further we hear, “When they heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”



In John's Gospel 14:15, Jesus tells us “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Adam and Eve disobeyed, which is a betrayal of God's love. When God, the jilted lover, enters the Garden they hide out of shame. Don't we often do the same, not only hiding from God but from each other? How often do we hide ourselves among the trees of the garden? Those trees represent all the good things of God's creation. What trees are we hiding behind? Pursuit of wealth? Pursuit of personal pleasure at the expense of others? Pursuit of our own ego, turning inward to the self instead of outward towards God and neighbor? Maybe I am hiding behind the tree of alcohol, drugs or pornography. When we use the good gifts of creation for our self-gratification instead of for the glory of God, we can turn good into evil. **Deciding for ourselves what is good or evil often leads to not-so-good results.** Not everything that appears good is for our benefit. A good, over-indulged, becomes an idol.

The Gospel is from Matthew's account of the temptation of Jesus. The final temptation is one of wealth and power.

*Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain,  
and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence,  
and he said to him, "All these I shall give to you,*

*if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.”*

*At this, Jesus said to him,*

*“Get away, Satan!*

*It is written:*

*The Lord, your God, shall you worship  
and him alone shall you serve.”*

During this season of Lent, God has blessed me with the opportunity to present several parish missions. The focus centers on the fact that we are Temples of God and the Holy Spirit of God dwells in us. (1 Cor 3:16). Session two of the mission is a reflection on the account of Jesus cleansing the temple. What gods have we set up in the temple of our hearts squeezing out the Holy Spirit? All this I will give to you if you prostrate yourself and worship me. What is it you worship? Have you carved idols out of the trees in the garden and installed them in your temple? During Lent, we are called to a renewed sense of conversion, a turning towards God. This is a lifelong, daily, not a one-time only, aspect of our spiritual journey. The account of Jesus cleansing the temple is violent. He makes a whip, flails it at the merchants, turns over tables and expresses anger. Sisters and brothers, cleansing the temple of our hearts can inflict violence on our souls, or even physically in our bodies. Cleansing our temples from addiction hurts. Cleansing our temples from holding on to old grudges hurts our ego and our soul. Cleansing our temples from unhealthy habits is hard, ask any smoker.

**So let us turn during Lent towards God in a spirit of repentance.**

*“Everything is possible for one who has faith.”(Mark 9:23) “What is impossible for human beings is possible for God.” (Luke 18:27)*

David Seitz, OFS  
FAN Board Member

**Suggested Action:**

In a spirit of repentance, comb your heart this week for any idols you may be worshiping or any places you may be hiding. Humbly, ask God’s forgiveness.

**Suggested Petitions:**

Grant us, O Lord, the grace and humility to ask forgiveness for our wrongdoings. We pray...  
May your everlasting mercy shine in our hearts and allow us the strength to speak your truths.  
We pray...

**Collect prayer from the Saturday after Ash Wednesday:**

**Show gracious favor, O Lord, we pray,  
to the works of penance we have begun,  
that we may have strength to accomplish with sincerity  
the bodily observance we undertake.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lies and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.**

## Mobilize in March! Meet with Your Senators and Ask Them to Protect Dreamers

Your help is needed in showing support for Dreamers and encouraging our lawmakers to protect them. Mobilize in March to visit your Senators and ask them to protect Dreamers.



At the [2020 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering](#) (CSMG) in January, hundreds of event participants advocated for one piece of legislation to lift up in meetings with lawmakers on Advocacy Day. That legislation was the [DREAM Act](#).

On November 12, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) heard oral arguments on the legality of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and is expected to issue a ruling on the legality of the DACA program in late April-June.

As the SCOTUS DACA decision date approaches, we urge you to continue voicing your support for Dreamers by meeting with your Senators while they are home during the Congressional recess March 16-20, 2020. Here are some resource to help:

- [Talking points](#) used by CSMG attendees in their Hill meetings
- Leave behind the [DACA backgrounder](#) in your own meetings
- Need help on how to set up a meeting? Click here to learn "[How to Set Up an In-District Meeting with your Lawmaker](#)."

Additionally, the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) has once again prepared prayer and action materials for use throughout the Lenten season. This Lent we are raising up the dreams, needs, and concerns of DACA recipients who are awaiting this Supreme Court decision which could lead to their deportation from the only home they have ever known. The Lenten booklet will include scripture, reflection, the story of a dreamer, suggested actions and will be **available to download beginning tomorrow, February 25th at this link:** [bit.ly/faith4daca-lent](http://bit.ly/faith4daca-lent).

So many lives will be affected by this decision. We need to raise our faith voices now.

## Gracias Farm Workers! A Report from Secular Franciscan, Roger Yockey

Roger Yockey and his wife, Marilyn are active members of FAN and Secular Franciscans from Washington state. Roger and Marliyn recently attended the board meeting for the [National Farm Worker](#)



National  
Farm Worker  
MINISTRY

[Ministry](#) (NFWM), a faith-based organization that supports farm workers as they organize for justice and empowerment. Roger is a board member and the Yakima/Tri-Cities Cluster Organizer of the Farm Worker Ministry Northwest.

Billed as “much more than a gathering of activists”, Roger called the meeting, “a time to learn of heat stress, pesticide poisoning, kidney failure, sexual harassment, stealing of wages, and slavery. But for Roger and Marilyn it was a call to do more with farm workers and to encourage, urge, push churches and individuals to join la lucha (the struggle).”

We have posted Roger’s full report on our [blog page](#) and we encourage you to read it.

## Next Steps on Public Charge Include #ProtectFamilies Teach-In Day

The Public Charge regulation goes into effect today, Feb. 24th. Our friends at the [Protecting Immigrant Families](#) Campaign have prepared a National Teach-In Day today in an effort to fight fear with facts and make sure that immigrant communities have accurate, up-to-date information.



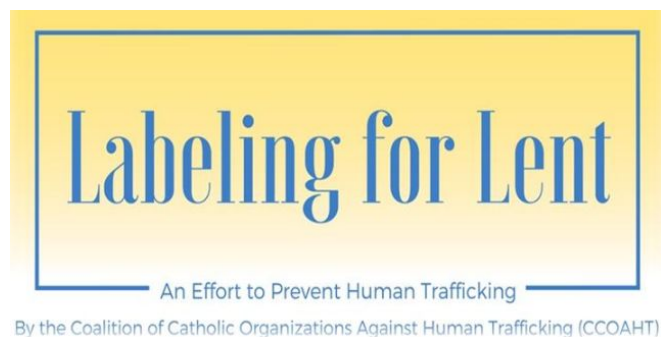
This [#ProtectFamilies Teach-In resource package](#) was developed to support efforts to hold educational events about public charge, dispel misinformation, and reach out to critical groups to spread the facts about the new rule. It contains sample presentations which are editable, community-facing materials, FAQs, and talking points.

[Click here to download the resource package.](#)

## Order Now: Labeling for Lent Postcards to Combat Human Trafficking

[Labeling for Lent](#) is a postcard campaign from the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAHNT).

Over the last few Lenten seasons, CCOAHNT has produced postcards to seafood producers, distributors, and retailers asking them 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](#).

## Take Action: Sign Petition to State Elected Officials Urging they Do Even More to Curb Climate Change

The largest and most imminent global threat is climate change — yet, many elected officials continue to deny this and assure the U.S. will not take any climate mitigation efforts.



Because the federal government has failed to pass effective climate legislation, going so far as to pull the U.S. out of pertinent global climate agreements, it is up to [elected officials at the state level to get things done](#). Each state must continue to enact measures and make further commitments to curb climate change.

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, FAN has committed to collecting signatures on a [petition to state elected officials](#) urging they do even more to help curb climate change. We encourage our members and friends to [sign](#).

## Pro-Refugee Groups in Arizona Log Win in State Senate

FAN member Rosemarie LeClercq (*pictured, front row, holding sign on right*) from the [Franciscan Renewal Center](#) in Arizona was one of more than [50 supporters](#) at her State Capitol this month lobbying for a Refugee Welcoming Resolution in the Arizona State Senate (SCR-1024). Many advocates and refugees shared their personal stories in hopes that continued refugee resettlement in the state will result in positive experiences.



The resolution of gratitude and support for the contributions of refugees who settle in Arizona [unanimously passed](#) the state Senate after the day spent advocating its importance.

Congratulations to everyone in Arizona on such great news! Keep up the good work!

## 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**.

