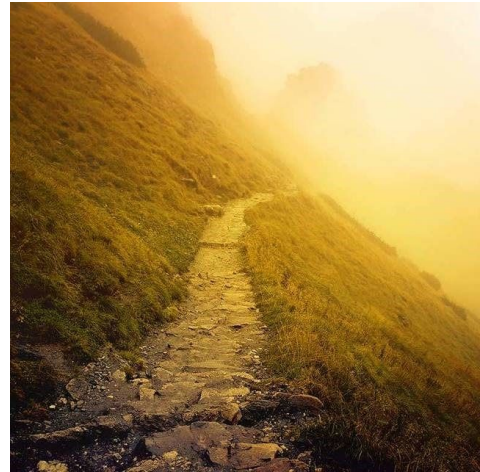


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Reflection Date: March 8, 2020 - Second Sunday of Lent

The Challenge to Come Down from the Mountain

Many, many years ago, before I entered religious life, I volunteered for a few years at a Franciscan Retreat House assisting with a program for high school seniors called *Search*. These weekend retreats were for me a transformational experience in that it awakened within me a new and deeper understanding of the religion that was so strong in my family upbringing and in my years of Catholic school training. This shift was for me a growing awareness and a movement from religious teachings and doctrines to begin to walk attentively on the path and journey of faith. Jesus, for me, was no longer simply a historical figure, the Son of God, rather he became someone who was alive, a friend, a brother who could be encountered through personal prayer, reflection and especially in relationships with others. This was truly my entry into Franciscan life!



For me and for many of the seniors on these retreats the greatest challenge was having to “come down from the mountain” after a truly uplifting and inspirational weekend. “Coming down from the mountain” meant having to bring what was experienced on retreat to the ordinary, often challenging and mundane experiences of everyday life in high school, in the neighborhood and in family life. Would we, could we continue to walk in faith or would we fall back into the more comfortable patterns of “pray, pay and obey”?

Whenever I hear the readings for this [Second Sunday of Lent](#) and especially the gospel of Jesus’ Transfiguration, I’m brought back to the memories of *Search* retreats and having to “come down from the mountain”. Too often we, like the disciples want to stay up on the mountain, to experience the mystical, the transformational, the good times of prayer, Eucharistic celebrations or simply to stay in the quiet experiences of God’s love, compassion and goodness. However, as Jesus himself said as he led the apostles down the mountain, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” He knew there was more to accomplish, more to be preached, more justice and mercy to be imparted upon those who were poor and marginalized by the Roman government, by society and the religious leaders of that time. He also knew the pain and suffering to come.

Our Franciscan life calls us to deep prayer, contemplative reflection and a striving for union with God in Christ. Our call is also to move and bring the experience of our prayer into the streets, into the marketplaces, and onto the margins and places to engage with others in messy, suffering and painful places of life. The Secular Franciscan Rule, Chapter II, calls for the “careful reading of the gospel, going from the gospel to life and life to the gospel.” Clare of Assisi wrote in her letter to Agnes of Prague, “Gaze upon [Christ], consider [Christ], contemplate [Christ], as you desire to imitate [Christ].”

Let us hear the call and grow in our desire to come down the mountain, to go forth from the familiar lands of our own people, so as to recognize and deeply know our sisters and brothers. May we bring our faith, our prayer and our hope so others may see in us and in themselves the goodness, the love and compassion of Christ. May we be the transformation and transfiguration of God's love for others. Let us come down from our mountains!

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Spend time this Lenten season in reflection about the journey from spiritual and religious teachings and the movement to translate them to experiences of everyday life.

Suggested Petitions:

Help us to be the transformation and transfiguration of God's love for others. We pray...
Help us to place our trust in you and bring our faith "down from the mountain" and into everyday life. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**O God, who have commanded us
to listen to your beloved Son,
be pleased, we pray,
to nourish us inwardly by your word,
that, with spiritual sight made pure,
we may rejoice to behold your glory.
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

IIC Releases #Faith4DACA Lenten Devotions

The [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) (IIC) Holy Days & Holidays Team has again put together a wonderful Lenten Resource entitled, [Faith4DACA: Facing the Future – Together](#). FAN's own Sr. Marie Lucey and Sr. Maria Orlandini both contributed to the writing.



Within the resource are eight devotions which are written to engage partners in faith reflections and scriptures as we move through the Lenten season AND to build understanding and an arc of escalated actions that help faith communities connect, support and stand in solidarity with DACA recipients as the Supreme Court decision approaches.

This Lent, we encourage our members and friends to [download and pray with this resource](#) in solidarity with our DACAmended friends and neighbors.

Facts Over Fear Campaign Seeks to Combat Misinformation and Anti-Muslim Hate

Anti-Muslim hate groups are working overtime to dehumanize our American Muslim neighbors. We at FAN have a mission to promote peace making in the spirit of our founding patron, St. Francis of Assisi, who risked everything when he crossed battle lines of the 5th crusades to meet with Muslim leader, Malik Al-Kamel.



We proudly support #[FactsOverFear](#): a video series campaign working on combating anti-Muslim hate and misinformation. Three videos have been released so far with two more coming in March. The most recent video, "[Islam and Sharia](#)" seeks to help people understand the teachings of the Islamic faith, called Sharia.

We urge you to watch and share these videos on social media:

- Facebook: <http://facebook.com/factsoverfearcampaign>
- Instagram: <http://instagram.com/factsoverfear>
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/factsoverfearus>

Franciscans Sisters of Clinton, IA Hold Screening of "For Sama"

(From Left: Marjorie Wisor, OSF; Eileen Golby, OSF; Hilary Mullany, OSF)

Having taken a corporate public stand on the issue of immigration, the [Sisters of St. Francis in Clinton, Iowa](#), who are members of FAN, watched the film "For Sama" in February.

"[For Sama](#)" is both an intimate and epic journey into the female experience of war. A love letter from a young mother to her daughter, the film tells the story of Waad al-Kateab's life through five years of the Syrian civil war uprising around her home in Aleppo, Syria. The film moved the sisters to action.



The filmmakers have started a campaign to increase awareness of the continued targeting of healthcare facilities in Syria and help build pressure for this to end. Some of the Clinton Franciscan sisters who had viewed the film held signs (*pictured*) in photos which were posted on social media to protest the bombing of hospitals.

For more information about the film “For Sama” visit <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/for-sama/>

For more information about the campaign visit <http://www.actionforsama.com>

Lent With The Friars Daily Reflections

[Lent with the Friars](#) is an initiative of Holy Name Province’s Development Office that offers daily features sent directly to your email inbox. These features provide simple reflective prayers, videos, and meditations for each day of Lent. They are followed by a reflection that brings someone or some ministry to our minds, hearts, and prayers.



This daily reflection can help each of us to make Lent a meaningful daily journey to Easter. [Click here to subscribe](#) and receive these daily reflections.

States with Weak Gun Laws and Higher Gun Ownership Lead Nation in Gun Deaths

On the heels of one of the [worst shootings in Wisconsin](#) history, a new [analysis](#) from the Violence Policy Center (VPC) shows that states with weak gun laws and higher gun ownership lead the nation in gun deaths.



The [Violence Policy Center](#) is a national educational organization working to stop gun death and injury. This latest analysis refers to overall gun death rates in 2018, the most recent year for which data is available. The deaths include gun homicides, suicides, and unintentional shootings.

While we add our thoughts and prayers for the families of the victims, we know it is not enough. We need to press the Senate to pass common-sense laws already through the House like [background checks](#) and the [Violence Against Women Act](#). We urge Congress and our State Elected Officials to continue to do more to prevent these terrible instances of violence.

St. Clare Pledge Action: Urge Congress to Pass the NO BAN Act

Three years ago, when the travel ban targeting immigrants from seven predominantly Muslim countries was initiated, FAN began [speaking up](#) about the injustice. Discrimination against Muslims or any type of discrimination on the basis of religion is distinctly un-American.

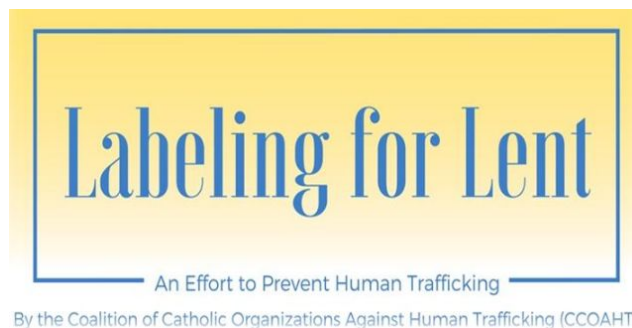


In 2019, Franciscans all over the world remembered and celebrated a special meeting which happened 800 years earlier. During the 5th Crusades, an itinerant preacher from Assisi, Italy named Francis crossed battle lines and risked his life to seek an audience with the Egyptian Sultan and Muslim, Malik al-Kamel. The Sultan in turn, risked his own life by granting Francis an audience. The two built a relationship of profound respect and ended up as life-long friends.

This story of Muslim-Christian relationship drives the desire in Franciscans to seek justice for our Muslim sisters and brothers. **Congress has the power to stop the injustice against Muslims.** The [No BAN Act](#) would end the Muslim Ban and ensure that no future president can abuse their authority and ban people for discriminatory purposes. As your [St. Clare Pledge](#) this week, we urge our members and friends to [sign this petition urging Congress to pass the NO BAN Act](#).

Labeling for Lent Campaign Update

In last week's newsletter, we let you know about [Labeling for Lent](#), the postcard campaign from the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking (CCOAHT). These postcards are addressed 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.



It was reported to us that on the first day of Lent 14,065 postcards had so far been requested and orders are still going strong! It is wonderful that so many are taking advantage of this campaign.

Additionally, we want to share with you that the U.S. Catholic Sisters against Human Trafficking (USCAHT) have created a [Labeling for Lent online petition](#) to complement the Postcard Campaign. Please **sign the petition and share it with your networks**.

Finally, we invite you to access **all of the Labeling for Lent educational materials in one easy-to-find location** at the [John J. Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy](#).

New Report from United Church of Christ Names America's Super Polluters

The United Church of Christ's (UCC) Commission for Racial Justice has been central to the environmental justice movement for nearly 40 years. Last week the UCC released a report which identified the country's "[Toxic 100: America's Super Polluters](#)" and is calling for **collective action to clean up the air we breathe.**



"[Breath to the People: Sacred Air and Toxic Pollution](#)" is a report prepared for the [United Church of Christ](#) by the [Environmental Integrity Project](#), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in 2002 by two former Environmental Protection Agency enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws.

In conjunction with the publication of this report, the UCC have also released this [teaser video](#) which describes the particular risk our children are at when they are breathing toxic air. We urge our members and friends to [watch and share the video](#) and this [report](#).