

## If You Love Me

Image by [Jondolar Schnurr](#) from Pixabay

Jesus has drawn a line in the sand. You will show your love for Him by keeping his commandments. Since Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, that means that to show our love for God we must keep His commandments. How will we know His commandments and how will we have the strength to keep them? After drawing this line in the sand, Jesus tells us how. “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth.” (Jn 14:16) Jesus has promised the Holy Spirit will lead His Church in the way of truth. [This week's first reading](#) from the Acts of the Apostles shows how Phillip was carrying out the command of Jesus to go forth and make disciples of all nations by baptizing. Phillip baptized and the apostles laid hands on those who were baptized calling down the Holy Spirit. What a great way to show their love for Jesus by keeping His commandment to baptize for the salvation of souls.



Keeping His commands presupposes that one knows His commandments. In order to know His commands, one must delve into His Word in the scriptures. This also requires that you make an act of faith that the scriptures are truly the Word of God and are divinely inspired. In the words of Joseph Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI, “for without faith, Scripture itself is not Scripture but, rather, an ill-assorted collection of literature that cannot have any normative significance for today.”

When we read the scriptures slowly and carefully, especially the Gospels, it becomes obvious that truly following Jesus is a challenge. It is hard. Some of His commandments are difficult. Love your enemy as yourself. Go and sin no more. Take up your cross and follow me. If they persecute me they will persecute you. Turn the other cheek. Did I really sign up for this? That is a question that we all need to ask ourselves. Do we believe the scriptures are the inspired Word of God? If so, then we must take the words of scripture seriously. If they are not, then I can pick and choose, because after all, it really doesn't matter.

I think the hardest part about keeping the commandments of Jesus is the humility required. Sometimes, loving our enemy makes our egos scream out in protest. Sometimes, keeping the moral law makes the ego whisper in our ears “you can't tell me what to do.” Sometimes, listening to the Church's authority to “bind and loose” (Mt 16:19) makes us cringe because it goes against our ego's perception and ideas. It is hard to be humble. It is hard to put our own desires aside and pray that God's will be done, not our will be done. I know personally, trusting in God's providence has always been a challenge. I want to submit to God's will. In my head I know that God only wills what is in my best interest. I also know that in His permissive will, he allows me to make mistakes, stumble and fall and take the wrong path. Thankfully, God is

always seeking us out and no matter what path we wander down, He can set our feet back on a path towards his mercy and compassion.

So let us humbly pray to God that he will send us his Holy Spirit and help us discern His will so that we can show our love for him by keeping his commandments. Let us pray for the gift of fortitude so that we will have the strength and courage to love Him. Let us pray for the grace of humility knowing that sometimes, God's will doesn't seem to mesh with our will. I offer the prayer below from "Thoughts in Solitude" by Thomas Merton to help guide us.

David Seitz, OFS  
FAN Board Member

**Suggested Actions:**

This week, pray the prayer below from Thomas Merton each day to help recognize God's gentle mercy for each of us.

**Suggested Petitions:**

For all hearts to be open to the humility required to keep God's commandments. We pray...  
For the gift of fortitude, that we have the strength to endure adversity in gentle kindness. We pray...

**Prayer from "Thoughts in Solitude" by Thomas Merton**

**My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.**

**Amen**

**Join us for a Laudato Si' Week Webinar**

On the heels of our successful [virtual gathering](#) of Franciscans for Ecumenical Advocacy Days, the staff of FAN is proud to announce our plans for a Laudato Si' Webinar in celebration of the 5th anniversary of the encyclical's release. We hope you will join us **Tuesday, May 19th at 3pm ET / 12pm PT**. [Please click here to register](#).



**LAUDATO SI'  
WEEK 2020**



**FRANCISCAN  
ACTION NETWORK**

We are excited to have our very own executive director, Stephen Schneck be our speaker for this webinar. The topic will be the Franciscan inspiration that informs the encyclical and how it resonates in a special way with Franciscan hearts, motivating us to action.

Help us celebrate this encyclical's powerful message and invitation of a Franciscan response. Join us on Tuesday, May 19th. You must [register to join the Zoom webinar](#), however we will livestream it on our [Facebook page](#) as well.

## New Guide Offers Support to Providers of Mental Health Services to Immigrants

Stress, fear, and anxiety are familiar negative emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic, but these states of emotions are all too common for individuals impacted by the immigration system. During this unprecedented time, DACA recipients battle against the pandemic as well as an impending Supreme Court decision on the fate of the DACA program, complicating their mental health experiences.



This [Guide to Providing Mental Health Services to Immigrants Impacted by Changes to DACA and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) aims to support providers in understanding the multi-layered and ever-changing environmental stressors that hinder DACA recipients' emotional wellbeing, as well as resources and strategies to help providers deliver effective services to this community. It was developed by [Informed Immigrant](#), a collective of nationally recognized immigrant-serving organizations, lawyers, technologists, and allies with whom FAN works in concert on immigration issues.

## Poor People's Campaign Moral March Goes Digital

*Rally in Washington, D.C. to kick off the revival of the Poor People's Campaign, May 2018*

On June 20, 2020 the [Poor People's Campaign](#) had planned an assembly and moral march on Washington, DC to dramatize the pain and prophetic leadership of the poor and build power to enact their demands. Now, due to the coronavirus pandemic, they will unite online in the largest digital gathering of poor, dispossessed and impacted people, faith leaders, and people of conscience.



In a powerful [video](#) invitation to the gathering, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, one of the campaigns' national co-chairs, describes the need "to lift the voices and faces of poverty in the midst of pandemic for a massive historic online gathering that will embolden us, strengthen us and prepare us to fight for the type of society we know we so badly need and deserve." The program will include the stories, solutions and songs of movement leaders and artists.

We know that the coronavirus is awakening many to the political and economic crises that have long been buried under the surface: before COVID-19, nearly 700 people died everyday because of poverty and inequality in this country. Franciscan Action Network supports the Campaign's call that a moral fusion movement is necessary to not just weather this storm, but to transform the nation. **We encourage you to sign up to participate at [www.june2020.org](http://www.june2020.org).**

## Now Available: May Issue of Stop Trafficking Newsletter

The focus of the [May Stop Trafficking newsletter](#) is to raise awareness to the health consequences of trafficking and how health professionals are becoming better equipped to identify and aid human trafficking victims. Please [click here](#) to access the Stop Trafficking newsletter.

Most victims of human trafficking have contact with a health care provider sometime during the time they are being trafficked. Despite this, up until recently many health care providers failed to recognize or address the signs of trafficking.

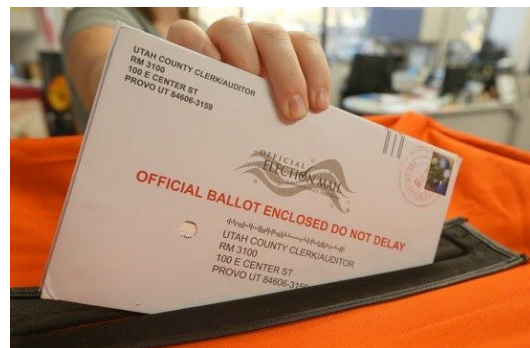


You can access previous issues of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter on our [website](#).

## Last Chance to Sign the No-Excuse Absentee Ballot Petition

For the past few weeks, we have been advising about our efforts within the Faithful Democracy campaign to educate and advocate for election security in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic. We must work to help preserve public health *and* voting rights this election year.

This week is the last opportunity for signatures on the petition that all states pass [no-excuse absentee voting](#). The best way to protect all people is to maintain social distancing. State officials can help accomplish this by minimizing obstacles to casting ballots from the safety of homes and shelters. [Click here to sign this petition](#).



## Creation 3-2-1 Resource Available on FAN's website

FAN member Carolyn D. Townes, OFS is the National Animator of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation for the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order and has





developed a resource called [Creation 3-2-1](#) which she is sending out to the Secular Franciscan family in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si.

Each [Creation 3-2-1](#) includes 3 excerpts about Creation Justice, 2 quotes from Laudato Si with short reflections, and 1 question to ponder or call to action. The materials will be emailed to the Secular Franciscan family for the next 16 weeks, leading up to the Season of Creation in September. Carolyn has graciously allowed us to host these resources on our website.

[Click here to download each week.](#)

## Call to Action: Save the Postal Service

As a trusted faith-based organization, FAN was contacted by the Democracy Initiative about a unified campaign to secure emergency federal funds to support the Postal Service which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and recession. Some facts about the current state of our postal system:



- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mail revenues are down by at least 30%, creating a grave and rapidly deteriorating financial situation for the USPS and more than 600,000 postal workers.
- The Post Office is an essential frontline service delivering social security checks, tax refunds, absentee ballots, and now COVID-19 stimulus checks to hundreds of millions of Americans.
- During the 2020 Elections, when we need to massively expand voting by mail to ensure voters do not have to choose between their health and having a say in our democracy, the USPS has never been more essential.

Democracy Initiative partners [American Postal Workers Union](#) (APWU) and [National Association of Letter Carriers](#) (NALC) have set up an online action portal to help mobilize letters to Congress and social media in support of the USPS. **Learn more and [take action here.](#)**

## A Glimpse at FAN's work: Sign-on Letters

*[Image by Free-Photos from Pixabay](#)*

The staff of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) have been working from home these past two months as we continue to advocate virtually in the spirits of Francis and Clare. While the way in which we accomplish our work looks different, we still work hard to do what we can to influence hearts and minds toward a goal of caring for creation and those on the margins.



One way we advocate is by working in coalition with faith-based and secular partners on sign-on letters that relate to our mission. Drafted by our numerous partner organizations, policy letters have a wide variety of themes and requests based on those themes. One good

example in which FAN took the lead is the [Faithful Democracy sign-on letter](#) to both Senate and House offices urging funding and priorities to protect upcoming elections in the next COVID response package. In April we, along with many of our faith partners, saw the lack of funding in Covid-19 relief packages that was specifically tagged for those populations we serve: the poor, marginalized, immigrant and undocumented. Letters were drafted and addressed to various groups (such as the administration, House or Senate) requesting these groups not be forgotten in future stimulus packages. April was a busy month for this type of advocacy as FAN signed on to 16 different Policy Letters.