

Publication Date: July 27, 2020

Reflection Date: August 2, 2020 - 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## The Hidden Epidemic of Hunger

*[Image by Engin Akyurt from Pixabay](#)*

In these days of COVID, food has become profound in ways we could not have imagined a year ago.

So many of us were baking our own bread that, for a time, yeast and bread flour were hard to find. So many of us planted vegetable gardens that seed companies ran out seed. Wary of restaurants, we cooked at home at levels not seen since our grandparents' days. And, those dinners at home, with the family around the table, took on the kind of glow that many of us had only read about in old literature.



We cooked what comforted, old recipes passed down generations. We said grace. We thanked God, and blessed those who planted and harvested, those who bravely worked in grocery stores, and those who cooked and prepared the table.

The [Sunday readings](#) speak in a special way to our moment's newfound appreciation of food.

The Gospel from Matthew retells the miracle of loaves and fishes, how Jesus out of his compassion for the hungry multiplied food enough for a few into meals that satisfied all who were without.

Sunday's first reading from Isaiah, similarly, invites those who hunger to come and have their fill. The prophet writes...

*You who have no money,  
come, receive grain and eat;  
Come, without paying and without cost,  
drink wine and milk!*

Jesus and the prophets were not concerned about who deserves food or who is the 'poorest', they simply spread love and compassion by providing food for all without question.

These days of COVID have also revealed to many of us the hidden epidemic of hunger in America. Food banks are struggling to meet the present demands. We saw some farmers plowing under their fields because of difficulties in getting crops to markets.

Even before America's virus crisis, forty million of our brothers and sisters struggled with hunger. One in six children in our country did not know where they'd find their next meal. The Hunger epidemic did not start with COVID, our country had already left behind those

impoverished with its ineffective welfare programs, tax cuts for the rich and a very low federal minimum wage. But COVID has amplified the epidemic, and, the current administration has also made moves to implement sharp cuts to SNAP (food stamp) benefits – this, while the virus rages, while people are struggling to return to work, and while demand for emergency food relief is near an all time high.

As we gather with our families for dinner on this warm summer's evening, let us look anew at the table spread before us. What a miracle it is! Reflect on the lessons from Matthew and Isaiah. Bless those whose labors have brought food to our table, contemplating the risks that some have taken in doing so. Thank God for the bounty of the earth, which is His garden, created for us to tend.

Let us also remember the millions around us who struggle with hunger even now. And, inspired by the multiplication of loaves and fishes, let us resolve that none among us may know hunger.

Stephen Schneck  
FAN Executive Director

**Suggested Actions:**

[Find a local food bank](#) in your area and donate a bag of groceries or money to help feed your fellow citizens.

[Contact your US Senators](#) today to boost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in the next COVID-19 relief package, with SNAP being a program proven to meet the needs of the people hardest hit by this pandemic.

**Suggested Petitions:**

For all those who work in industries that grow and supply food; may they be blessed with abundant resources, good health, access to health care and appreciated for the work they do. We pray...

For those who live with food insecurity; may they get access to reliable sources of food and may they encounter Christ in those who seek to provide them with basic necessities. We pray...

**Collect Prayer:**

**Draw near to your servants, O Lord,  
and answer their prayers with unceasing kindness,  
that, for those who glory in you as their Creator and guide,  
you may restore what you have created  
and keep safe what you have restored.  
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**

## Weaponizing Public Health to End Asylum in the US

Recently, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice proposed a [new rule](#) that would give them expansive authority to deny asylum and block and deport asylum seekers in the name of public health. The period for public comment on the rule will conclude on August 10, 2020.

Human Rights First and their partners will host a zoom webinar on **Thursday, July 30 at noon (ET) / 11 am (CT) / 10am (MT) / 9am (PT)** to learn about the new rule, its implications for public health and asylum in the US during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, and how to submit a comment on the proposed regulations. [Click here to register.](#)

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In other news on Asylum, we want to thank all those who submitted comments on the proposed regulation to gut asylum protections. At last count, 79,633 comments were submitted along with multiple legal briefs, all of which help to delay any decision. Great job!

## Join Us: Better PNC Bank Petition Signed by Several Franciscans

A [petition](#) is circulating that demands PNC Bank sell off all the loans, investments, and bond issues that it has in nuclear arms producers. Further, it demands from PNC a binding commitment to never invest in any entity involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons.



Notable Franciscan signers include Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM, Vincent Peterson, OFM Conv., as well as other priests, religious, and members of peace organizations.

As a concrete action to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we encourage you to [sign on here](#).

## DACA and the Process of Creating Systemic Change

The National Institute of Pastoral Migratoria invites you to participate in a [virtual panel](#) that will provide insight into how personal encounters with immigrants can be a catalyst for systematic change in higher education institutions. We hope you will join the discussion on **Thursday, July 30th at 3pm ET / 2pm CT / 12p PT**.

Participants will hear an overview regarding the

PASTORAL MIGRATORIA ONLINE SUMMER SERIES | VIRTUAL PANEL  
"DACA and the Process of Creating Systemic Change" (English)

Thursday, July 30, 2020 | 2 - 3:15 p.m. (CST)

Presenters:

 Dr. Donna Carroll President, Dominican University	 Mark G. Kuczewski, PHD, HEC-C Director at the Neiswanger Institute for	 Fr. Guillermo Campozano, CM Vice President of Mission and Ministry at DePaul University	 Ashley Feasley, Director of Policy, U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops	 Elizabeth Collier, Professor of Business Ethics at Dominican University
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current DACA policy reality in order to engage in advocacy action. Panelists will share their own personal experiences in welcoming and accompanying undocumented students and helping them to pursue their dreams and passions.

[Click here to register.](#)

## Victory! House Passes the No Ban Act

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives [passed the NO BAN Act](#) to end the Muslim Ban. During the debate on the House floor, several members of Congress noted that it was due to Muslim Advocates and the NO BAN Act Coalition who worked with members of Congress to shape the bill and helped lead the effort. **Thank you to everyone who has spoken out and contacted your members of Congress!**

[Now it's up to the Senate.](#)

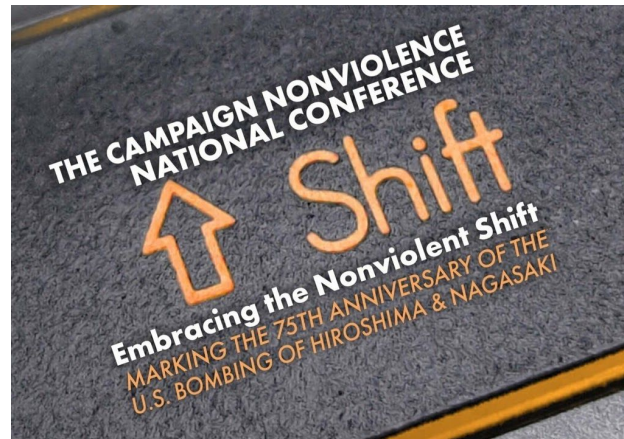
While we celebrate the victory, we know the fight is not over. Continue your good work advocating for our Muslim sisters and brothers. [Click here to tell your Senators](#): America is a place where people of all races and religions should be able to live free and equal lives.



## Campaign for Nonviolence National Conference is Online

[Campaign Nonviolence](#) will host their national conference **August 6-8, 2020** in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the U.S. bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki. See the full schedule [here](#).

Due to the continued pandemic, they will host a variety of online activities. Participants will experience the wisdom of nonviolence visionaries, scholars and practitioners who will share their expertise from a wide variety of fields. They will offer concrete pathways to build the transformed world our hearts long for, a world free from the violence of racism, poverty, war and the environmental crisis.



Speakers include: **Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM**, from the Center for Action and Contemplation, **Dr. Erica Chenoweth** from Harvard University, **Rev. Lennox Yearwood, Jr.** from the Hip Hop Caucus, and [many more](#). Also, there will be a **live online nonviolence training** led by Pace e Bene nonviolence trainers on **Friday, Aug. 7th** beginning at 3 p.m. Eastern / 12 p.m. Pacific. (3 hours in length). Note, you have the opportunity to sign up for this training as a stand-alone webinar as opposed to committing to the entire conference. More [details here](#).



## Webinar for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

[Justice for Immigrants](#) and the anti-trafficking campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops along with [US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#) will host a webinar to commemorate **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, July 30th at 1pm ET / 10am PT.**

Participants will hear directly from local and national Catholic organizations about their work to combat forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation domestically and abroad.



Click here to register: [www.bit.ly/WDATrafficking](http://www.bit.ly/WDATrafficking) Phone: 917-338-1451 Passcode: 312252624#

Additionally, the 2020 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, published annually by the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, is [available for download](#).