

Do You Hear God Whispering?

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The [reading this week](#) from 1 Kings is one of my favorites because it takes me back to my senior year in high school. I went on a retreat and had what I would call my first real experience of the presence of God. I was sitting out in the woods that surrounded the retreat center on an early spring morning. Everything was so quiet. I could actually hear the melting mid-March snow. Then, a slight breeze began to move the pine trees and the bows began to gently rub together, and in that soft whisper of a wind, the presence of God came over me.



When Elijah went to seek a manifestation of the Lord, a theophany, he went into the mountains, probably because the majesty of mountains has moved the hearts of many to thoughts of things bigger than themselves. He stood out on the mountain awaiting God to show himself. There was a strong wind that crushed the rocks around him, followed by an earthquake and fire. Yet, God was not to be seen in any of the loud, powerful, fear inspiring events on the mountain. Elijah, picking himself up and regaining his composure then heard a tiny whispering sound, and in that small whisper, Elijah encountered the almighty God.

Matthew tells of a similar incident in the life of Jesus and the apostles. Out on the sea of Galilee, the apostles are caught in a nasty storm. Their boat is being tossed about and these fishermen who made their living out on the water are fearful. Jesus comes out, walking over the rough water to the boat. Peter, as he is known to do, is full of a sudden rash of enthusiasm and jumps out of the boat and begins to walk across the water to Jesus. Rough waves and powerful winds soon conquer his faith and he began to sink, only to be saved by Jesus reaching down to him. What happens next? The water calms. Jesus is in the boat with the apostles and they acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and do him homage.

The two stories have a common theme. The apostles found the Son of God in the calming of the storm. Elijah found God in a tiny whisper. God did not manifest himself in power and awe. That is how God works in our lives. If he were always revealing himself in power, how much easier would it be to believe? God wants us to know him in our hearts, and to find him there, we need to sit in silence and wait for the whisper.

These readings are very timely for our country today. We are experiencing worldly powers that can be frightening. The 'earthquake' of violence happening in the streets amidst protests. The 'fire' of hatred burning bright in our divided nation, a fire that is consuming our souls and making us blind to the whisper of God in our lives and in the lives of those with whom we disagree. If we let fear brought on by the external world consume us, we cannot find God, and we cannot experience joy and peace.

So how do we overcome this and find God? By keeping our focus on Jesus, who reaches down to pull us all out from the troubled waters and brings us into His boat which can only by the nature of His being in it, be set upon calm and gentle waters. If you sincerely seek God's will and sincerely try to follow it, you will have peace. "Peace be with you." (Jn 20:19) Jesus wants us to be at peace. While we go about living out Jesus's message, we can feel his presence and do so joyfully. To start this process, take some time and tune out the stormy news and social media that is disrupting your inner peace. Find a quiet place to sit and let your mind focus on Jesus. After all, how can we be instruments of peace unless we first have peace in our hearts? By stepping back and gaining inner peace first, we can bring that peace and love into our fight for justice and equality.

David Seitz, OFS
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Take 5 minutes each day this week to turn off all TV, social media and other distractions and sit in silence with God.

Suggested Petitions:

May we have the opportunity and strength to tune out societal distractions and find God in the peace. We pray...

May we live authentic and holy lives by relying on the peace of Christ to guide our actions. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Almighty ever-living God,
whom, taught by the Holy Spirit,
we dare to call our Father,
bring, we pray, to perfection in our hearts
the spirit of adoption as your sons and daughters,
that we may merit to enter into the inheritance
which you have promised.
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

Take Action to Support Dreamers

Last week, the Trump Administration released a [memo](#) that undermines the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and continues the attacks on Dreamers and undocumented young

Ringling bells for DACA justice



people. The announcement sidesteps last month's U.S. Supreme Court (SCOTUS) decision, which ruled that the Trump administration did not provide adequate justification to rescind DACA in 2017.

DACA has provided temporary protection from deportation and the ability to work and pursue education to almost 800,000 people who came to the U.S. as children. Over 200,000 DACA recipients are currently serving on the frontlines of the pandemic, working to protect the health and safety of Americans across the U.S. as we confront COVID-19. Despite their many contributions to our communities, DACA recipients, undocumented youth, and their loved ones are once again facing the threat of the program ending.

The Interfaith Immigration Coalition released a [statement](#) calling for Congressional action and we echo this insistence. We urge our members and friends to call your Members of Congress at the **Capitol Switchboard, (202) 224-3121** using **this sample script**:

"Hello, my name is _____, I'm part of Franciscan Action Network and your constituent. I'm calling today to ask [Representative/Senator NAME] to support Dreamers by rejecting President Trump's termination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. DACA recipients are on the frontlines of the Coronavirus pandemic in our hospitals and as essential workers. Now more than ever, Congress has a moral obligation to pass permanent protections and solutions for all young immigrants without expanding detention, deportation and border militarization that further harm immigrant communities. Please do all you can to support and protect them. Thank you for your time and attention. Peace and all good."

Webinar: Climate Resilience, Displacement and Migration

[Image by David Mark from Pixabay](#)

Our good friends at Church World Service and their partners are hosting a webinar this **Wednesday, August 5th at 10am ET / 7am PT**, titled [Climate Resilience, Displacement and Migration: Renewing U.S. Engagement](#).

From their flier:

People around the world are feeling the effects of climate change. Mitigation is critical to avoiding the most catastrophic impacts – but even in a best-case scenario, at-risk communities will need to adapt to changes already taking place, and climate-induced mobility will continue to be a reality.

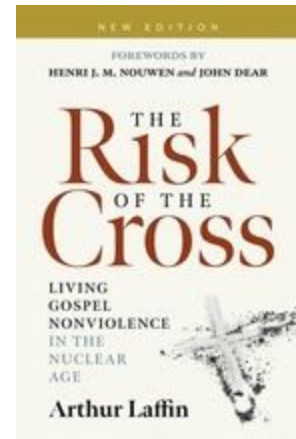


This webinar will share experiences from climate-impacted communities in Pacific island states, Central America, and the U.S. and will highlight the need for community-led climate change adaptation, as well ways in which climate change is already impacting human mobility. It will also lift up opportunities for the U.S. to renew its engagement on climate resilience, displacement and migration.

[Click here to register.](#)

New Book on Gospel Nonviolence: “The Risk of The Cross”

On Ash Wednesday each year, FAN staff members join the service near the White House sponsored by Pax Christi Metro-DC and organized by our friend Art Laffin. This year, as we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we are pleased to bring information about his new book, [*The Risk of the Cross*](#).



There is more than one crisis facing humanity and Earth today. We are gripped in an immediate global pandemic and threatened by impacts of climate change. But we cannot forget what could possibly be the greatest threat of all: nuclear war. Arthur Laffin offers an unflinching yet hopeful resource to help people of faith reflect on the reality of the nuclear threat. In the 2020 New Edition of [*The Risk of the Cross: Living Gospel Nonviolence in the Nuclear Age*](#), Art provides a guidebook for Christians grappling with the reality of nuclear weapons and seeking a nonviolent world.

Art is not an armchair philosopher or scholar, but a lifelong peace activist who does his homework. He draws on the work of scientists, physicians, economists, and environmentalists, but interprets scholarship through the lens of his Christian Catholic faith. Art continues to walk the talk, engaging in nonviolent acts of civil disobedience which have led him to be arrested at least 40 times.

This slim book of 120 pages provides 5 sessions for groups or individuals which follow a format of Prayer, Scripture passage, a Discussion Article linked to informative Appendices, Questions for Discussion, and a short Closing Reflection. Franciscan Action Network is included in a list of groups advocating for social justice and nonviolence.

New Video Released for 2020 World Day of Migrants and Refugees

The 106th [*World Day of Migrants and Refugees*](#) (WDMR) will be celebrated on Sunday September 27, 2020 and the theme chosen by the Holy Father is “Forced like Jesus Christ to flee” with a focus on the pastoral care of internally displaced people.



Every month approaching September 27, a new video of Pope Francis and other multimedia materials are being released that delve into the sub-themes present in the Message of the Holy Father. The first sub-theme was “*To know in order to understand*” and the second one was “*To be close in order to serve*”. This month, the Holy Father released a third video “[*To listen in order to be reconciled*](#),” wherein he urges us to be attentive and humble in listening to our brothers and sisters so we can be truly reconciled.

Many more resources, videos, and documents to download are available on the [Migrants and](#)

[Refugees Section](#) of the Vatican's website.

Join FAN in Creating the Peace Ribbon 2020

As followers of St. Francis, a peacemaker in his time, FAN sees the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a call to [recommit ourselves](#) to advocate for a world free of the threat and tyranny of nuclear weapons.



The [Peace Ribbon 2020](#) project aims to spur the imagination of all that would be lost if we succumb again to the use of a nuclear weapon. We want as many people as possible to participate in the Peace Ribbon this year by creating works of art with the theme, "What I cannot bear to think of as lost forever." We hope you will join us and make your own Peace Ribbon panel. The FAN staff made one together, which is pictured here. Email an image of your panel to dortiz@paxchristiusa.org, and your panel will be added to the [Panels of the Ribbon Home Page](#) or you can share a photo of your panel to the [Peace Ribbon Facebook page](#).

FAN Hosts Final Webinar of 3-Part Series on Laudato Si' for Young Adults

The staff of FAN and representatives from the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU) were proud to present our final event in a 3-part series of webinars to "[Protect our Future: A Guide to Living out Laudato Si'](#)."



Our third and final gathering took place July 28th, when we delved into ways to actively participate in caring for our common home. With our friend Annika Harley from Creation Justice Ministries and a student from Cardinal Stritch University who took part in their alternative Spring Break trip around environmental justice and faith, we explored how to become a stronger advocate in Franciscan response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. You can find the recording of the webinar [here](#) along with links to the first two parts of the series.