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Reflection Date: August 23, 2020 - 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## Creating Heaven on Earth

*Image by RÜŞTÜ BOZKUŞ from Pixabay*

In the [second reading this Sunday](#), Paul offers a description of God as unsearchable and he states that no one can know the “mind of the Lord”, yet all things have their being through Him. In this age of ‘Google’, can we even fathom something being unsearchable? We humans think we are so smart, we are so certain, and that we have this thing called “life” all figured out, but do we ever stop and recognize that it is only by God’s design that we are here and possess the knowledge we have? I think St. Francis would call it a lesson in humility, to humble ourselves to God’s gifts that make our lives possible and fruitful. This lesson from St. Paul makes Peter’s declaration in our Gospel reading that much more impressive.



In the Gospel, Peter acknowledges Jesus is the Messiah and is awarded the gift of being the foundation of the Church. As a kid in school, I have memories of being so excited when I knew an answer to a question posed by the teacher. I was the one who would shoot my hand up in the air and wave it around, squirming like my seat was loose, until I was called on. I am sure I was quite annoying to others who would actively try to shrink in size. I loved knowing the right answer! I loved having the teacher look at me with satisfaction that I had heard and understood the material being taught. If I were Peter in today’s Gospel, I’m sure I would have been so proud of myself when telling Jesus, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Peter's great love for Jesus made it possible for him to do everything that Jesus asked. For he says, “...flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.” As a reward, Peter becomes the rock on which our church is built. The Lord asks the same of each of us: to trust in God with great love and faithfulness to His teachings. Do we have the humility to acknowledge that God is unsearchable? That we cannot know His mind? Can we obtain a meekness which allows us to thank God for the many gifts he has given us? Do we love God enough to follow his teachings and live our lives by his example?

These questions make for excellent reflection and if we are honest with ourselves, perhaps our hearts will be open to the transformation necessary to create heaven here on earth.

Janine Walsh

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**Suggested Action:**

Spend time this week contemplating the questions at the end of the reflection and open your mind to the ways in which God is speaking to you.

**Suggested Petitions:**

May our hearts be humbled so to trust in God's will above all. We pray...  
In thanksgiving for the many gifts God has bestowed upon us. We pray...

**Prayer:**

Lord our God, we thank you that you have given us the light of life, that we can now learn how to live, and that through your great grace we may understand life in direct relationship with the Lord Jesus, who was crucified and who rose from the dead. Grant that the power of Christ may be made visible in us. Grant that his life may become our life, that we may leave behind all doubts and anxiety, even though we are often surrounded by darkness and night. Keep us in your Word. Let your will be done on earth as in all the heavens.

Amen.

## Have you Been Counted? Census Collection Ending Early: Sept. 30th

The Census Bureau said it will **end the 2020 census count one month early** on September 30th in order to meet the year-end deadline. This could have severe consequences for the vulnerable populations, which have already been [hobbled by the pandemic](#) that has made door-to-door data collection unsafe. Nearly 70 percent of U.S. households have responded to the census so far, but that's only about half of those who were supposed to receive mailings with instructions on how to respond on their own.

The Coalition on Human Needs has a [letter-writing action campaign](#) to Congress urging they work to protect the integrity of the Census. **Write to your Members of Congress today.**

A rushed Census will harm every state in our country. As a direct result of the difficulties of trying to conduct a Census during a pandemic, there are low responses in virtually every city and state. If the counting time period is cut short, communities most in need of resources to improve quality of life and standards of living will be chronically underfunded for the next decade.

We urge our members and friends to be sure you've [filled out the census](#). Copy this



information to email your community, friends, and family to make sure everyone is counted.

## New Unheard Voices Faithful Democracy Report: Voting During a Pandemic

Ensuring our elections are safe, secure, and accessible is important to us. Vote-by-mail has been tried and tested in states across the country such as Utah, Colorado, and Washington. The evidence shows this not only provides a secure way of voting that can protect the public health and the integrity of our elections, but this also ensures that every eligible voter can participate and make their voices heard in a [safe way](#). What is clear is that no matter how a person votes, either in person or by mail, we must ensure that they are able to vote safely and securely during the pandemic: that's when our democracy works best.

A new [report from Faithful Democracy](#) is a **how-to guide on voting during the COVID-19 pandemic**. Navigating the 2020 election as faithful voters is all about doing our part to protect our health and that of others.



We do not have to choose between public health and a functioning democracy. And, according to many recent polls, Americans understand this. We should be talking about providing states with the resources they need to get ready for safe, secure, and accessible elections in November with options to vote either in person or by mail. **To learn more about FAN's work with Faithful Democracy and to take action and call on your Senators to provide adequate election funding this November [head on over to FAN's website](#).**

## Take Action: Write Letters of Encouragement to Families in Detention

After COVID-19 was confirmed in family detention centers, a federal judge ordered ICE to release all children in its custody. As that battle continues in the courts, the families languish in detention centers, uncertain of their future.

Immigration justice advocates [tell us](#) that 53 families in the Dilley, Texas family detention center have been detained for over 100 days, and 35 of those families have been there for *over 300 days*. They are urging support of these families with a letter-writing campaign whereby supporters can send a letter to a family ensuring them that they



are not alone. Find [more information here](#) about what to include in the letter and where to send it.

## Save the Date: Plan Now for the Season of Creation

As the coronavirus pandemic and the climate crisis rage on, now more than ever we need to come together as one global family for justice. This [Season of Creation](#) - from September 1 to October 4th - is an opportunity to wake up the world - for each of us to become beacons of hope and inspiration for a better future.



# SEASON OF CREATION

As wildfires are raging across the Arctic Circle, from Greenland to Siberia to Alaska, heat waves across the Arctic are leading to a rapid meltdown and increase in wildfires.

Together, we have the power to ignite a bold global cry for climate justice, and there couldn't be a more important time for that action. Join us for this [Season of Creation](#) to pray and act for our common home. [Register your participation](#) in the Season of Creation.

## Live Conversation on Rise in Online Trafficking

The U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons is hosting an [interactive conversation](#) about the rise of sex trafficking online this **Wednesday August 19th at 11am ET / 8am PT**.

During this session you will have the opportunity to dialogue with Ambassador John Richmond as well as other government officials and front-line specialists from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Government of the Philippines, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to learn more about unique challenges and innovations in the global fight against sex trafficking online.



This session is open to the public but you must [register at this link](#).