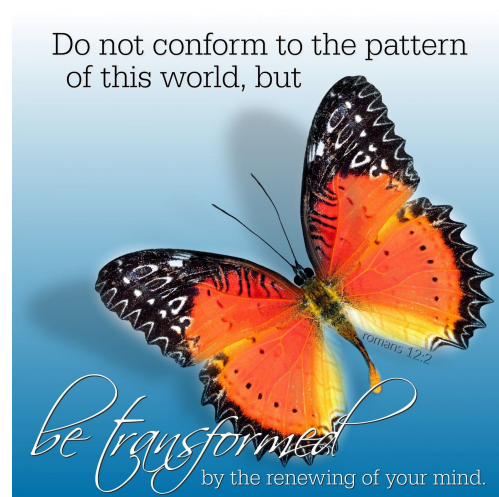


Called to Hope and Transformation

Here we are reflecting on our readings for the [Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) and we are in the twenty-fourth week of this COVID-19 pandemic and shut down. If we are truly honest about this experience, we are saying to ourselves and perhaps aloud to others, 'Enough already, when is this going to be over?'

Many people are lamenting the death and illness of loved ones and friends. Many are lamenting and struggling with the economic impact, loss of jobs, businesses and their very livelihood. Students are lamenting the loss of in-person classes, seeing friends and wondering, with their parents, if and when they might return to school. And many of us, especially if we are living responsibly, are lamenting the loss of freedom to move about and live life as we please.



Perhaps we might, in our lamenting, be able to resonate with Jeremiah's lament. Things weren't going well for him. He never wanted to be a prophet in the first place and he lamented that God had seduced him. He found himself alone, abandoned and not able to enjoy life with his family and friends. He got to the point of saying enough! "I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more." Jeremiah was ready to give up, but then realized the fire burning within his heart. This burning inner presence impelled him to speak and to trust that God was with him.

In this grave time of pandemic lamentation, of living with the constant uncertainty and insecurity, we cannot give into despair. The call to hope in these dark times goes far deeper than a return to what we've named "normalcy". We know from history that in the face of dramatic events, life and society shifts and is totally altered. Consider the events like the Civil War, the two World Wars and the devastation of September 11, 2001. Our life, our world is being dramatically changed by this worldwide pandemic. The question is will we be changed with it? Will we allow ourselves to simply be stuck hoping for a future of normalcy or will we *act* to create a new, and more just world? Will we be conscious and reflective enough to admit that life and our worldview has and must continue to change? Are we capable of being transformed to desire the greater good, equality and mutuality for all people and not simply focus on our own needs and our concerns?

Paul's words are a call to this deeper reflection and transformation. "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." We also hear Jesus' challenge to the disciples and to each of us. "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Dying to self, denying one's need for recognition, position, personal gain and power over others is Christ's paschal call to transformation. This call can feel daunting and insurmountable leaving us lamenting. Yet in these times, a simple children's tale like [Hope for the Flowers](#) by Trina Paulus, can help us to see, with caterpillar eyes, the wisdom of letting go, reflecting and connecting with the burning presence of Christ within us to embrace the possibility and the beauty of grace-filled transformation.

Through this week, let us hold the words of our Alleluia verse in prayer. "May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts, that we may know what is the hope that belongs to our call."

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

This week, take 13 minutes to watch the tale, [Hope for the Flowers](#) and reflect on its message.

Suggested Petitions:

May we have the courage to stop climbing and die to ourselves, trusting fully in God. We pray...
May we see our fellow human beings with God's eyes, as beautiful and diverse miracles created in God's image. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**God of might, giver of every good gift,
put into our hearts the love of your name,
so that, by deepening our sense of reverence,
you may nurture in us what is good
and, by your watchful care,
keep safe what you have nurtured.
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 Protect the USPS

[Image by F. Muhammad from Pixabay](#)

With a mandate to ensure that every person in the United States (and territories) has access to mail delivery, the United States Postal Service (USPS) is an essential part of our national infrastructure and a linchpin of the economy. Normally, the USPS is self-funded and doesn't receive any federal dollars to operate; but this year, in the midst



of a pandemic, emergency funding is needed to continue serving the public. The funding is critical for businesses struggling to stay open, for people to get their essential needs, such as food and prescription medications, and for voters wanting to vote from home to avoid needless exposure to COVID 19.

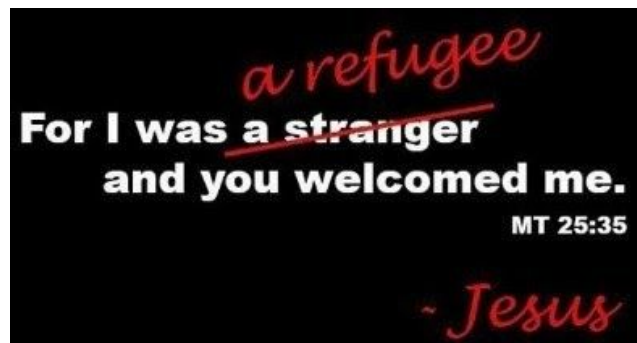
We must tell Congress to pass the Delivering for America Act (H.R. 8015) which will maintain prompt and reliable postal services during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. Here are some ways to take action:

- Send an email message to Congress: [Click here to send your letter directly](#) to your member of Congress.
- Call your member of Congress: Call your elected officials at the **Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121** and share your story about why the mail is important to you.
- Request a virtual visit: Gather folks in your community who care about the postal service and voting and ask for a virtual visit with your member of congress or their staff

Join us in protecting the vote and protecting the USPS by contacting your member of Congress.

Take Action to Save Refugee Resettlement

Right now, the administration is considering how many refugees to welcome in 2021. The current administration has already cut refugee admissions by more than 80%, from the historic average goal of 95,000 to just 18,000 in FY2020 – an all-time low. We must send a strong message to Congress that their constituents want to build back the resettlement program and see more refugees resettled and more families reunited.



To learn how to take action at this critical time, use this new August Recess Toolkit from Church World Service (CWS): <https://bit.ly/AugustRecessToolkit2020>.

Additionally, [Immigration Nation](#) is a six-part documentary series that sounds the alarm on the immigration crisis in America by imbedding with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, attorneys, activists, lawmakers and immigrants, whose harrowing stories humanize a perilously politicized issue. The series highlights stories of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees trying to reunite with their families. Episode 5 features a client from CWS's affiliate CRIS Ohio. [This toolkit](#) has resources to amplify these stories.

Citizens Along U.S-Mexico border and Around the Country Take Action for Migrants

The immigration enforcement and detention system has separated thousands of families, put children in cages, and caused the deaths of children and adult migrants who came to



the United States seeking safety and freedom. And it has done all this using billions of taxpayer dollars.

As the people of Laredo, TX are [demanding](#), the U.S. government should invest in the future, not in efforts that divide, terrorize and destroy communities. [No Border Wall Laredo Coalition](#) released [drone footage and visuals](#) of first-ever giant street mural on the U.S.-Mexico border in protest of the Border Wall.

It is time to defund hate and establish humanity and justice at the border and in our communities. The National Immigrant Justice Center has an action alert calling on Congress to cut funding for the agencies that perpetrate these abuses — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). [Click here to take action.](#)

2021 Immigration Action Plan Revealed

Last week, FAN was proud to join more than 170 of the nation's leading immigration and advocacy organizations in releasing the [2021 Immigration Action Plan](#), which outlines ten priority actions for the incoming administration.

From the executive summary:

By centering human dignity, family unity, community well-being and American prosperity, the 2021 Immigration Action Plan is designed to reinsert and rejuvenate core American values and power the economic recovery of our nation. The 2021 Immigration Action Plan is a set of concrete, actionable and fully articulated proposals addressing every stage of immigration policy and processing for the next administration.



2021 IMMIGRATION ACTION PLAN

RESTORING HUMAN DIGNITY
RECOVERING THE ECONOMY
REINFORCING AMERICAN VALUES

Read the [2021 Immigration Action Plan](#) here.

Celebrate Labor Day with +John Stowe, OFM Conv.

When Kentucky legislators proposed anti-union "right to work" legislation in 2017, Bishop John Stowe of Lexington Diocese [spoke out](#) boldly in defense of Catholic Social Teaching on labor, unions, and worker justice. Bishop Stowe has often spoken out on the dignity of work, even going as far as calling for necessary consistency within church employment.



The [Catholic Labor Network](#) has announced its first annual livestreamed Labor Day Mass Monday September 7th, and they are excited to have it celebrated by Bishop Stowe. We hope you can join.

[Click here to register.](#)

Season of Creation Begins Next Week

As you may have seen, last week the Trump Administration and Department of Interior [released a Record of Decision that finalizes plans](#) and paves the way for oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge. It's deeply flawed: It ignores science, fails to protect polar bears and caribou, and tramples Indigenous rights.



SEASON OF CREATION

Creation care organizations and partners have developed a [sign-on letter](#) to the big oil companies of Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, and Hilcorp encouraging them NOT to pursue fossil fuel development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, one of our most majestic public lands in the nation. [Click here to read the letter and sign on your organization.](#)

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.** 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.

Diocese of Lexington Says Congress Must Protect the Vulnerable in Next Stimulus Package

Last week, the coordinator of the Justice and Peace Office for the Diocese of Lexington, KY [published this op-ed](#) in one of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell's home state newspapers calling on him to move on stimulus relief legislation that seeks to serve the most vulnerable in our society.



We are grateful for this leadership out of Bishop John Stowe's diocese and pray more voices speak out on behalf of the least among us.

Join us in thanking them by sharing our [Facebook post](#) and [Tweet](#).