

Watchmen/Women 2020

The 2019 HBO miniseries “The Watchmen” has received 26 Emmy nominations. I do not have HBO so have not viewed the highly acclaimed series, but I’ve read that from the original graphic novel of the 1980s, to the 2009 movie, to the 2019 TV miniseries, the core element has a group of “superheroes” or investigators who must uncover evil plots that threaten destruction of a people. The HBO series opens with the Tulsa Massacre of 1921,



a horrific racist chapter in US history that only recently has become widely known by most White Americans, including me. So I was intrigued by God’s announcement to Ezechiel in [this week’s First Reading](#): “I have appointed (you) watchman for the House of Israel” whose charge is to “warn the wicked, trying to turn him from his way...” Ezechiel’s mission is twofold: reveal the evil being done, and warn perpetrators so they may turn from their ways and escape punishment of death.

In September, 2020 many threats call out for watchmen/women to warn us as a people that we are headed in the wrong direction: systemic racism, widening economic inequality, climate crisis, healthcare crisis intensified by mishandling of coronavirus, deep political, social, religious divisions. All of us who are grounded in the gospel of Jesus are challenged to call out evils in our time and place. This critical moment in our history as a nation is not a time to hide in the shadows, cowering in fear or hopelessness. The times demand that we be a watchman or watchwoman, caring so much about our democracy, our church, our children and grandchildren that we find ways to give warnings and try to turn haters, dividers, and graspers of wealth and power from their ways.

Paul reminds us in the Second Reading that “love is the fulfillment of the law.” As we call out warnings, as we “admonish the sinner” as Jesus teaches in the Gospel, we must do so out of love; not a soft, abstract feeling, but “tough love” that seeks conversion of “the wicked,” not their damnation; love that does not match violence with violence or hate with hate. The late great watchman, John R. Lewis, gave us a model of how and when to “cause good trouble.” Without swerving from truth and right, he showed us how to stand or march as nonviolent advocates for justice. We need not be “superheroes” like John Lewis, or Ezechiel, or the crucified Jesus, but each of us can first do our own soul-searching, and then seize opportunities, either as individuals or with others, to nonviolently challenge abuse, exploitation, cruelty and other destructive behaviors. We can be watchmen, watchwomen, in 2020 and beyond.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Actions:

Reflect on next week's significant dates through the lens of a watchman/woman:
September 7, [Labor Day](#): In this year's pandemic, thank and pray for the true "essential workers," and urge economic assistance for the millions of unemployed.
September 8: Birth of Mary: thoughtfully pray Mary's [Magnificat](#), asking her to pray for us.
September 9: Pray to [St. Peter Claver](#), patron saint of the enslaved, to enlighten us to confront systemic racism.

Suggested Petition:

That we may speak truth to power in love, let us pray

Prayers

**A gospel that doesn't unsettle,
a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin,
a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of the society
in which it is proclaimed, what gospel is that?**

-St. Archbishop Oscar Romero

**Preach the truth as if we had a million voices,
for it is silence that kills the world.**

-St. Catherine of Siena

Coming Soon from FAN: Release of *A Franciscan Moment* Videos

We are living in a critical time. The United States is dealing with a deadly pandemic, massive unemployment and recession, protests over racial injustice, wildfires in the West and two hurricanes causing untold destruction in the South. In these divisive times, we need to remember how to have hard conversations and be open to listening to one another. We must be open to compromise and we must act: we must vote with our Franciscan values.

[Image by Darwin Lagazon from Pixabay](#)



Through a new effort to carry out our [mission](#), Franciscan Action Network has developed three videos inspired by Pope Francis and our Franciscan charism, each calling attention to a different theme on which we work: Care for Creation, Compassion at the Border, and Morality in Government.

Because we have always been [rooted in relationships](#) and respect for human dignity, Franciscans are uniquely qualified to host discussions on how we build a better society. In

September, we will be releasing these videos, drawing attention to the Franciscan Moment we are called to be a part of. We hope you will join us in sharing the videos and their messages - stay tuned!

Save the Date! FAN's Annual Benefit Celebration

Franciscan Action Network's annual benefit will be going virtual this year and we are planning an incredible program for you!

Please mark your calendars for **Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 7pm ET / 4pm PT.**

Let's make 2020 a truly Franciscan Moment!



National Poll Worker Recruitment Day, Sept. 1

Our democracy depends on hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who make sure elections run smoothly and everyone's vote is counted. As coronavirus continues to impact Americans across the country, there has been a staggering decrease in the number of people who are able to work the polls -- which could mean closed polling places and long delays during the November election.



**AMERICA IS IN THE
MIDST OF A NATIONWIDE
POLL WORKER SHORTAGE**

FAN has learned of a first-of-its-kind initiative called [Power the Polls](#), created to recruit poll workers to ensure a safe, fair election for all voters. When you [sign up](#), depending on your jurisdiction, you will either be contacted by Power the Polls, a partner organization, or your local election administrators regarding your application. The Power the Polls team will help you along the way.

[Sign up to Power the Polls today](#) and be sure to share this message on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Columbans Release New Podcast on the Environment, *Jubilee for the Earth*

Our good friends at the [Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach](#) have announced their production of a new podcast mini-series about biodiversity and our sacred story.

JUBILEE FOR THE EARTH

A Podcast on Biodiversity & Our Sacred Story



Over the course of six episodes, [Jubilee for the Earth](#) will explore the beauty of biodiversity and the threats it faces. Listeners will be treated to stories from Columbans around the world who are working to renew the face of the Earth. Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, the goal of the podcast is to help us all to see how caring for our common home is fundamental to our lives as people of faith and as global citizens.

The podcast will be published in time for the Season of Creation, September 2020. You can listen to the podcast trailer on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), or [SoundCloud](#) or watch the videos on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

Join Refugee Council USA as They Advocate for New Americans

Right now, the administration is considering how many refugees will be resettled in FY 2021 - and by law they must consult with Congress before September 30th. Now is a critical time for people who care about refugees to make their voices heard.

Our friends at the [Refugee Council, USA](#) (RCUSA) are urging participation in Refugee Advocacy Days from **Tuesday, September 1st - Thursday, September 3rd** to hold the administration accountable to conducting meaningful consultations with Congress & rebuilding the resettlement program to historic norms - a 95,000 refugee admissions goal (the historic average) in FY 2021. We urge our members and friends to **access their [Advocacy Days Toolkit](#)** to find the top 4 ways to take action.

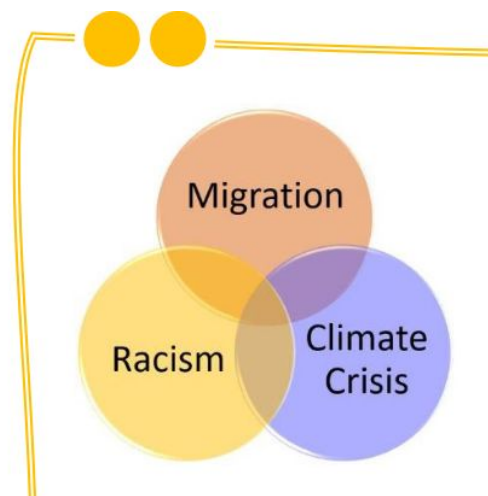


Additionally, RCUSA and its members will host a [grassroots webinar](#) for all interested on **Friday, September 11th at 12p ET / 9am PT**. Attendees will be discussing ways in which community members can advocate in support of refugees during this critical time including opportunities for civic engagement ahead of the November elections, the FY 2021 federal appropriations process, and other relevant refugee updates. [Click here to register to attend.](#)

New Reflective Voting Guide on Issues of Racism, Migration, and Climate

The justice and peace promoters from 11 women's religious congregations in Michigan and Indiana have developed a new reflective voting guide for the 2020 election season. The sisters began with and embraced the [resolution](#) from the 2019 National Assembly of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, resulting in the creation of "[A Reflective Voting Guide: Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration, and Climate Crisis.](#)"

The guide contains three study modules on the



issues of racism, migration, and climate crisis for reflection to help prepare the reader for the November elections. Each module has a section on **Experience** of people affected by the issue, **Values** of the issue in light of Catholic Social Teachings, and a **Call for Action**.

A disclaimer notes that the guide "does not contain all the questions to be asked. Nor does it recommend any candidate for office" yet it gently calls readers to participate fully and effectively in the political process of our nation by voting. You are invited to [download and read the Reflective Voting Guide by clicking here](#).

2020 Feast of St. Francis Program from CCC

Our friends at the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) (CCC) have announced their 2020 Feast of St. Francis Program is available for download.

Titled "[The Healing Power of Love in Action: Creation Care in a Time of Pandemic and Partisanship](#)", this year's program focuses

on St. Francis' Cantic of the Creatures and explores how it truly speaks to us in our era

of climate change, pandemic, and partisanship. The program contains prayers, readings, a short video, and suggested activities.



To access the full program, [click here and fill-out the form](#). After you submit the form, you will receive an email with the links to the resources.