

Turn to the Lord for Mercy

[Image by Momentmal from Pixabay](#)

Probably nothing has rocked the church so much in the past 50 years as the accusations of abuse by church officials, or perhaps even more so, the coverup of the abuse by those in authority. We will never know all the ramifications of abuse, and the ripple effects of coverup not only for the abused and the perpetrators but also for those in authority who refused to take responsibility at the time of the abuse. As complicit with the abuse as the perpetrator, they sacrifice untold numbers of innocent people to maintain their perception of themselves as innocent.



I reflected on this recently after viewing the movie “Just Mercy” which tells the true story of Walter McMillian who, with the help of Bryan Stevenson, a young defense attorney who works at the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) (EJI), appeals his murder conviction. The movie describes how racism drives the web of coverup and complicity within the criminal justice system.

The EJI website states “The question we need to ask about the death penalty in America is not whether someone deserves to die for a crime. The question is whether we deserve to kill.” Each one of us needs to ask the question: “Do I deserve to kill?” With the federal government now executing people, we are all as complicit with the murder as the person who orders the execution, as the person who turns on the switch.

[“Turn to the Lord for mercy, to our God who is generous in forgiving. For my thoughts are not your thoughts nor are your ways my ways.” Is. 55:9](#)

We will never fully understand sin, why human beings made in God’s image and likeness fear, hurt, hate, abuse, torture, murder other human beings made in God’s image and likeness. We will also never comprehend the generosity of God in forgiving each of us, a generosity recently modeled by Pope Francis in authorizing general absolution during the escalation of the coronavirus.

“The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.” Ps.145:18

The Jesus who walked this earth with us knows, understands, and loves each of us more than we know, understand, and love ourselves. This Jesus only asks that we try to follow him in the truth; a truth that proscribes coverup and that honors each human being with dignity. A human being that abuses or murders another human being needs professional help. When this is denied, many innocent people, in addition to the victims and perpetrators, are sacrificed on the altars of coverup and national retribution.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
FAN Member

Suggested Actions:

Find out more about [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#) which mobilizes Catholics and all people of goodwill to end the use of the death penalty and to transform the U.S. criminal justice system from punitive to restorative.

Take some time and reflect on the words of the Our Father.

Suggested Petitions:

We pray in thanksgiving for the generosity of our God in forgiving us. Let us pray...

We pray for the courage to speak out whenever we are witness to the abuse or murder of another human being. Let us pray...

Collect Prayer:

**O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law
upon love of you and of our neighbor,
grant that, by keeping your precepts,
we may merit to attain eternal life.**

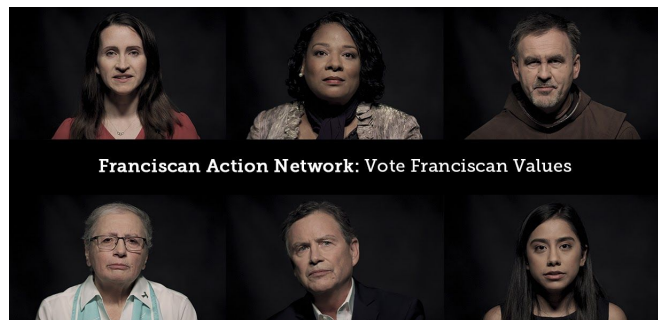
**Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Release of First Video of 2020: A Franciscan Moment Video Series

The year 2020 has been a challenge for our nation. It has been a year like no other. Yet, its challenges call for Franciscan values. This is a [Franciscan moment](#).

Last week, we sent out an email blast about our new video series, entitled **2020: A Franciscan Moment**, calling on Americans to be inspired by Franciscan values as they vote. Each video is an impassioned plea for voters to bring Franciscan hearts into the voting booth.



If you haven't yet seen it, please [WATCH: Morality in Government by Clicking Here](#). We want these messages to be seen by as many people as possible, so please also take a moment to share these posts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). Keep watching for our next video in the series!

Take Action: Sign Petition Demanding Funds for Vote-By-Mail for All

Election Day is just around the corner -- and we need your help to make sure voters who want to cast their ballot via mail are able to, despite any efforts to stop them. No one should have to choose between risking their health at the polls or forfeiting their right to vote during the COVID-19 pandemic.



FAN has joined with good governance partners in a [petition urging the Senate to immediately step up to defend our rights](#) -- by funding and protecting the U.S. Postal Service, expanding vote-by-mail options wherever possible, and approving the \$3.6 billion experts say states need to hold safe and accessible elections this fall.

Mail-in voting is a paper-based system that is safe and accessible, it can easily be audited to make sure election results are correct -- and it has already been tested and proven secure in states across the country. [Sign the petition demanding the Senate take action.](#)

Prepare for the 2020 Election: Reflections, Webinars and More

Many consider this year's general election to be the most important in decades. The challenges we have faced this year put us at a moral crossroads. There is a general call for every American to re-evaluate their morals and values and to remember these character traits at the voting booth.



To assist in this effort, FAN has been made aware of multiple resources being made available to help reflect and plan for November 3rd.:

- The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) has introduced a weekly program called [Towards a More Perfect Union: 2020 Election Reflections](#) they describe as a journey of faith and dialogue to explore some principles of faith and ideals of our democracy. Click the link for more information.
- The Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States has released [An Ignatian Guide to Civic Engagement](#), which reflects on our Gospel call to promote the common good in the public square.
- Faith in Public Life has a brand new [Faithful Voter Toolkit](#) with suggested sermons, scriptures, talking points, social media and other resources.
- The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns offers a series of two-page briefs and webinars on global issues to help voters prepare for the 2020 U.S. elections. Find [more information here](#).

Webinar Discussion on *The President and Immigration Law*

The largest immigration controversies over the last decade have involved policies produced by the president. Critics of this state of affairs across the political spectrum argue that Congress ought to dictate who may come to the United States and who will be forced to leave.

Our good friends at the [Center for Migration Studies](#) (CMS) will tackle this subject when they host an interactive, virtual event on the need to rethink the role of the president in US immigration policy making. Based on the groundbreaking new book [The President and Immigration Law](#), the event will be held this **Wednesday, September 16 at 1pm ET / 10am PT**. Authors Adam Cox and Cristina M. Rodríguez will be on hand to discuss how, over the course of two centuries, the President became the US immigration policymaker-in-chief. [Click here to register](#).



To Promote a Consistent Ethic of Life, We Must Reject Honoring William Barr

The National Catholic Prayer Breakfast this year is scheduled to honor Attorney General William Barr for his "exemplary Christlike" behavior. Alongside author and anti-death penalty activist [Sr. Helen Prejean](#), we raise our voices in "fervent opposition" to the event.

The Association of U.S. Catholic Priests released a [statement](#) calling the plan for the award "shocking, incomprehensible, and scandalous", citing A.G. Barr's recent decision to begin federal executions after 17 years as "especially scandalous". In fact, many of Mr. Barr's actions are in direct contradiction to the teaching of the Catholic Church, as this Op-Ed [article from National Catholic Reporter](#) points out.



[Death Penalty Action](#) has two ways to take action:

1. This [petition individuals may sign](#) urging Congress to abolish the federal death penalty
2. For [Organizational leaders, a sign on letter](#) expressing opposition to federal executions

Additionally, Catholic Mobilizing Network has this [petition directly to A.G. Barr](#) urging he reverse course on federal executions.

Two more federal executions are scheduled for the days immediately surrounding the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast on September 23rd. A.G. Barr has the power to stop them both, as well as any future executions. In order to promote a consistent ethic of life, we must say no to William Barr and the death penalty.

September is Suicide Prevention Month

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[Everytown for Gun Safety](#) reminds us that gun suicides account for 23,000 people in America every year. One proven way to address this public health crisis is with policies and practices that focus on disrupting access to firearms in times of crisis.



We urge members and friends to educate yourself and others. Through comprehensive reports, fact-checking, and survivor stories, the [Everytown](#) website has a plethora of information to explore and many [ways to take action](#).