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Reflection Date: September 27, 2020 - 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Watch What They Do, Not What They Say

Tax collectors were really hated and despised in Jesus' time. Yet Jesus says in [this week's Gospel](#) that they will enter the kingdom of God before the chief priests and elders of the people. Why were they given first place in the Kingdom?

Jesus sees in them the willingness to believe the message of mercy that He is proclaiming. They are open; they believe that another life is possible; they believe in his message of love, inclusion, and mercy for all.

The chief priests and the elders were instead too busy making sure that only the righteous, in their eyes, were the elected ones. In other words, they were too busy excluding people, dividing the worthy from the unworthy, using very superficial parameters.

Jesus, in asking their opinion on the behavior of the brothers, is helping them to realize that it was not the one who said the right things who followed the will of the Father. The second son, in fact, said all the right things in front of the Father but his actions did not follow his words.

In our day-to-day life we too are surrounded, even drowned in words. We wonder whom to believe anymore. The internet has made it so easy for all of us to be fooled by words and noise. In these months of heated campaigning by both political parties. I wonder if we as a nation have the capacity to quiet the noise and discern whom to believe, who is really planning to do good for the people and the nation, or if words used on a single issue are going to be fooling us, knowing that they will not be followed up with actions.

"Watch what they do, not what they say" is advice I try to follow, not only now, but in life in general. Paul's words in the letter to the Philippians have given me today the yardstick I will use in these troubled times as I discern about a leader for our nation:

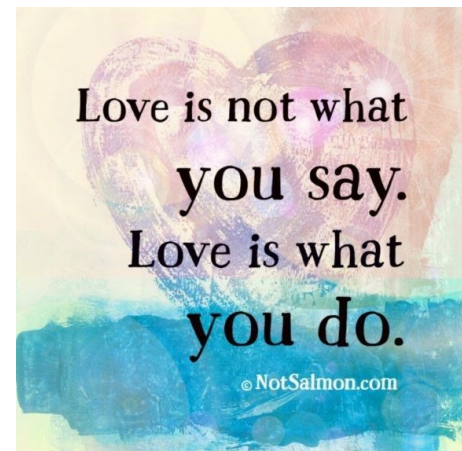
*"Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory.
Rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves,
Each looking out not for his own interests,
But also for those of others."*

At the end of my days I would rather be in the company of the tax collector!

Sr. Maria Orlandini, OSF
FAN Director of Advocacy

Suggested Action:

- This week spend time reading in a 'trustworthy' website about what the people running in your District wish to accomplish.



- Pay attention to your words; make sure they are followed by actions.
- Sign up for the [Saint Francis Novena](#)

Suggested Petitions:

- For Peace in our cities, that the rights of all be respected. We pray...
- For families grieving the loss of loved ones because of Covid-19. We pray...
- For a cease to the wildfires in the West that have burned over 5 million acres, for the lives lost and healing from the damage. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**O God, who manifest your almighty power
above all by pardoning and showing mercy,
bestow, we pray, your grace abundantly upon us
and make those hastening to attain your promises
heirs to the treasures of heaven.**

**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.

Horrific Anti-Life Allegations Coming From Georgia ICE Detention Center

Image by Pete Linforth from Pixabay

Last week, news of [forced sterilizations](#) and “[jarring medical neglect](#)” at Irwin County Detention Center (ICDC) in Georgia caused outrage among the faith community.

The testimony by Dawn Wooten, a nurse at the facility turned whistleblower, confirmed what detained immigrants have been reporting for years. A harsh spotlight has been thrown on the abhorrent past neglect of detainees as these facilities now deal with Covid-19 by refusing to administer protective equipment and falsifying records in order to underreport cases.



This [statement](#) was released in response by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, of which FAN is an active member. The demands are to cut funding for unjust immigrant detention and a meaningful investigation into the claims of medical abuse and neglect.

Celebrate the International Day of Peace With These Partners

The [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#) is excited this week to celebrate the first annual Catholic Nonviolence Days of Action. Events all over the country will take place beginning today, September 21st, the International Day of Peace, through October 2nd, the International Day of Nonviolence and Gandhi's birthday. [Click here to see a list of events](#) inviting everyone to pray, study, act and celebrate the power of nonviolence during the week.



The [Franciscan Peace Center](#) in Clinton, Iowa reconfigured their traditional International Day of Peace celebrations into a [virtual walk across the USA](#). Individuals from each state across the country were recruited and asked to record themselves walking and talking about a wish for peace in their state. The individual videos were edited together into a 13-minute project. Watch the completed project today, Monday, September 21st at the [Clinton Franciscans Website](#).

Additionally, the Washington Interfaith Peace and Security Working Group and the General Board of Church and Society, UMC will host a virtual [Interfaith International Day of Peace Service](#) online this Wednesday, September 23rd at noon EST. Attendees are asked to please bring a candle or flashlight to the service. [Click here to attend](#).

New Website Offers Comprehensive View of Southern Border Region

Our friends at the Southern Border Communities Coalition (SBCC) have introduced an [interactive webpage](#) recently launched as a resource for researchers, policy makers, media, and others that aggregates the latest data & stories on key border issues.



From the website:

For too long border issues have been framed by people who don't live in our region and by politicians who have used anti-immigrant sentiments for their own political gain at our expense. The truth is the southern border region is one of the most diverse, economically vibrant, and safest areas of the country.

If you are looking for on-the-ground information on issues like the environment, the border wall, the actions of border patrol agents, demographics and more, look no further than SBCC's [Border Lens](#).

Voter Registration Day and Statement of Principles for Voters

There are less than 2 months until the election. Every American can do something to help voters access the information they need to successfully participate in democracy.

Tomorrow, **September 22nd is voter registration day** and many of our partner organizations are working hard to ensure that every eligible American is registered to vote and has a plan to cast their ballot this November. We invite our members and friends to **make a meaningful impact on our democracy** by reaching out to 3 friends or family members you think might not be registered -- maybe they just turned 18, recently moved, or have never participated in the political process before. Urge them to [check their voter registration now by clicking here](#).



Pax Christi USA has released this "[Statement of Principles](#)" in the context of the 2020 U.S. elections as a resource to inform the decisions that all people will make, urging "we elect leaders with the values, character and integrity required to serve our communities."

For more information, we recommend [Vote411.org](#) which has a host of information on each specific states' registration, polling places, and more!

Time is Running Out: Have You Been Counted?

The [2020 Census](#) is underway and time is running out to respond. The census impacts funding decisions for things like health care, infrastructure, education, and more. We believe that every person counts and critical funding must be fairly distributed among those communities that need it.

Respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail today. Regardless of how you choose to respond, your information will be kept confidential and can only be used to produce statistics. **Your responses cannot be used against you in any way.** Learn more at [2020Census.gov](#).



Be sure to check out [www.CountUsIn2020.org/resources](#) for more Count Us In 2020 resources and [www.CountUsIn2020.org/partner-resources](#) for a compilation of partner resources.

