

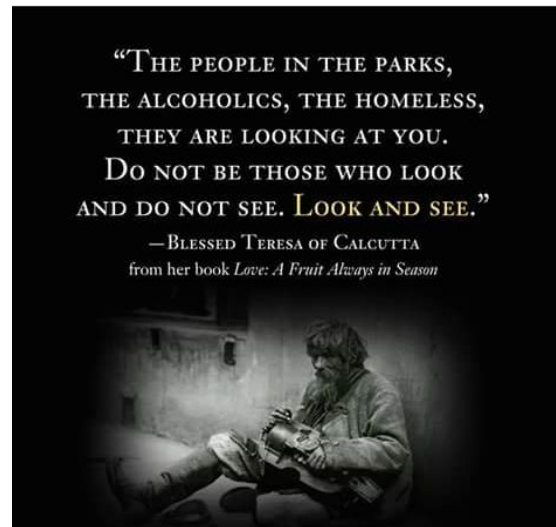
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Reflection Date: November 22, 2020 - Feast of Christ, King of the Universe

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## Whatever you Do to the Least of These...

The readings for the [feast of Christ the King](#) teach us two things about kingship. First, the king is the sovereign ruler and second, the king is charged with the care of his people as the reading from Ezekiel 34 demonstrates. "I myself will look after and tend my sheep." (Ezk 34:11) The prophet describes other duties of the king; to rescue, to pasture, to give rest, to bind up the injured, and to heal the sick. Isn't this the expectations that we have from those who govern us? Providing systems and policies that make it possible for all—from the greatest to the least—to have the necessities of life. A good example can be found in St. Louis IX, king of France. A follower of St. Francis in the Third Order, he was known to open his palace on feast days and invite in the poor of the city. He taught his son to care for those in need and taught that it is the duty of a ruler to provide for the poor, to side with the poor in disputes, not letting social status influence justice. These are lessons we can all take to heart in our culture today.



“THE PEOPLE IN THE PARKS,  
THE ALCOHOLICS, THE HOMELESS,  
THEY ARE LOOKING AT YOU.  
DO NOT BE THOSE WHO LOOK  
AND DO NOT SEE. LOOK AND SEE.”

—BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA  
from her book *Love: A Fruit Always in Season*

The Gospel reading from Matthew 25 is one of my favorites. We see beginning in verse 31 the Son of Man separating the sheep from the goats. The sheep are those who have provided for those in need; clothed the naked, fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, visited those in prison, and welcomed the stranger. The Son of Man refers to himself as “king” in verse 40 when he issues judgement. “And the king will say to them in reply, Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt 25:40)

We have just witnessed a fiercely contested election. We have chosen those who will govern over us. We must expect them, and yes hold them accountable, to provide for the needs of those they govern. We have witnessed all too often of late, politicians who when elected, accumulate great wealth while in office. It is said that no one leaves congress a poorer person. Lobbyists, political action groups and large campaign donors make it nearly impossible for our legislatures to be truly independent and seek the common good. The Franciscan Action Network is [actively involved](#) in taking the money out of politics, advocating for a system that will take away the large financial incentives that often influence those elected “by” the people, yet, do not always work “for” the people. This is an important and extremely worthwhile cause.

So what can we do? Each of us can live out the call of the King in Matthew 25 and work to ensure the least among us are cared for. In the early Church, before Christianity was legalized in Rome, there was an emperor, Julian the Apostate. Julian, it is said, lamented that Christians were making the Roman government look bad. He observed that Christians were taking better care of needy Romans than the Roman government. The Christians not only looked after their own, but any who demonstrated a need. In the end, it was that witness of Christian charity that converted the culture. It took a few centuries, but in God's time and with perseverance, charity converted the most powerful empire known to the world at that time. We also should take the

advice of Blessed Solanus Casey, the Capuchin Franciscan friar of Detroit, MI., to “Shake off excessive worry and exercise a little confidence in God’s merciful providence.” I believe that the Church will always be better positioned to provide for those in need than the government. The Church is on the front lines and knows the needs of its local communities far better than a bureaucrat. However, we must also advocate to ensure that there are systems and policies in place that make that work easier and able to be performed unimpeded.

So as the dust settles from our recent elections and the pandemic, the experiences which we will all remember as 2020, a year that will live in infamy, let us not lose the peace of Christ in our hearts. Let us all call to mind the King to whom we owe our ultimate allegiance, Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

David Seitz, OFS  
FAN Board Member

**Suggested Action:**

Strive to live out the Gospel message of Matthew 25 and find ways in your community to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and welcome the stranger.

**Suggested Petitions:**

May we be deeply grateful for the gifts we have received and seek to share our bounty with those in need. We pray...

For all those who live on the margins - the poor, the underprivileged, the migrant, the sick - may their needs be met through just structures and the loving kindness of those around them.

**Collect Prayer:**

**Almighty ever-living God,  
whose will is to restore all things  
in your beloved Son, the King of the universe,  
grant, we pray,  
that the whole creation, set free from slavery,  
may render your majesty service  
and ceaselessly proclaim your praise.  
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**

## **Time for action: Sacred People, Sacred Earth**

Diverse, grassroots people of faith and conscience are coming together to demand real climate solutions and to lead by example. Our good friends at GreenFaith are among the founding grassroots partners in 14 countries collaborating to kick off a new era of global, multi-faith climate action.



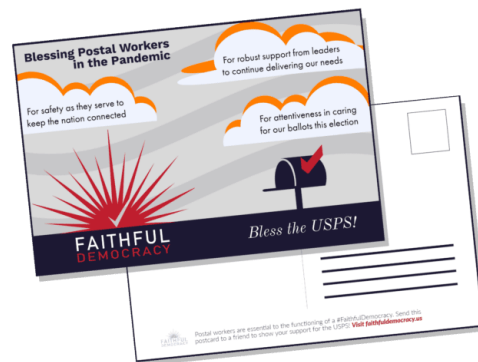
**Tomorrow, November 17th at 8:30pm ET (5:30pm PT)**, join in for a global TEDx event to kick off [Sacred People, Sacred Earth](#) - a mobilization of the biggest-ever grassroots, global, multi-faith, COVID-friendly climate action that will take place on March 11, 2021. [Click here to reserve a spot for this TEDx.](#)

Motivated by spoken word, music, prayer and dynamic speakers, we'll share bold demands that grassroots faith communities around the world have developed, and provide opportunities for people of diverse faiths and spiritualities everywhere to get involved.

Join in to launch the mobilizing efforts for [Sacred People, Sacred Earth](#) and learn what we can do to lead our communities to a better world.

## Tomorrow: Save the Post Office Day of Action

Election Day is behind us but the struggle to Save the Post Office continues. Postmaster General DeJoy has vowed to return to his mail-delaying policies and the Postal Service still urgently needs COVID relief signed into law. Postal workers helped defend our democratic rights, making vote-by-mail an unprecedented success in the election. Now as a country, we must defend the Postal Service.



**Tomorrow, Tuesday, November 17th is a national day of action.** We are urging our members and friends to take action and help us celebrate our postal workers' contributions to our democratic rights and renew our call for \$25 billion COVID relief. Here are some options:

1. Plug into or host events/press conferences in front of your local post office. You can find more info and sign up at <https://apwu.org/post-office-action>.
2. Continue to spread the word on social media using the hashtag, #SaveThePostOffice. Here is a [social media toolkit](#) with posts and graphics to use.
3. [Mail a blessing for our Postal Workers](#): Download our "Bless the USPS" postcards or order a FREE pack of 20 with your pledge to send them all in 2020. [Click here](#) for more information.
4. Finally, we urge you to **call Congress at 833-924-0085** and demand emergency COVID relief for the USPS.

This year has seen a massive outpouring of support which is both humbling and inspiring. We thank you for your continued efforts to #SaveTheUSPS.

## Advent Resource - Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

As an active participant in the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) (IIC), FAN's own Sr. Marie Lucey and Sr. Maria Orlandini sit on the Holy Days and Holidays committee. This group



develops resources with different themes for use at various times during the year. For Advent this year, the Holy Days and Holidays resource will focus on Black Migrants.

All sessions offer scripture, spiritual reflection & question, a story of black migrants, actions, and a prayer. There are 7 Sessions, one for each of the 4 Weeks of Advent, Christmas, and the feasts of the Holy Family & Epiphany.

Sign Up at: <http://bit.ly/BlackMigrantsJourneys> to receive the resources when they are ready.

## Appeal from our Friends in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador

Our sisters and brothers in Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador have been hit yet again by a devastating hurricane and torrential rains. Our friends at the SHARE Foundation are [organizing](#) to help get the word out and to collect funds to support the relief efforts of their partners. The SHARE foundation was instrumental in coordinating the [2019 interfaith delegation](#) of which FAN's Sr. Maria Orlandini was a participant.



Honduras provides food for the whole Central America region, and now that food supply has been lost as more than 40,000 hectares of crops have been destroyed or damaged. This measurement is equivalent to 98,842 acres of crops destroyed, not to mention mass evacuations, landslides, and homelessness that will likely continue.

In addition to Covid, there is heavy concern over the threat of multiple diseases due to exposure to contaminated water. People feel totally abandoned by the government. These friends have turned to us, yet again, for critical support – both moral and material. They ask us for our prayers and for emergency aid. See details and information about how you can help by [clicking here](#).

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact Jose Artiga, Executive Director of the SHARE Foundation, [jose@share-elsalvador.org](mailto:jose@share-elsalvador.org). Thank you for whatever you can do to help!

## Plan Now to Host 'Roses in December' Gathering

December 2nd marks the 40th anniversary of the martyrdom of the "Roses in December" martyrs (*pictured*), Dorothy Kazel, OSU, Maura Clarke, MM, Ita Ford, MM and Jean Donovan who were brutally murder by the



U.S.-supported Salvadoran military for their ministry and dedication to those living in poverty. They were called "subversives" because they accompanied refugee families who had fallen victim to the escalating violence and oppression that eventually led to civil war. [Read more about them here](#).

[LCWR](#) and the [SHARE Foundation](#) invite women religious especially to celebrate the gift of

these four women and remember all of those who dedicate their lives to working for justice in El Salvador and throughout the world. Please plan now to host a prayer vigil, evening of conversation and story-telling, retreat, or other gathering in your communities, parishes or educational institutions.

The hope is to commemorate the lives of the Roses in December martyrs by hosting 40 remembrances in 40 cities to mark the 40th anniversary. The SHARE Foundation is collecting brief descriptions of local events. Send details to [jose@share-elsalvador.org](mailto:jose@share-elsalvador.org) to be counted among the 40.

This **updated [Roses in December toolkit](#)** is available to help with organizing your event. The toolkit includes the story of the four women; background on El Salvador; many ideas for celebrations, prayer services, action and advocacy; and a list of resources.

## Host a Screening of “The Reunited States”

Based on the book of the same name by Mark Gerzon, [The Reunited States](#) is an urgent documentary that follows four everyday heroes on the difficult journey of bridging our political divides.

Susan Bro, who lost her daughter when a car drove through a group of counter-protestors in Charlottesville, and David and Erin Leaverton, a Republican couple who travel to all fifty states in an RV to find out what divides us, are just a few of the characters profiled in the film. Each of these bridge-builders have realized that while our divides run deeper than they ever could have imagined, so does the love and hope to bring our country back together.

As Franciscans who know deeply the value of relationship building, we encourage our friends and members to consider hosting a screening in your church, community, or school. There are a host of [resources available here](#) to help you plan. We all need to practice the art of listening to those with an opinion different from our own.

