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Reflection Date: January 17, 2021 - 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Can We Hear God Through the Riotous Noise?

My friends,

I live in Washington, DC, blocks from the White House and Capitol Hill. Last Wednesday, my streets were filled with rioting white nationalists and conspiracy theorists intent on an insurrection against the laws, the Constitution, and the democracy of the United States. It was one of the most shameful days in the history of our republic in recent memory.



Perhaps I can be forgiven, then, for not writing the usual reflection that this Newsletter customarily offers on the [Lectionary readings for next Sunday](#). These are not ordinary days, even though Sunday marks the start of liturgical Ordinary Time.

Yet, the readings do still speak to us. The Gospel is from John, recounting the calling of apostles and disciples to stand up and to follow Christ. To follow the Lamb of God.

Likewise, the first reading is from First Samuel, recounting how the young Samuel, sleeping in the home of Eli, was awakened three times in the night by the voice of God calling him by name. Then came the response from Samuel, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.” I wonder if we are now being called. I wonder if at this moment we should not be listening for what our Quaker friends describe as the “still, small voice” of God calling us, much like the call to the prophet Samuel.

Could it be that all of us are now called to wake up, like Samuel? Are we being called to awaken from our normal slumber and listen more intently for the still, small voice amidst the riotous noise of the moment? If so, to what are we called?

I’m reminded that the verb “to call” in Latin is *vocare*, which is also the root for our word “advocacy” (*ad+vocare*), a calling to attention and a calling to action. This is our work, our “vocation,” at Franciscan Action Network. Like vocations, we are surely not all called to the same work. However, like the disciples in the Gospel, we are all called to follow Jesus.

The question is – are we awake to the call? Are we attentive amidst the noise of these days to the still, small voice of God? Do we answer, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening?” And, when we hear, do we stand up and bear prophetic witness, like Samuel? With the disciples and apostles, do we follow the Christ?

These have been extraordinary days here in Washington. Let’s pray that the voice of God is heard through the riotous noise.

Stephen Schneck, PhD.

FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

This week, take time to read the readings for Sunday and sit in silence with them, reflecting on how you are being called.

Suggested Petitions:

May we have the fortitude to answer when the Lord calls us, “Here I am, your servant is listening.” We pray...

May we have the courage to take action for the common good. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
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.

Participate in National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Today, January 11th is national Human Trafficking Awareness Day. Many who work on this issue of modern-day slavery will take time today to pray for an end to this heinous crime. We keep educating on the topic through February 8th, which is the feast of St. Josephine Bhakita, who was herself kidnapped and sold into slavery. We urge our members and friends to participate in one of the ways listed below.

The US Department of Homeland Security has a campaign to help raise awareness of human trafficking by **wearing blue on January 11th** to prompt online conversations. Simply post a photo of yourself wearing blue on social media with the hashtag #WearBlueDay and encourage friends, family, and colleagues to do the same. [Click here for more information.](#)

The US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking has posted prayer resources on their website including a Daily Prayer Intention calendar in both English and Spanish which begins today and goes through February 8th. [Click here to download the calendar.](#)

This Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking published a comprehensive resource which includes background information, talking points, and sample social media posts and community engagement ideas. [Click here to download the toolkit.](#)



Finally, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has posted this [Prayer to End Trafficking](#). Please take a minute to say a prayer for all survivors and victims of human trafficking.

Take Action: Call-in Day Supporting “For the People Act”

FAN's Jason Miller and other good governance at the HR1 introduction at the Capitol in 2019

The Franciscan Action Network has made democracy reform a hallmark of its advocacy for years because over the past decades, our democracy and the power of the American people have continued to diminish, broken long ago by the influence of wealthy donors and corporate interests. If people of faith are ever going to see progress on the policy issues we care about, we must have a democracy that responds to the needs and priorities of the voters.



There is a chance to turn it around by passing the [For The People Act](#), the most sweeping set of reforms to our democracy in a generation — but to get this done, we need your help. **Call your U.S. House Representative TODAY at 1-888-246-5947 to urge them to support passing the For the People Act as a first order of business in the new Congress.**

If passed, the For the People Act would:

- Drive big money out of politics;
- Restore voting rights and offer new protections for voters;
- End gerrymandering so that electoral districts are fairly drawn; and
- Hold government officials accountable with new ethics standards.

Take 5 minutes and **call your Representative today and then email us to [let us know how it went](#)**. Thanks for everything you do.

News and Updates from Justice for Immigrants

[Justice for Immigrants](#) (JFI) announced last week that starting this year, the Catholic bishops have decided to move National Migration Week (NMW) from January to September, so that it aligns with the Vatican's World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR). WDMR takes place the last Sunday of September and NMW the week leading up to it. In 2021, NMW will take place September 20th - 26th. Please check the JFI [National Migration Week](#) page as we head into the spring for further information.



This week, on **January 13th at 2pm ET / 11am PT**, JFI will host their next **national call**. Join to learn more about what is happening in the world of migration policy and how they are preparing for a new Administration and a new Congress. To join, please call 800-446-1162 and login with the passcode 106181.

Finally, JFI has made multiple recommendations intended to guide discussions with legislators and the incoming Biden Administration in four general categories: legalization;

border policies; enforcement; and root causes. [Click here to find these transition documents.](#)

Help us Show Gratitude to our Sisters

Franciscan Action Network is graced by the work and dedication of two extraordinary Franciscan Sisters. During Christmas week, we sent out emails inviting you to join us in celebrating the vocation of Sisters Marie Lucey, OSF (*left*) and Maria Orlandini, OSF (*right*). Each sister took time to listen to and write up the story of the other, which we share with you here:



[Read Sr. Marie's story](#)

[Read Sr. Maria's story](#)

We encourage you to read their compelling biographies and lift them up in your prayer. If you are looking for a way to give a tax-free year-end donation, consider celebrating with a donation in their honor, and in gratitude for their advocacy work for the impoverished, oppressed, and the most vulnerable among us. [Click here to donate online](#) or send checks to **P.O. Box 29106, Washington, DC 20017**. Thank you for your support.

Latest Gun Violence Data from the CDC

Newly-released data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows the overall gun death rate in the U.S. increased 17% from 2010 to 2019. [A joint review of CDC data](#) by the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence and sister organization Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (ESGV) found increases in both homicide and suicide rates contributed to the overall change; in that time period, the firearm homicide rate increased 26% and the firearm suicide rate increased 12.5%.

say **NO** to
#WeaponsOfWar.



From the press release:

“What’s obvious from today’s data is that gun violence in the U.S. remains persistently high, and lives will continue to be lost needlessly without meaningful national leadership,” said CSGV Executive Director Josh Horwitz. *“To stem this tide, we need to adopt a comprehensive public health approach to gun violence prevention that includes robust legislation and funding [from Congress](#) and executive action from [the new administration](#). ... We cannot solve a problem we cannot quantify, and without timely data, we lack the information we need to make the best possible decisions.”*

Visit the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence website for additional [2019 statistics](#) and the [PreventFirearmSuicide.com](#) project for detailed data on firearm suicide.

Reflections on World Day of Peace Message

As he does each year, our Holy Father released his message for the [2021 World Day of Peace](#) on January 1st, this year calling for a “culture of care as a path to peace.” We encourage all our members and friends to read the inspiring words of Pope Francis and consider ways in which you can amplify his message. Additionally, we offer these resources.

Pax Christi England and Wales has posted multiple resources for their January 17th celebration of Peace Sunday, including hymns. [Click here to find more information.](#)

Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist and we have [posted his reflection](#) of Pope Francis' World Day of Peace message on our blog page.