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## Seek the Common Good

Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Our [readings this week](#) teach us a lesson that was as applicable in Old Testament times as it is today; for humanity to survive and thrive we must choose to seek the common good instead of prioritizing our own desires.



Today, throughout the world people have been wearing masks and gloves, social distancing and quarantining themselves to protect those they love and for society at large. Our reading from the book of Leviticus reminds us that from early history, people have quarantined or separated themselves from those they love and the general population for the common good.

St. Paul warns us that self-seeking behavior will only serve to bring down society “Not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.” (1 Cor. 10:33) In *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis asserts: “Radical individualism is a virus that is extremely difficult to eliminate, for it is clever. It makes us believe that everything consists in giving free rein to our own ambitions, as if by pursuing ever greater ambitions and creating safety nets we would somehow be serving the common good.”

This week’s Gospel will remind every Franciscan and Franciscan-hearted person of the story of St. Francis embracing the leper, whom society rejected. After embracing “what had seemed bitter to me”, Francis was transformed. The leper awakened the best in Francis as those that are the most vulnerable awaken the best in all who embrace them. Perhaps this is a lesson for all those who survive this pandemic. In his book *Let Us Dream*, Pope Francis states that the pandemic has unmasked how we have “shriveled within our bubbles of indifference” and self-absorption. The global pandemic has taught us that we are on a shared journey and that what happens to a person half a world away does impact us. The pandemic invites us to look at each person made in the image and likeness of God as integral to the whole of humanity, regardless of our racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences.

In *Let Us Dream* Pope Francis warns, “We must not let the current clarifying moment pass us by. Let it not be said, in years to come, that in response to the coronavirus crisis we failed to act to restore the dignity of our people.” In the spirit of our nonviolent Jesus, Saint Francis and Saint Clare, let us humbly seek the common good together.

When did you last choose to act for the common good instead of prioritizing your own desires?

When did you last have the opportunity and blessing to “embrace” the most vulnerable?

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF

FAN Member

**Suggested Action:**

This week, consider the questions Sr. Maryann poses at the end of her reflection. Have an open, honest conversation with God as to your answers.

**Suggested Petitions:**

For all those who are sick from COVID-19. May they see the face of God in the care they receive from others. We pray...

For hearts to be opened to conversion so that we choose to seek the common good in our lives. We pray...

**Collect Prayer:**

**O God, who teach us that you abide  
in hearts that are just and true,  
grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace  
as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.  
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**

## **TODAY: International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking**

Four organizations have collaborated in organizing a [series of events](#) honoring the **International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking TODAY, February 8th.**



International Day  
of Prayer and Awareness  
Against Human Trafficking

February 8, 2021

The John J. Brunetti Human Trafficking Academy at St. Thomas University College of Law and the [Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking](#) (CCOAHT), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services, and Catholic Health Association of the United States together invite you to join one or all of three events which we are proud to offer free and open to the public. FAN Director of Advocacy, Sr. Maria Orlandini is our representative in CCOAHT and will be part of the prayer service TODAY.

**PART I:** Prayer Service for Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking (Virtual)  
10:15 AM – 10:45 AM EST (7:15 AM - 7:45 AM PST)

**PART II:** Survivor Perspectives: Informing our Work against Human Trafficking (Virtual)  
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM EST (8:00 AM - 9:00 AM PST)

**Mass** for Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking (In-person & Online)  
12:15 PM – 1:00 PM EST (9:15 AM - 10:00 AM PST)

[Click here for more information and to register to attend.](#) “We cannot rest until trafficking in human persons is eliminated from the globe.” – Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski, Archdiocese of Miami.

## Webinar TODAY: Take Action for Immigrant Justice in 2021

In the first few weeks of the Biden administration, we have witnessed many announcements and policy changes, especially on immigration.

Join the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) Webinar **TODAY Monday, February 8th at 5 PM ET/ and 2 PM PT** for an overview of the current immigration landscape, to hear how recent changes are impacting vulnerable communities, and to learn how you and your faith community can become involved. [Click here to register.](#)

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The first 100 days is a critical moment for faith communities to take action, alongside immigrants' rights organizations and immigrant leaders. In the coming weeks there will be many opportunities to push for legislative and administrative reforms that create relief from deportation, push towards citizenship for all, and rebuild the refugee and asylum programs. [Be sure to join us tonight to hear how to get involved.](#)

## Webinar Opportunities to Help us Move Towards Anti-Racism

The all-pervasive nature of racism continues to impact our society in tragic and profound ways, yet also with subtle and unknowing biases at play. The issues are so deeply rooted and complex that a conscious and deliberate approach is required; an approach that moves us towards a practice of anti-racism.

Fr. Sam Fuller, OFM Cap, is hosting the third in a 3-webinar series welcoming Deacon Art Miller to begin to offer such an approach through education, listening and reflective prayer. This final webinar will take place **TOMORROW, Feb. 9th at 7:00pm ET / 4:00pm PT** and will be a retreat experience to prayerfully reflect on the excerpted writings of Howard Thurman, Ibram X. Kendi, and Bryan Massingale. [Click here to register.](#)

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Additionally, FAN's own Jason Miller will be speaking on a webinar hosted by the [Franciscan Federation](#) to discuss confronting white privilege and supremacy in the post-George Floyd and Post-Donald Trump era. **Save the Date and plan to join RACISM: Where Do We Go From Here?** on Feb. 22nd at 7:30pm ET / 4:30pm PT. [Click here to register.](#)

## Take Action: Line 3 Tar Sands Pipeline Construction

## in Minnesota

Interfaith Power & Light's (IPL) Minnesota affiliate has been supporting an Indigenous led effort to stop the Line 3 tar sands oil pipeline, a pipeline very similar to Keystone XL. Line 3 will run through untouched wetlands, the treaty territory of Anishinaabe peoples, and the Mississippi River headwaters to the shore of Lake Superior. [Construction has begun](#) with drilling under the Mississippi River imminent and time is of the essence.

Some Indigenous groups are calling on President Biden to stop the pipeline and our friends at IPL and GreenFaith are working to **bring a faith voice to support this effort**. Here are several ways you can get involved:

- **Feb. 10th 3pm ET / 12pm PT:** [Register to join in the Protect Sacred Water Digital Rally](#) to #StopLine3 where frontline groups, Indigenous leaders, and faith leaders will give an overview of the Line 3 fight and share what people of faith can do to help.
- **Leader and Organizational Sign on Letter:** Add your organization to this [Letter from Faith Leaders](#) Calling on the Biden Administration to Stop Line 3. The deadline for signatures is Feb. 15th.
- **Individual People of Faith Petition:** [Sign on to this petition and share it](#) with your networks. The deadline for signatures is Feb. 15th.

Thank you for taking action to stop climate- and water-destroying pipelines.

## Lent is Coming! Find More Resources Here

Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, February 17th and we want to make you aware of several resources being offered to help you engage in the season with an open heart and mind.

The FAN Staff is happy to announce that we have put together a series of reflection videos based on the [Franciscan Values](#) written at our founding which continue to guide our work. We will be sending out an email with a link to these videos beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing each Friday of Lent. [Find more information here.](#)



The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has a [Lenten Reflection Guide with a theme from Pope Francis' new encyclical, Fratelli Tutti](#) ("Brothers and Sisters All"). In it, the reader is invited to enter into the journey of Lent and dive deeper into the reflections of Pope Francis.

Last week, we let you know that the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) will release a Lenten devotional from the Holy Days and Holidays committee. *Lenten Values: Springing into Action* will reflect on nine values that ground the work of immigration justice; each one features scripture, stories, and more. [Sign up here to receive the materials once they're ready.](#) FAN's own Sisters Marie Lucey and Maria Orlandini contributed to the series.

## How Does our Sacred Story Affect our Call to Justice?

Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio, OSF and the [Center for Christogenesis](#) will host a Zoom conversation with FAN friend Patrick Carolan discussing how our sacred story affects our call to justice.

Faith activists are engaged in the critical and absolute necessary work of rooting out and changing the systemic injustices so entrenched in all of our systems. Many self identify as “Matthew 25 Christians.” They often use Catholic Social Teachings and Biblical quotes from Isaiah 58 and others to support their work.

In a world that is filled with suffering and pain it is comforting to believe in a story—a theology—that God is always there, interceding on behalf of the faithful. A theology that teaches that the ultimate goal is to go to a better place. But is this a theology that can truly bring about justice and peace?

On **Feb. 25th at 4pm ET / 1pm PT**, join the [Center for Christogenesis](#) in this exciting conversation with Patrick and Ilia exploring a renewed sacred story for a more just world. Find more information and register by [clicking here](#).

## Save the Date: NAC Hosts Conference on Root Causes and Intersections on Human Trafficking

The National Advocacy Center's 2021 [Human Trafficking Conference](#) will explore the conditions and vulnerabilities that lead to trafficking. Throughout the conference, attendees will hear from survivors, service providers, and other anti-trafficking experts. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in advocacy that addresses the root causes of trafficking.

The conference is free of charge and entirely virtual.

Monday, March 8, 2021 from 12p - 3p ET (9a - 12p PT)

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 from 12p - 1:30p ET (9a - 11:30a PT)

Find more information and register to attend by [clicking here](#).

