

## The Hill We Climb

Our readings for this [Second Sunday of Lent](#) provide us with varied and interesting insights into how God was experienced throughout the scriptures. They also call and challenge us to be attentive, clear and sensitive to how we embrace and express our attitudes and understanding of God's presence in our lives and in our world today. This is a call to be the transfigured love and presence of God.



In the Book of Genesis, we know that God established a covenant relationship with Abraham. This covenant was a bond of divine-human love with not only Abraham but all of his descendants. Yet, in the first reading we hear of a God who puts Abraham to the test. Does Abraham measure-up? Do we measure-up? So many of us grew up being taught of a God who sat in judgment looking down from the heights of heaven recording all we did or didn't do. Do we still hang onto this perception of a judging and testing God? Do we embody and witness to a God of merciful covenant love or one who stands in judgment of others?

Paul's Letter to the Romans states, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" We grasp a message for a people emboldened with confidence in the presence of God despite the suffering and persecution they experienced under the reign of the Emperor Nero. It's interesting that the biblical scholar, N. T. Wright used an image of a mountain peak when he identified the Letter to the Romans as Paul's masterpiece presenting a challenge and spiritual vision to the faithful. He wrote of the Letter to the Romans, "It dwarfs most of his other writings, an Alpine peak towering over hills and villages." The source of this mountain peak, emboldened confidence is surely the resurrected Christ, who conquered hatred, persecution and humiliating death to rise victorious and promises this new life to all who believe.

The gospel passage of the Transfiguration of Jesus gives us the ultimate mountain peak experience. "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." This event marked God's covenantal union with Christ and all of us, for Jesus did not go up that mountain alone. His invitation to Peter, James and John was for them to witness and later preach that he, standing with Moses and Elijah, was the true fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. He is indeed the Christ, the Messiah of God.

Last month, we all witnessed the prophetic words of the young Poet Laureate, Amanda Gorman, a black woman, Harvard scholar and Catholic. Her words of wisdom, [The Hill We Climb](#), still echo in my heart. "We've learned that quiet isn't always peace and the norms and notions of what just is, isn't always just-ice." "If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change, our children's birthright."

With the sacred scriptures, Amanda's words call and challenge us to live and witness to the emboldened confidence of God's presence. This covenantal love and mercy is within us and in all people, regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, and even in the midst of dark and difficult times. It is the call to enter into the sufferings of others, to work for justice, to see and to be the transfigured and resurrected presence of Christ Jesus. Do we have the courage to live in the light of Christ and together work and climb to the peaks of justice and love?

May this be our life's work, so that united with Amanda and all God's people we may proclaim, "When day comes we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid, the new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

Margaret Magee OSF  
Member of the FAN Board

### **Suggested Actions:**

Make time this week to reflect on the uniquely [Franciscan Values](#) we hold dear. Consider how you can live out these values in your life.

### **Suggested Petitions:**

For all of us who need encouragement to be "brave enough", may the words of Amanda Gorman and other inspirational leaders settle into our hearts and give us the confidence to live in the light of Christ. We pray...

For all of us who at times fail to see the transfigured love of God through Christ Jesus, may we be open to recognizing the moments in our lives where God is speaking to us through others. We pray...

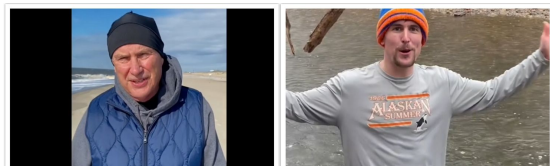
### **Collect Prayer:**

**O God, who commanded us  
to listen to your beloved Son,  
be pleased, we pray,  
to nourish us inwardly by your word,  
that, with spiritual sight made pure,  
we may rejoice to behold your glory.  
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.**

## **Virtual Polar Bear Plunge a Success**

While we missed the normal crowds of enthusiastic plungers gathered at the National Harbor, this year's [Polar Bear Plunge](#) to



#KeepWinterCold was still a success! Plunging was a bit different as for the first time ever, it was VIRTUAL and NATIONAL! Supporters across the country got to choose how they took the plunge.

Our team took the [#PolarBearChallenge](#) from various home locations, in keeping with CDC guidelines. As promised, we each recorded our plunges and compiled them in a video. [Just click here to watch us freeze!](#)

For the past 6 years, various members of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) staff and our supporters have participated with our friends at Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) in the "Keep Winter Cold" Polar Bear Plunge. **Each dollar donated goes to the efforts to care for God's creation, both at CCAN and at FAN.** In case you missed it, [you can still donate on FAN's website.](#)

This year we have a lot planned in our continued mission to care for creation and we deeply appreciate your support! FAN continues to educate, inspire, and mobilize a diverse community to advocate for clean energy policies, in the DC area and across the country. [We can't do it without the generous donations from climate lovers like you.](#)

## TONIGHT: Franciscan Federation Webinar for Black History Month

To heal the divisions and injustices of our world, Pope Francis calls for a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach at all levels: personal, social, political, economic, no matter the issue. We keep this directive in mind in all our work to combat systemic racism.

FAN's own Jason Miller will be speaking on a webinar hosted by the [Franciscan Federation](#) **TONIGHT, Feb. 22nd at 7:30pm ET / 4:30pm PT** titled, [Where Do We Go From Here?](#)



With St. Francis and Pope Francis as our guide, Jason will examine historical and modern day examples of white supremacy in the Catholic Church. This eye opening conversation promises to not only educate participants but challenge them as well. [Join us by clicking here to register.](#)

## Celebrating Faithful Democracy as Black History

The Faithful Democracy coalition will celebrate the impact of Black History on our democracy in a [webinar Town Hall gathering](#) on **Thursday, February 25th at 4:30pm ET / 1:30pm PT. All who RSVP will get access to a recording of the event.**

If not for the courageous struggle and perseverance of African Americans to be civic participants, the oldest democracy in the world



might still be an exclusionary system for white men. Learn how the [For the People Act](#) would honor that legacy with transformational federal democracy reforms.

This [faith-based Town Hall](#) will look at the racial equity benefits of the bill, how it complements the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the urgency of passage to safeguard our democracy. [RSVP by clicking here.](#)

## Efforts Continue to Stop Line 3 in Minnesota

Last week, we made you aware of the [allied climate organizations and indigenous people](#) in Minnesota working to amplify the widespread opposition to the Line 3 tar sands pipeline. The efforts continue!



In 2014, Canadian pipeline company Enbridge proposed a pipeline expansion corridor from Alberta, Canada to Superior, Wisconsin. If allowed, this would tear up a massive swath through untouched wetlands and the treaty territory of Anishinaabe peoples, through the Mississippi River headwaters to the shore of Lake Superior.

Recently the Biden Administration revoked federal permits for the Keystone XL pipeline and the same can be done for Line 3. Two separate petitions have been organized asking President Biden to take executive action to stop Line 3:

1. [Individual people of faith](#) are encouraged to sign this petition.
2. [Organizational signers](#) are encouraged to sign this petition.

We urge our members and friends to **take action by signing one or both of the above petitions** and sharing them with your networks.

## Register for NAC 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.](#)



## Join in the Sacred People, Sacred Earth Day of Action March 11, 2021

As Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people, we have a special responsibility to care for all God's Creation and hurting communities, especially in the conversation around how to recover from COVID-19. This responsibility requires us to take action in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in our nation and around the world who are simultaneously affected adversely by climate change and most severely impacted by the pandemic.



[Sacred People, Sacred Earth](#) is billed as the biggest ever multi-faith global climate day of action. On **March 11, 2021** diverse, grassroots people of faith and conscience will come together to demand real climate solutions and to lead by example. **As a co-sponsor we at FAN invite you to [join us in participating on social media](#)** and together create a powerful Franciscan call to protect God's sacred people and sacred earth!

Click [here to find an event in your local area](#) or if you are interested in organizing your own event, find useful information [here](#). This guide "[Making an Impact Close to Home](#)" offers creative ways to get involved without leaving your home.

We look forward to joining you on March 11th as we unite with Franciscans and others all over the world in sounding the alarm for the environmental crisis.

## Summary: Biden Administration's Migration-Related Executive Orders

It's been in the news since President Biden was sworn into office that on his first day, he signed 17 Executive Orders (EO) and Presidential Proclamations, including some reversing immigration policies and procedures enacted by the outgoing administration. The migration-related executive actions have addressed a wide range of issues that have long been of interest to the advocacy community. With grateful appreciation to the [Justice for Immigrants](#) campaign, we offer an overview of some of the key migration-related orders below.



[FAQ page](#) with information about the first three of these executive orders:

- [Executive Order 14010](#): "Creating a Comprehensive Regional Framework to Address the Causes of Migration, to Manage Migration Throughout North and Central America, and to Provide Safe and Orderly Processing of Asylum Seekers at the United States Border"
- [Executive Order 14011](#): "Establishment of Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families"
- [Executive Order 14012](#): "Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans"
- [Executive Order 14013](#): "Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees"

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and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration.” [FAQ on this EO](#)

In addition to EO 14013 mentioned above, President Biden proposed two new refugee resettlement goals as follows:

1. A Presidential Determination (PD) Refugee Goal of 125,000 for fiscal year (FY) 2022
2. An emergency revision of the FY 2021 Presidential Determination (PD) from 15,000 to 62,500.

The Administration will consult with Congress about these proposed PD's, as required by law, and then finalize their admission plans for FY 2021.

Finally, we were thrilled last week to see the White House [announce a sweeping immigration bill](#) that would create an eight-year path to citizenship for millions of immigrants already in the country. We will keep you updated on any new information as it becomes available.