

## The Good Shepherd

The purpose of [this Sunday's gospel](#) is to expand the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd beyond the parish priest or pastor to every Christian and church leader. The actual word 'pastor' is derived from a Latin word meaning 'shepherd.' In this gospel we are offered both comfort and challenge. The comforting good news is that the Good Shepherd knows us, provides for us and loves us. The challenge is that we are called to be good shepherds to those entrusted to our care. When introducing himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus makes three claims: first, his sheep recognize his voice, second, an emphasis on this self sacrificing life - "the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, and third, his deep desire that many other sheep follow him - "There are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well."



I was once part of a justice group called Pastors for Peace. When asked about the name, the founder of the group, Rev. Lucius Walker, said we are all pastors in the eyes of the people we serve. So Jesus shares his life of being a Good Shepherd with us. Everyone entrusted with the care of others is a Good Shepherd. We are a good shepherd by loving those entrusted to us, praying for them, spending our time and talents for their welfare, and guarding them from physical and spiritual dangers. Who are the people to whom you are a good shepherd? At the time that I am writing this reflection, I am also formulating a letter to send to an immigration judge and lawyer. It is on behalf of someone who is trying desperately to get a green card to remain in the United States with her husband and children. I feel that I am a good shepherd to her. Use this example to think of people for whom you are the good shepherd.

This Good Shepherd Sunday is celebrated after Holy Week when Jesus was put to death by the High Council. And then to their dismay and wonderment Jesus rises and is with us again on Easter Sunday. It is testimony to the truth that God's plan will prevail. Even if they reject this stone, it will still become the cornerstone that will one day be recognized. But the rejection of Jesus and his followers will not alter God's plan. The ultimate goal is to have one flock under one shepherd. It will be accomplished by Jesus laying down his life for all his sheep.

Sister Marge Wissman, OSF  
FAN Board Member

### **Suggested Action:**

Set aside some quiet time pondering "Who is a good shepherd for you and for whom are you a good shepherd?"

### **Suggested Petitions:**

That we, like Jesus, are aware of “other sheep that do not belong to this fold”. We pray...  
That we may recognize and respond and extend our shepherd’s care not only to our close neighbors but to the whole community of creation. We pray...

**Prayer by James J. Chepponis**

**“When we are lost and cannot find the way, God cares for us and keeps us safe. For God is our light and our faithful guide, who leads us with a shepherd’s care. With a Shepherd’s care, God leads us, with a father’s strength God guides us, with a mother’s love, and God nurtures us and cradles us in gentle arms.”**

**Amen**

## **Fratelli Tutti Webinar Series: Finding Sisterhood and Brotherhood to Overcome what Divides Us**

Franciscan Action Network is excited to present a [series of discussions](#) that will unpack the directives in Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* to help heal divisions and guide us towards better unity. As a way to enrich our understanding and reflection on the encyclical, we will host four conversations in relation to specific topics:



- [Fratelli Tutti on Culture and Society](#), with Kim Daniels & Heidi Schlumpf on May 5
- [Fratelli Tutti on Racism and Anti-Racism](#), with Olga Segura & Ralph McCloud on May 19
- [Fratelli Tutti on Economics](#), with Tony Annett & Meg Clark on May 26
- [Fratelli Tutti on Governance and Politics](#), with Amy Uelmann & David Cloutier on June 16

**Please note: There is a separate registration link for each discussion.** Once you register you will be emailed a unique link to join the event(s).

Each event will follow the same format with moderated discussion followed by Q&A, where attendees will be encouraged to submit questions for the panelists. The four events will each begin at 7pm ET (4pm PT) and be moderated by our own Executive Director, Stephen Schneck. [Click here to learn how to sponsor these events.](#)

We hope you will join us for these enriching discussions. **If you are unable to join us in person, we will be making recordings of the discussions available for viewing.**

**Take Action: Call Your Senator to Support USPS Board of Governors Nominees**

The Save the Post Office Coalition is urging calls to Senators to confirm President Biden's three nominees to the Board of Governors.

**Background and more info:**

The Postmaster General is not technically a presidential appointment; the position reports to an independent USPS Board of Governors, who are appointed by the president. Currently, there are four vacant seats on this board, including one governor serving a grace year.



To be a strong candidate for USPS governor, nominees must bring badly-needed diversity to the board, demonstrate a willingness to pursue innovative revenue streams like restoring postal banking, commit to strengthening service standards, and work with Congress to remove artificial barriers to USPS's financial health.

Recently, President Biden [announced](#) the nomination of three new members to the Board of Governors: **Ron Stroman, Amber McReynolds, and Anton Hajar**. Stroman was formerly the deputy postmaster general and resigned rather than endorse a suspicious hiring process; McReynolds is a leading expert and advocate for voting-by-mail; and Hajar is a labor attorney and an expert in civil rights and data law. Their respective track records of integrity, and their areas of professional expertise, qualify them each to serve as responsible stewards of the postal service's future.

Nominees to the independent USPS Board of Governors require Senate confirmation. The first and most important vote happens in the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC), and then the nominations move to the full Senate. The Save the Post Office Coalition is urging calls to Senators to confirm these three nominees to the Board.

Please [contact your Senators](#) today via phone or email and ask them to vote "yes" on all three nominations to the USPS Board of Governors.

## Take Action: Advocate for a Pathway to Citizenship

Immigrant essential workers have been helping our communities endure this pandemic for over a year now, yet they have often been treated as expendable. In many ways, the U.S. benefits from their labor while disregarding their humanity.

Now is the time to fight for a pathway to citizenship for essential workers and their families, farmworkers, and our neighbors with DACA and TPS!



1. **Sign on to this Interfaith Immigration Coalition letter** - Faith leaders, people of faith, and faith organizations and denominations are invited to sign on to [this letter](#) to the Biden administration and Congressional leaders. **The deadline to sign is Friday, April 23!**
  - a. **Individual** faith leaders and people of faith are invited to [sign here](#).



- b. Faith communities and faith-based **organizations** are invited to [sign here](#).
2. **Amplify on Social Media** - [Use this toolkit](#) to engage in advocacy and invite others to take action by posting on social media. Share this [Facebook post](#) and [this Tweet](#) to start spreading the word!
3. **Engage Local Media** - Write a Letter to the Editor using the guide [in this toolkit](#).
4. Plan on attending this 1.5 hour **virtual training** to learn best practices for engaging in federal immigration policy advocacy. [More info here](#)

Our undocumented neighbors deserve safety, protection, and an official welcome in the U.S. Raise your voice today!

## Take Action: Advocate for Welcoming Refugees

While the Biden Administration has taken many important steps for social justice, we are frustrated with [last week's decision](#) to maintain the all-time lowest refugee admissions cap for this year. At this point, tens of thousands of people who *have already completed the complex process for resettling in the U.S.* have been stranded abroad, often in overcrowded refugee camps where many have been waiting for years. Franciscan Action Network [released a statement](#) urging action just a day before hearing the disappointing news that this year's Presidential Determination will remain at 15,000. Our friends at Church World Service have put together an action alert to voice our opposition. [Please click here to take action today](#).



Funding needs are projected to increase substantially next year, and with this latest development it is more important for us to make our voices heard to Members of Congress. Our friends at Church World Service put together two faith letters urging robust funding be allocated for refugees, asylum seekers, and unaccompanied children in the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Please take a moment to sign on using these links:

**Individual Faith Leaders:** Sign on using this form: <http://bit.ly/FY22FundingFaithLeaders>.

**Faith Organizations:** Sign on using this form: <https://bit.ly/FY22FundingFaithOrgs>.

Thank you for taking action - and please share this information with your networks. FAN will continue to advocate for a larger refugee resettlement cap and prays that the President will change his mind.

## Updates on the Solidarity with Seafarers Campaign

We have mentioned in this newsletter about the [Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking](#) (CCOAH) Solidarity with Seafarers campaign that is focused on the impact of all men and women who work at sea. The recent [blockage of the Suez Canal](#) has put the importance of sea transport in the news. You can [read more about the campaign here](#).

This campaign is in preparation for and in honor



of May 22nd – the National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and the People of the Sea. Similarly, the Campaign will culminate on June 25, 2021 – The Day of the Seafarer. **We invite you to continue to be involved using the resources below, which have been updated:**

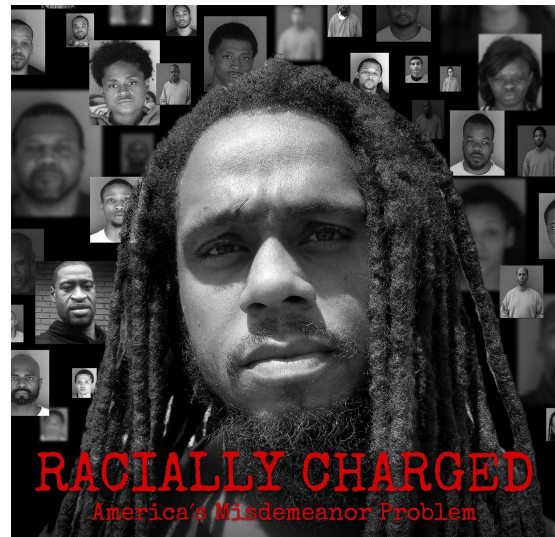
- This [Resource Booklet](#) contains backgrounders, prayers, bulletin inserts, social media, and calls to action to help us make a difference in the lives of seafarers and fishers.
- This [Prayer Service](#) in honor of Our Lady Star of the Sea, the protector of seafarers and fishers.
- This set of [social media graphics](#) for people of faith to use to promote the hard work and sacrifice of seafarers who toil at sea.
- [Sign this petition to Walmart](#) urging they sign the Neptune Declaration for Seafarer Welfare and Crew Change to help prevent labor trafficking and support these essential workers.

We will continue to bring you updated information and resources to use to bring attention to our brothers and sisters who work at sea.

## Sign up to Host a Screening of “Racially Charged”

In light of the Derek Chauvin trial and the killing of Daunte Wright by police in Minneapolis, we need to have deeper conversations about policing and racial equality in our justice system. Our good friends at [Brave New Films](#) hope their new film will educate and shed light on the criminal justice problem in America and what we can do to help create lasting change.

The short documentary called **Racially Charged: America's Misdemeanor Problem** covers the racial inequality inherent in our criminal justice system which charges 13 million Americans a year, mostly poor, Black and brown people, with misdemeanors. [View the trailer and see more about the film here.](#)



We urge our members and friends to sign up to host your own virtual screening of [Racially Charged here](#). Once you sign up to host a screening, you'll receive a link to download the film, a discussion guide, and information on how to host a virtual screening.