

Publication Date: May 10, 2021

Reflection Date: May 16, 2021 - The Ascension of the Lord/7th Sunday of Easter

“These signs will accompany those who believe,...”

Image by [Dimitris Vetsikas](#) from [Pixabay](#)

It is without a doubt that in our world there is much suffering.

Thinking back on Pope Francis's visit to the Church of Iraq in March of this year, we saw a Church that had been overwhelmed by violence, hatred, and real persecution to the breaking point. Most of the Church buildings had been desecrated and far too many of the believers killed or displaced by a political movement of hatred and violence.



It took even more violence to free up and hopefully give this part of our Church a new chance! Yet, there is a new spring in the Church and people that show us how God works in our midst, in spite of ourselves.

The early Church at the time of the writing of [this week's readings](#) was in a similar uncertainty. The Apostolate and the believers were just adjusting to Christ being put to death and rising again. But somehow Jesus was in their midst preparing them for their future call and destiny. The readings call out to us to understand that for those who believe, great things are yet to happen. Perhaps the greatest promoter of this is Blessed Solanus Casey, a Capuchin who trusted in God's providence and intercession for the many who came to him for advice, assistance, and direction in their lives. He would tell so many (and would also tell us now) to "Thank God ahead of time!" And he was right.

For those of us who encounter the margins of our Church and Society we know that somehow God still steps into the dialogue and touches and changes hearts. After a time of great need, there is always a new wave of the Spirit that moves in our midst, changes our lives and gives us a new beginning.

Let us pray for a greater outpouring of the Spirit that changes us to be more welcoming of the stranger, willing to stand with the marginalized and outsiders of society, and speak truth to power.

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Each day this week, say a short prayer to the Holy Spirit to speak through your words and deeds.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those persecuted for their faith, may they instead encounter tolerance and acceptance.
We pray...

For all those dealing with violence in their countries, may the Risen Lord of Peace descend into every heart. We pray...

Collect Prayer (From the Vigil Mass for the Ascension of the Lord)

**O God, whose Son today ascended to the heavens
as the Apostles looked on,
grant, we pray, that, in accordance with his promise,
we may be worthy for him to live with us always on earth,
and we with him in heaven.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

Amen.

Fratelli Tutti on Culture and Society Webinar a Success

Last week, Franciscan Action Network hosted the first in a [series of four discussions](#) on *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis' latest encyclical. Our panelists, Kim Daniels and Heidi Schlumpf went deeply into the message of the encyclical, specifically about solidarity, community, family, friendship, and the common good and how we can engage in a pluralistic society while avoiding "tribalism." There was rich conversation and thought-provoking questions.



If you missed it, you can [access the recording here](#).

We hope you will join us for our **second discussion of the series**, [Fratelli Tutti on Racism and Anti-Racism](#), on **May 19, 2021 at 7pm ET (4pm PT)**, where we will welcome Olga Segura and Ralph McCloud to help us consider the divisions caused by racism and how to overcome them. **Please note, even if you joined us in last week's discussion, you must register separately for the next in the series.**

Register for our second discussion by clicking here: <https://tinyurl.com/mby4p69s>

Webinar: Citizenship for All - Faith Voices Needed for Advocacy

Please join the Interfaith Immigration Coalition on a [webinar](#) to learn how you and your faith communities can take action right now and urge Congress to take bold, humane, and timely action for all 11 million undocumented immigrants.



Simultaneous Spanish Translations available.

We hope you will join us on **Wednesday May 12th at 7:30pm ET/ 6:30pm CT/ 5:30pm MT/ 4:30pm PT** at the [Citizenship for All: Faith voices needed for Advocacy webinar](#), where you'll learn:

- About the reconciliation process and why it is important for advocacy
- The current state of play in Congress and its timeline
- How to begin advocating immediately

May is a critical month for faith communities to act alongside directly-impacted immigrants' groups and leaders and immigrant rights organizations. In the coming weeks, there will be many opportunities to increase pressure on the Biden administration and Congress to include citizenship for Dreamers, TPS holders, and essential workers—including farmworkers—in the next recovery/reconciliation package. [RSVP today](#).

Webinar: Responding to Child Migration in a New Era

It has been difficult to understand the situation immigrant children currently face at the U.S. southern border.

On **Tuesday, May 18 at 1pm ET / 12pm CT / 11am MT / 10am PT**, experts from the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#) (NIJC) will host a [virtual event](#) to discuss the process unaccompanied children face in the United States, the current response from the Biden administration, and how NIJC and others are advocating for the protections and long-term solutions necessary to meet the needs of unaccompanied children and their families. Once you [register](#), you will receive a link to join the event.



We have seen large numbers of children seeking protection and security in this country before and know there are steps that can be taken to ensure their safety and prevent others from needing to flee their homes in the future. If you can't join in live, [register anyway](#) to get the recording of the event afterwards.

Citizens' Climate Lobby Catholic Conference: Call to Action to Care for Our Common Home

Catholics are a large demographic in Congress. About 30% of Congress self identifies as Catholic as well as President Biden. We hope that connecting with Catholic members of Congress through their faith will allow passage of meaningful legislation for the common good.



This has inspired the Citizens' Climate Lobby's Catholic Action Team to host a virtual [CCL Catholic Conference: Call to Action to](#)

[Care for Our Common Home](#), on **Saturday, May 15th from 12-4pm ET / 9a-12pm PT.**

There is an inspiring list of speakers lined up for the event, including Bishop John Stowe, OFM from the Diocese of Lexington, Bishop Robert McElroy from the Diocese of San Diego, and Jose Aguto from Catholic Climate Covenant. [Click here to learn more and register.](#)

Laudato Si' Week Coming May 16-25th

[Laudato Si' week](#) began as a way to celebrate the first anniversary of Pope Francis' papal encyclical letter, "*Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home.*"



The encyclical has helped the world's 1.3 billion Catholics better understand that "everything is connected" and put millennia of Catholic teaching in the context of today's ecological crisis and climate emergency.

This year, [Laudato Si' week](#) will be held **May 16-25**, and promises to be a celebration of the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion.

[Laudato Si' Week 2021](#) will also be a time to reflect on what the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us and prepare for the future with hope. During the week, we will learn, dialogue, and act for our common home. Together we will take steps in our journey toward ecological conversion. [Click here](#) to register and find resources and events.

Save the Date: June 4th is National Gun Violence Awareness Day

June 4th is National Gun Violence Awareness Day, when we start [Wear Orange](#) Weekend to honor the people shot and killed or wounded by gun violence, and the survivors of gun violence. We honor them and renew our commitment to ending gun violence in America by taking action and taking part in Wear Orange.



Orange is the color that [Hadiya Pendleton](#)'s friends wore in her honor when she was shot and killed in Chicago at the age of 15 — just one week after performing at President Obama's 2nd inaugural parade in 2013. Since then orange has been the defining color of the gun violence prevention movement.

We hope you will save the date and put a big orange sticker on your calendar for June 4th to honor all victims of gun violence. If you need some swag, [click here to shop](#) the new Wear Orange designs from [Everytown for Gun Safety](#).

We can end gun violence.