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Reflection Date: July 18, 2021 - 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gathering Together and Sharing

The [Readings for this Sunday](#) take on a different lens, at least for myself.

This past week I went to a classmate's memorial Mass held outside, went into a store, voted at a polling location and finally went to a restaurant.

It seemed a little strange after over a year of limiting my outings to medical appointments only. In fact, to be honest I was a little nervous and truthfully, I cheated a little by voting early, knowing that there would not be as many people there as on the official election day. Needless to say it was great to share what I did and saw each night at dinner.



In the Gospel reading from Mark, the disciples came back from their day to discuss with Jesus what they had done and experienced that day. Too many times we do not bring our lives to God, after all, God knows. But there is something about talking, sharing our lives that make us more alive through the Presence and Power of God.

Sharing our lives together brings us into deeper communion with each other and with God. God wants to be a part of our lives. Just as God calls us to accompany the poor and forgotten, so God wants to do the same for us.

Also notice that Jesus wants the disciples to discuss their day with each other. Over the past year we had little opportunities to do this. Zoom might be an adequate substitute, but there's something about physically gathering around a table, sharing and being fed. The Holy Spirit is always present in a group of two to three or more and empowers us to accept each other and those whom we meet. By that sharing and acceptance, the Holy Spirit empowers us to action. So hear the call to come away, share with others, accept the stranger and the signs and wonders will again be a part of our lives.

Bro. Paul Crawford, OFM, Cap., MSW
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

This week, ask God, "Who can I gather with or who can I bring to my table?" and at the end of each day make time to share your day with God.

Suggested Petitions:

May we long to share our good days and bad days with God. We pray...

May we have opportunities to gather and share our lives with friends and family. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,
they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.
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

Save the Date: Franciscan Action Network Annual Gala Benefit

We hope you will **save the date** and plan on joining the staff and board of Franciscan Action Network at our annual gala
Thursday, October 7th at 7:30pm ET (4:30pm PT).

We are excited to announce virtual attendance will be made available again so that folks from all over the country can join us to celebrate.

Last year's event was a great success and we are gearing up for another fun evening. Won't you join us?

Watch our [website](#) for more information.



Take Action: Sign the Petition for Healthy Planet, Healthy People

2021 is a super year for global meetings related to caring for our earth - there are two United Nations summits coming up where world leaders have the power to act boldly to care for creation.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been reminded that "everything is interconnected". We are [asking](#) the leaders of these global gatherings to urgently align national and global commitments with limiting warming to 1.5°C at most, and no more biodiversity loss that's harming the present and future of our common home!

It will take massive public pressure to ensure



leaders are not influenced by corporate lobbyists who are concerned about profit over people and the planet. [Click here to sign and share the petition.](#)

One powerful way individuals and institutions can encourage world leaders to boldly act for climate and ecological justice is to [gather petition signatures](#) on the Biodiversity and Climate petition (HEALTHY PLANET HEALTHY PEOPLE) that has been developed with the input of many Catholic actors worldwide. Get [more information about the campaign here](#).

Help us Fulfill our Commitment to the Belonging Begins with Us Campaign

Franciscan Action Network is proud to be partnering with the [Ad Council](#) and the [American Immigration Council](#) on the [Belonging Begins with Us](#) campaign to foster a more welcoming nation where everyone – regardless of background – feels they belong.

Using video homilies from priests all over the country, we aim to help in finding points of connection and shared experiences to create a more welcoming nation where everyone belongs. This [Sunday's homily is by Fr. Joe Newman, OSFS](#) of St. Francis de Sales School in Toledo, Ohio.



We are in need of priests willing to help us out by recording a homily for us. If you need help recording a homily we can set up a zoom call and record it together. See some examples by [clicking here](#).

Please contact [Jason Miller](#) with any questions or to [sign up click here](#).

New Report Confirms Continued Harms to Asylum Seekers

Our friends at the [Hope Border Institute](#) partnered with [Human Rights First](#) to issue a report last week on the continued harms of expelling asylum seekers under the Trump Administration's Title 42 policy.

Disorderly and Inhumane: Biden Administration Continues to Expel Asylum Seekers to Danger While U.S. Border Communities Stand Ready to Welcome focuses on the El Paso-Ciudad Juárez region where the expulsion policy continues to block asylum seekers from Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela and other countries from access to the U.S. asylum system. The findings confirm that [expelled](#) families and adults are immediately targeted for kidnapping and violence.

[Download the full report by clicking here.](#)



Webinar: Catholic Church's Work with Immigrants in

the U.S. in a Period of Crisis

This **Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 2pm ET (11am PT)**, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) will host a [webinar and discussion](#) on its forthcoming report,



The CRISIS Survey: The Catholic Church's Work with Immigrants in the United States in a Period of Crisis.

CMS administered the Catholic Refugee and Immigrant Service Integration Survey (the “CRISIS Survey”) from December 14, 2020 through February 5, 2021. This survey explored the work of Catholic institutions during the Trump administration and the COVID-19 pandemic. The CRISIS Survey documents the reach, diversity, and productivity of Catholic institutions that worked with immigrants and refugees during a pandemic which particularly devastated their communities and an administration whose policies and rhetoric made their work far more difficult.

The report's authors will share key findings and recommendations and several guests will offer remarks and reflections. [Register to join the webinar here.](#)

Take Action: Plan a ‘Good Trouble Candlelight Vigil’ on July 17th

America is at a crossroads.

Six months have passed since the failed attack on our nation and our democracy on January 6th. Since that day, anti-voter laws have been passed in states all over the country and the Supreme Court’s recent rulings have made clear that it will not act to protect the sacred right to vote. The ‘For the People Act’ and the ‘John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act’ are pieces of legislation that can ensure our democracy is truly “of the people, by the people, and for the people.”



On July 17th, the one year mark of the passing of Rep. John Lewis, activists across the country will [make good trouble](#) by hosting and attending [Good Trouble for Democracy candlelight vigils](#) to **demand that Congress act to protect our freedom to vote and rebuild our democracy.**

Planning an event can be a simple and incredibly impactful way to contribute to this movement for democracy. [Sign up at this link to get started](#). All you need to do is pick a good location at sundown. Our friends in various good governance groups will mail you materials, publicize your event and support you in getting media coverage. You will be provided optional trainings to help you plan.

Let's all commit to making Good Trouble.

Conference: The Franciscan Way 2021 and Beyond

The [Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis](#) and the Sisters of Charity Foundation are sponsoring an interactive virtual conference **from July 23, 2021 to July 24, 2021**. The [Franciscan Way 2021 and Beyond](#) will explore the needs of the future, and identify what is emerging in the Franciscan Movement today.

The first night will be dedicated to the Keynote speaker, Athena Calogeras Godet, who is an educator, health care advocate, community motivator, writer and editor of Haversack, a Franciscan review. The second day will have a morning of panelists reflecting on the Franciscan charism and its emergence in our time. In the afternoon, attendees will have the opportunity to engage in small and large group discussions. [Click here for more info.](#)

The conference is being offered free of charge. [RSVP to attend by clicking here.](#)