

Trust and Hope in the Lord

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The one thing we can always count on in times of hardship and struggle is the hope that things will get better. Those who trust in the Lord and whose hope is in the Lord are blessed indeed. This is the promise from the Prophet Jeremiah as well as our Psalmist in our readings for next [Sunday, the 6th in Ordinary Time](#). It is easy to see the degradation and the destruction of our world and lose sight of the hope that God promises. Those who are poor, hungry, in misery and pain are blessed and will have God's grace and mercy. And those who are rich, filled, and living an abundant life, will meet their recompense – especially if they do not consider those who live without the basic necessities of life.



Francis of Assisi was very well off, yet he let go of his material things to have the greater things. This is the paradox of living the gospel – you give up much to gain much more. This is the hope that is spoken of. The hope that God is ever present and always faithful to grant us more than we need when we put our hope and trust in him. This is not an easy task for most of us. For those of us who have many possessions, it is difficult to part with those material items lest we feel we are losing out on something. But it is in giving that we receive, as the familiar prayer of peace states. It is in losing our life that we gain life.

In these times of economic uncertainty, racial unrest, and unspeakable violence—all during a raging pandemic—it is difficult to find hope or to trust in anything we cannot see. Yet we are told by the Prophet and the Psalmist that we are blessed if we hope in the Lord. Although we cannot see the sun now, all we need to do is wait for the rain to stop – as we know it surely will. This hope and trust are part of our daily conversion from darkness to the light of Christ. We cannot appreciate the beautiful butterflies without the dying of the caterpillars. As our Lord tells us, we will always have the poor with us. Without having the poor in our midst, for what would there be to strive?

The Evangelist Luke's account of Jesus' Sermon on the Plain gives us the stark reality of the difference between the haves and the have nots; those who are blessed and those who are woeful. Luke reminds us, quite harshly, that in this life there are blessings and there is misery. Those who have much and do not remember those who go without will be miserable later. But the hope is that we will remember those who are poor, needy, and hungry and take the action to help alleviate their suffering. Let us not simply walk past those who are in need, for they are God's messengers sent to show us the way of love and mercy.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

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Animator of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for the Secular Franciscan Order

Suggested Action:

Contemplate the blessings you received at times in your life when you felt hopeless. Say a prayer to God asking for renewed trust in the Lord.

Suggested Petitions:

For the needy, hungry, and those made poor. May their needs be met by good Christian people. We pray...

For those who feel hopeless. May they have renewed trust and faith in God. 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
God, for ever and ever.

Amen

Assessment of the Biden-Harris Root Causes Strategy in Central America

The Root Causes Initiative is a coalition of grassroots and faith-based organizations in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and the US working on the reasons for forced migration. This initiative was tasked with analysis of civil society

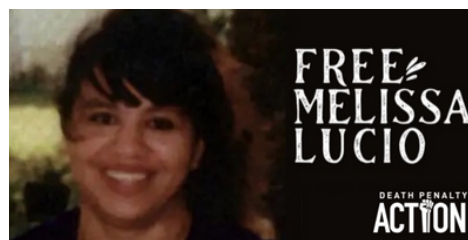
organizations and publicly available data along with a review of the impact of \$400 million in foreign aid committed to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras in 2021. They have released a [comprehensive report](#) on the Biden administration's actions and progress in addressing the drivers of migration from Central America and the humane management of migrants at the US-Mexico border.

Iniciativa Causas Raíz ROOT CAUSES INITIATIVE

The report is a grassroots critique of the administration's strategies and provides critical recommendations in four key areas to address the major drivers of forced migration in the region. **Read the [full report by clicking here](#).**

Take Action to #FreeMelissaLucio

Melissa E. Lucio is a Texas native, born in Lubbock, TX, in June, 1969. She has spent over a decade on death row in Texas for a crime she did not commit and now faces an execution date of April 27, 2022 for the murder of her two-year-old daughter Mariah in 2007. Our mission to promote a consistent ethic of life calls us to [support Melissa's appeal](#).



The primary evidence used in her conviction came from a seven hour coercive interrogation on the night of Mariah's death. The prosecutor in her case is now serving a 13 year prison sentence for bribery. Melissa has maintained her innocence ever since she was arrested. [Click this link to take action](#): read more about her story, sign the petition, and contact Texas officials.

Advocate: Support Climate Investments and the Child Tax Credit

Last year, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) outlined a moral framework in furtherance of just infrastructure policies. In a [letter to Congress](#), they urged work to focus on "policies that will help those on the margins of society, strengthen families, protect religious freedom, promote care for creation, and respect the rights and dignity of every human life."



Following up on this message, the USCCB has now developed this [action](#) for Catholics to contact their Members of Congress to urge support of climate investments and the Child Tax Credit. [Take action by clicking here](#).

Conference on the Campaign for Fair Food and Wendy's Boycott

The [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#) (CIW) is planning a major action in early April related to an ongoing boycott of Wendy's due to the company's unfair practices toward farmworkers.

This week, CIW will host a faith solidarity Zoom conference to discuss CIW's Campaign for Fair Food, the effects of COVID-19 on the farmworker community, and ways to be in solidarity with the Wendy's Boycott.



Join us to learn how you can take action to support farmworker justice

JOIN US WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 9TH OR THURSDAY FEBRUARY 10TH FROM 11-12 PM FOR A ZOOM CONFERENCE DISCUSSING:

- THE LATEST ON THE COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS' (CIW) CAMPAIGN FOR FAIR FOOD
- HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED FARMWORKERS
- HOW YOU CAN BE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE WENDY'S BOYCOTT THIS SPRING

TO REGISTER, USE THIS LINK: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/FAITHSOLIDARITY](https://bit.ly/faithsolidarity)

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT UREL AT UREL@ALLIANCEFORFAIRFOOD.ORG OR AT 305-305-1212

There are **two (2) Zoom meeting dates to choose from** - Wednesday, Feb. 9 at 11am ET (8am PT) or Thursday, Feb. 10 at 11am ET (8am PT) - **you only need to attend one**. [Please fill out this form to register](#).

Take Action: Call for a Global Plastics Treaty

Plastic is poisoning life on earth.

We have seen various forms of plastic choking life in the deepest oceans and on the highest mountains. Now shocking studies are finding plastic pollution everywhere: in the rain, our food, our drinking water, even in the human placenta. Tiny, invisible pieces of



plastic can travel around the world through water and air, contaminating all life on earth. Right now, a movement is underway calling for a global legal framework regulating the use of plastic.

We urge our members and friends to take action today and sign **both of these initiatives**:

Earth Day campaign (Domestic): [Click to sign](#)
and

Avaaz campaign (International): [Click to sign](#)

Film Screening and Discussion: Stranger/Sister

The United States is experiencing a surge in hate crimes. Muslim and Jewish communities are particularly at risk. Stranger/Sister is the story of two ordinary women, one Muslim and one Jewish, who dare to believe they can join hands to stop the wave of hate.

Overcoming a long history of distrust between their two communities, they build a movement that turns strangers into sisters, challenging our assumptions about how to fight hate in America. Their story is brought to light in the 45 min documentary, Stranger/Sister Trailer. [Click here to watch the trailer.](#)

This **Wednesday, Feb. 9th at 6:30pm ET (3:30pm PT)** join in a virtual screening and panel style discussion of the film and its topics hosted by the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. [Click here for more info and to register.](#)



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

On the **second Wednesday of each month** we host members of [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) from all over the country for a monthly national FJC call.

These calls allow members to hear about the work FAN is doing in DC and offer space for FAN staff to hear what the FJC members are doing in their local community. Sharing and discussion are always built into these meetings so we can learn from each other's personal experiences in different parts of the country.

We hope you are able to join us on the next call, **February 9th at 3pm ET (12pm PT)**. For information about the call or about Franciscan Justice Circles, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org.

