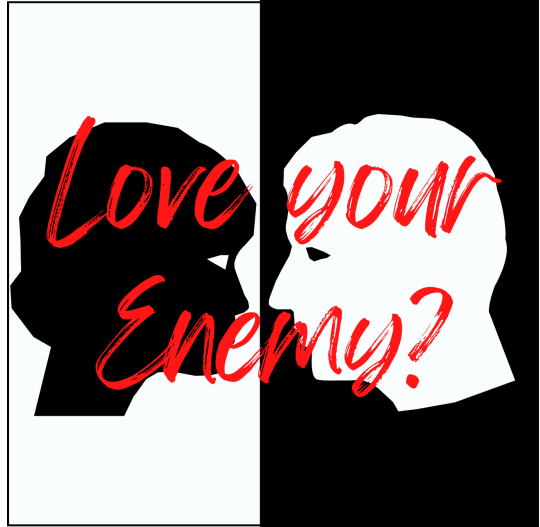


Love Your Enemies?

In our Gospel reading for the [Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), Jesus says: “To you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” Though these words are startling, Jesus does not stop there. He continues: “To the person who strikes you on one cheek, offer the other one as well.”

Jesus’ disciples must have been puzzled, even shocked, by his command to love their enemies and turn the other cheek. We too may be taken aback by Jesus’ words. We live in a world marked by gun violence, political polarization and domestic abuse.

What does it mean to love your enemy in a world scarred by terrorism? What does “turn the other cheek” look like in 2022?



Jesus’ uncompromising words challenge us at the deepest level of our being. Most likely, each one of us has been wounded, betrayed or rejected at different times in our lives. And, most likely, each of us has also wounded, betrayed or rejected others, even friends and family. It is all part of our human condition.

Notice that Jesus does not say “like” your enemies. He is not asking us to make best friends of our opponents. But he is commanding that we love them. Jesus doesn’t ask for miracles, but continually invites us not only to free the person who wounds us, but also to free ourselves from the pain, anger and hurt that binds us.

Jesus’ command to “turn the other cheek” is not meant to be an act of weak submission. That would not fit Jesus. Instead, turning the other cheek requires great courage and inner strength. Jesus set the example himself when he is struck in the face during his trial. By refusing to return violence for violence, Jesus unmask violence for what it is. Turning the other cheek may not succeed in checking the violence of others, but it preserves the inner dignity and freedom of the one who was struck.

How do we put Jesus’ teaching into effect? Is it merely a matter of will-power or wishing it so? Or does it require a conversion at the deepest level of our being, to see things and act as Jesus does? Jesus’ capacity to love enemies came from his intimacy with God; it is the consequence of his prayer. If we desire the same clarity and freedom, we need to nurture intimacy with God. Time spent seeking God is the key to inner freedom, empowering genuine love for others, even for enemies.

Suggested Action:

Pray for someone who has hurt you and pray for freedom from the hurt that resulted.
Reflect on the [Vow of Nonviolence at Pax Christi USA](#).

Suggested Petitions:

May those who suffer from violence find healing of body and spirit. Loving God, hear our prayer.
May we treat Mother Earth, our common home, with gentle, nonviolent care. Loving God, hear our prayer.

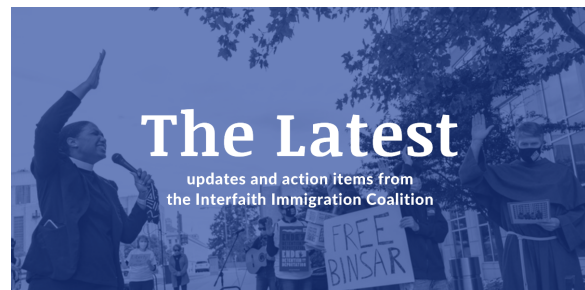
Collect Prayer:

**Grant, we pray, almighty God
that, always pondering spiritual things,
we may carry out in both word and deed
that which is 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

The Latest Advocacy Opportunities in Support of Immigrants

A bi-monthly newsletter published by our good friends at [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) supplies the latest ways to take action in support of our migrant sisters and brothers.



Uplift Black voices and immigrant advocacy this Black History Month

- [Using this toolkit](#), join in highlighting the ongoing mistreatment and expulsions of Haitians and other Black immigrants, refugees, and asylees and calling for an immigration system that respects and safeguards Black lives.

Webinar: From Rhetoric to Reality, Feb. 15 at 4pm ET

- [Register here](#) to join Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach for a discussion on what's really happening on the US-Mexico border and how people of faith can stand in solidarity with migrants and border communities.

Save the date: FCNL young adults lobby weekend, Mar. 12-15

- [Register by Feb. 25](#) to gather in DC or online with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) for an advocacy conference and day of action focused on advancing a pathway to citizenship for immigrants.

The Most Recent News on Gun Violence Prevention

The Biden Administration [recently announced](#) additional actions to reduce gun crime and make communities safer. These new actions are meant



to build on the [five-part, comprehensive strategy](#) announced last June meant to tackle the persistent spike in gun crimes due to the pandemic.

This is good news because research from [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) shows that fewer people die by gun violence in states with strong gun safety laws. They have released their updated research comparing gun policy across the country, scoring every state on the strength of its gun laws and comparing it with its rate of gun violence. [Find your state's rank by clicking here.](#)

However, there is a new wave of especially dangerous “permitless carry” gun bills being passed across the country. Permitless carry laws allow people to carry concealed handguns in public without a permit, without training, and without a background check. Responsible gun owners, law enforcement, and the majority of Americans all oppose permitless carry.

We must continue to advocate for common sense gun safety laws in order to create a more peaceful society.

Sign the Petition: Tell the President ‘Climate Can’t Wait’

[Climate can’t wait.](#) Every day of inaction costs us dearly. We have all seen the impacts of climate change in the forms of wildfires, droughts, superstorms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and more. We have a moral responsibility as a nation, and a sacred task as people of faith, to care for our climate and to leave a safe and thriving world for future generations. That’s why we need to pass the \$550 billion in investments that will deliver on climate, justice, jobs, and clean energy.

The Build Back Better Act includes the most significant climate and clean energy investments ever- and it will create jobs and protect clean air and clean water for all. Add your name to this [petition to President Biden](#) calling on him to keep his promise to take meaningful action on climate, justice, and clean energy.

Additionally, we want you to be aware of the [Environmental Justice for All Act](#). This is proposed legislation rooted in the moral principle that all people have the right to clear air, clean water, access to parks, and a just transition from fossil fuel industries. [Read about it here.](#)



Webinar: Nuclear Weapons and Human Rights

In October 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) affirmed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons violate the Right to Life, and that there is an obligation under international human rights law to provide adequate reparation to the victims of nuclear testing and use.

Aligned with this affirmation, on **Monday February 28 at 10am Eastern (7am Pacific)**, Abolition2000 will host "[Nuclear Weapons and Human Rights](#)", an intergenerational



online event to commemorate Nuclear Remembrance Day and World Future Day.

The event will bring together young leaders from areas impacted by nuclear tests (Marshall Islands and Kazakhstan) to discuss and advance the human right to a nuclear-weapon-free future. [Click here to register.](#)

Several Partner Organizations Have Employment Opportunities

Recently, we have heard from several of our partner organizations who are looking to fill various job openings. If you know of anyone who might be a good fit for one of these positions, please forward this information on.

1. **The Franciscan Federation** is looking for an [executive director](#)
2. **Franciscan Peace Center in Clinton, IA** is looking for [Director of Programming](#)
3. **Franciscan Mission Service** is hiring an [Associate Director](#)
4. **The U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking** is looking for an [executive director](#)



Live in DC? Join Tuesdays with Ignatius at the Washington Retreat House

The Society of Jesus has designated 2021-2022 as the "Ignatian Year" marking the 500th anniversary of St. Ignatius' conversion brought about by a life-changing cannonball injury. St. Ignatius believed that our God is an active God who is always inviting each of us to deeper relationship.



To celebrate, our good friends the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement are hosting "[Tuesdays with Ignatius](#)" at the Washington Retreat House in Washington, DC each Tuesday evening through May. The series will assist participants in noticing and celebrating the Sacred newness in our daily lives.

Each session will include periods of personal reflection, contemplation, and fellowship. Cinematic and musical excerpts will be utilized to illustrate session themes. All are welcome to attend one or all sessions. [Find more information by clicking here.](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

"...where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and



inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.” (Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ 158)

Are you called to join a local grassroots movement that seeks to advocate for the common good? Franciscan Justice Circles are forming around the country and we’d love to [help connect you](#) to an existing Circle or support you in starting one in your area.

This week the following Circles will be meeting via zoom: Washington State/Louisiana, Virtual (non-location-based) Circle, Connecticut-Rhode Island, and Cincinnati Tri-State. Please [contact us](#) for details!