

Welcome with Forgiveness and Love

Image by [Jeong Eun Lee](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The Scriptures for the [fourth Sunday of Lent](#) emphasize forgiveness and love! In the first reading, the Israelites have crossed the Jordan and reached the Promised Land. They complained a lot on their way. But when they finally reached the Promised Land, God welcomed them and invited them to celebrate the Passover for the first time in 40 years. He did not remind them of all their complaining.

Sometimes misery can make us repent and bring us back to Jesus. In the Gospel reading, we hear the familiar story of the Prodigal Son. Maybe deep down the father knew that the son would come back to him and for months had anticipated his return and yearned for it. The father started to prepare the welcome home celebration for his son as soon as he saw him coming. The father really did not listen to his son's apology but welcomed him back out of forgiveness and love. David Wyte, in his book *Consolations* says, "we might as well begin forgiving at the beginning of any drama rather than put ourselves through the full cycle of festering incapacitation, reluctant hearing and eventual blessing." This is what the father did; he reconciled right away. We do not know if the son was just glad to get out of a bad situation or if he even repented. It does not mean that the father was not hurt or angry at his son's departure but welcoming him back was more important.



This reading brings to mind the parable of the lost sheep and emphasizes that God is accessible to all, even those who were sinners or strayed from God's path. When Jesus went off to find the lost sheep, God knew that the 99 would be okay but could not let one of them go. So Jesus went after the one lost sheep and that one lost sheep could be one of us.

Returning to the Gospel story, the father who cared for both of his sons noticed that his oldest son did not come in to join the party. The eldest son is hurt and tells his father how he had been there every day for him, does his job, lives properly and obeys the rules. For all his righteousness, he refuses to recognize his privilege. The father says to him "Son, you are always with me and all I have is yours." But the oldest son at this time cannot accept both/and; it must be either/or. For him, his father is too loving and too accepting. Yet this is the father that Jesus came to reveal to all of us!

Sr. Marge Wissman, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggestion action:

St. Francis said family feeling must replace tribal thinking if you are to make room in this world for everyone. Whom do I think of as *not* my brother and sister? This week, seek an opportunity to connect with that person, or at the very least learn more about them with an honest open heart.

Suggested Petitions:

For the lost and the abandoned and for those who offer a welcoming hand, we pray...
For youth workers and counselors called to offer hope and life-affirming options to our young people, we pray...

Prayer:

Rejoicing Father, you celebrate when one of your lost children is found because no one is worthless to you. We stand humbled and in awe that you would count us among your most prized possessions. Give us eyes to see the priceless value of every living soul for the sake of the one who became human for the sake of our souls, Jesus Christ, our seeker.

Amen

FAN is hiring! Come work with us

The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is seeking a new [associate for campaigns and development](#). This is a full-time staff position, located in NE Washington DC, and is open immediately. FAN is a 501(c)3 organization and is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community among staff, board, and our broader network.

The associate for campaigns and development will work with the executive director, the director of Franciscan Justice Circles, and other staff to expand and strengthen FAN's network of Franciscan-hearted people who seek to combine Gospel values and the Franciscan charism with effective advocacy for justice, peace, the integrity of creation, and human dignity.



For the full job description and application instructions, [click here](#). FAN will accept rolling applications until the position is filled with an end date no later than April 30, 2021. **Please forward this information to anyone you know who might be interested.**

Victory: Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was Reauthorized

We want to be sure you saw the news that the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) passed both the House of Representatives and the Senate as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 (better known as the omnibus package). [President Biden](#) signed the reauthorization last week. [Watch his comments here](#)

**CONGRESS PASSED
THE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
REAUTHORIZATION**

which begin at minute 35.

This victory is in part thanks to your advocacy. Without committed people taking concerned action, change doesn't happen. Through perseverance and resilience for many years, we are now able to celebrate. So let's celebrate this especially sweet success as we mark Women's History Month.

Webinar: Meeting the Moment with our Power

US Climate Action Network (USCAN) is hosting a conversation about [meeting the moment with our power](#) **March 24th 2:30 pm ET/ 1:30 pm CT/ 11:30 am PT.**

With the upcoming Supreme Court Case on the ability to regulate greenhouse gasses under the Clean Air Act our good friends at USCAN will host a 90 minute discussion about what happened, any plans to escalate in the event of a bad outcome, and how escalations can be tied to demands around executive orders, state action, and more.

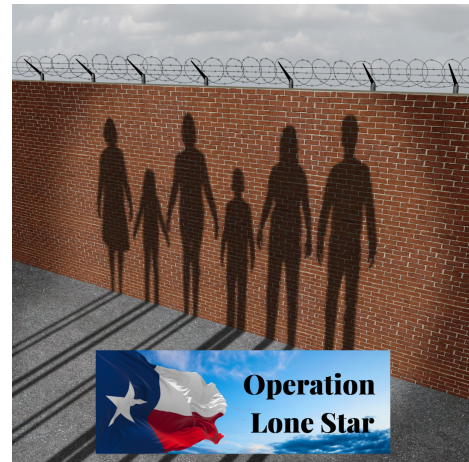
Click here to [RSVP today](#).



Panel Discussion on Texas' Operation Lone Star

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Region 12 will host a webinar discussion of the faith response to Texas' Operation Lone Star on **Tuesday, March 22, 2022 at 3pm ET/2pm CT/1pm MT/12pm PT** and its potential implications for the nation.

This unprecedented "catch and jail" policy is trampling immigrant rights, militarizing the border, and ignoring our Christian duty to show mercy to the stranger. Presenters will include Norma Pimentel, MJ, Ceil Roeger, OP, Most Rev. Mark J. Seitz, DD. For more information and to register [click here](#).



Save the Date: RCUSA Refugee Advocacy Days

Refugee Council USA will be hosting their annual [Virtual Refugee Advocacy Days](#) **May 9th - May 13th, 2022**. This is an opportunity for community members, advocates, faith leaders, resettlement staff, and others to show their support for pro-refugee legislation with their members of Congress.

Participants will not only have the opportunity to meet virtually with their members of Congress, but will also be able to attend a number of special training sessions to help build and expand their advocacy toolbelt.



Refugee and asylee leaders will have additional leadership training opportunities in the lead up to the Advocacy Days kick off. A full list of sessions and the proposed schedule (tentative to updates) can be found in [RCUSA's concept note](#).

If you are **familiar with** RCUSA's Refugee Advocacy Days and would like to volunteer to schedule and accompany constituents, [click here](#).

If you are **new** to RCUSA's Refugee Advocacy Days and would like to take action, [click here](#).

Review of Ukraine Appeal

A few weeks ago, we sent out an email describing the good work of [Franciscans helping on the ground in Ukraine](#) as the war in that country rages on. We want to give you an update.

As a result of our efforts, hundreds of newsletter readers such as yourselves have clicked on the stories and made donations. As the images coming out on the news become bleaker, we hold onto the knowledge that our prayers and financial help will be brought to those who most need it.



Franciscan Justice Circle updates

With training and some time discerning what issues matter most to the group, members of Franciscan Justice Circles begin to bring a Franciscan voice out into the community. As part of the Metro DC area FJC, FAN executive director Michele Dunne, OFS [spoke briefly](#) last week at the introduction of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in Washington DC. (Pictured)



Additionally, FAN has been hosting special issue briefings for our Institutional Members and members of our Franciscan Justice Circles. Last week, our outgoing Director of Campaigns and Development Jason Miller led us through the current state of democracy with a focus on voting rights across the nation. Two FJC members, one from Georgia and one from Wisconsin, offered specifics on what is happening in their states regarding voting laws.

For more information about joining a Circle or forming one in your area, [contact us](#).