

Listening to and recognizing our Shepherd

Image by [Quang Nguyen vinh](#) from [Pixabay](#)

“My sheep hear my voice,” Jesus says in this Sunday’s [Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Easter](#), “and they follow me.” Jesus is the Good Shepherd: he feeds his flock, he loves his flock, he provides for his flock by sending them the Holy Spirit. I read once and found it fascinating that every day, sheep approach their shepherd to be touched on the nose. This is the sheep’s way to acknowledge their shepherd and for the shepherd to acknowledge their sheep in return. Plus the sheep would know that it really is their shepherd, their caregiver, and not someone else.



Jesus uses the shepherd image for those who believe in him also belong to him. It is all about hearing his voice, knowing him and following him. We recognize our shepherd in our midst and we also recognize when something is happening that is not of our shepherd Jesus. It is this recognition of Jesus that moved Paul and Barnabas to continue to preach about Jesus even after he had died and risen. When they were expelled from Antioch, they simply proceeded to the next town filled with joy because they knew Jesus and recognized his voice. They shook the dust from their feet, reminding those who resist that they are putting in jeopardy the invitation to life extended to them.

Over and over, Pope Francis has preached encounter, not confrontation; attraction, not promotion; dialogue, not debate. There are currently 8 billion people living on this planet. Most of them have a belief about God. These beliefs are not all alike but most of the 8 billion believers are convinced that theirs is the right one. If all the 8 billion believers were charitable and respectful the world would be a lot different than it is or has been. We would truly know and believe that Jesus is our shepherd.

Sr. Marge Wissman, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Reflect on which voice calls you the loudest. Don't let the many other voices in our world drown out God's voice. Instead prepare yourself for the moments God chooses to speak. And when God does speak, let that voice grab your attention so that you can follow, even if that means boldly acting and speaking out in favor of just causes and the most vulnerable among us.

Suggested Petitions:

On this Mother's Day, let us pray for mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, and all those who model the role of mothers in our lives...

On this World Day of Prayer for vocations, let us pray that those who are called to priesthood or religious life be good shepherds to the flock....

Prayer:

God, help me to know your gentle voice throughout my daily life. May that voice overwhelm all others that compete for my attention. I choose you, dear God, as my one shepherd and guide. Jesus, I trust in you.

Amen

Help us welcome our new Director of Campaigns

FAN is excited to welcome our new Director of Campaigns, Tobias (Toby) Harkleroad, OFS. [Send Toby a message of welcome by clicking here.](#)

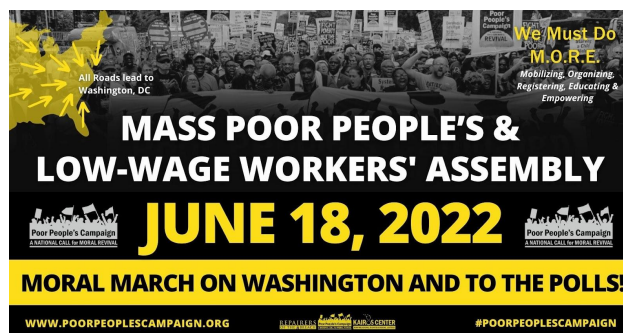
Toby Harkleroad is a professed Secular Franciscan who has been working as an educator in both a teacher and administrator capacity for 20 years. While serving as a principal in the Archdiocese of Washington, Toby represented the archdiocese at the Maryland Catholic Conference where he advocated for education, childcare, and family policies. Toby was a pioneer in finding ways for Catholic schools to partner with state and federal governments for school and childcare funding.



His passion for Franciscan values began as a high school student at the Capuchin's St. Lawrence Seminary and continued to grow as a parishioner and staff member at the OFM's St. Camillus parish in Silver Spring, MD. Toby's vocation story was profiled by the Franciscans of Holy Name Province. [Click here to read.](#)

Webinar: Learn about the Poor People's Campaign Moral March

The Poor People's Campaign was founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968 and revived in 2018 to unite Americans impacted by economic, racial, and climate injustice across the country. Franciscan Action Network has signed up as a mobilizing partner for the [Poor People's Campaign](#) Moral March in Washington, D.C. on Saturday June 18, 2022.



We invite you to join us and our partners for a webinar on **Thursday, May 5th at 7pm EDT / 4pm PDT** to learn more about the [Moral](#)

[March on DC on June 18](#). Our speakers will include [Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis](#), the National Co-Chair of the [Poor People's Campaign](#).

[Register for the webinar HERE!](#)

Co-sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, Franciscan Action Network, Quixote Center, LCWR, and Pax Christi USA with the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

Webinar: Racism & the Filipino Immigrant Experience

On **Thursday, May 19 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT** the Asian American Committee and the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation animators of the six U.S. OFM Provinces (US6 JPIC Working Group) have organized an online panel on Filipino immigrant history and culture. [Click here for more information and speaker bios.](#)

Filipinx/a Studies scholars in the field of Asian American Studies will examine the history of anti-Asian racism in this country and explore the possibilities for solidarity through a Filipino American lens. [Click here to register.](#)



RACISM & the Filipino Immigrant Experience

An online panel on Filipino immigrant history & culture featuring Filipinx/a Studies scholars, organized by the Asian American Committee & by the US6 JPIC Working Group.

Thursday May 19, 2022
4:00 pm EDT, 3 p.m. CDT
2 p.m. MDT, 1 p.m. PDT
Register @ <https://bit.ly/30ppQe6>

 Marianna S. Balce SUNY Stony Brook	 Jay Balce Cal State U Los Angeles	 Michael Viola St. Mary's College of CA
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Take Action: Urge Congress to Save Oak Flat

What if your elected officials told you that your sacred place did not matter? That is what the Apache and other tribal communities in Arizona are being faced with regarding Oak Flat, or Chi'chil Biłdagoteel, a site [sacred](#) to them.

Currently within Tonto National Forest, because Oak Flat sits atop a copper deposit, the federal government plans to transfer the land to a mining company, Resolution Copper. Unless Congress takes action, the land is at risk to be permanently destroyed.



Only Congress can permanently save Oak Flat. We share some action alerts below to help you **contact your members of Congress and ask them to co-sponsor the Save Oak Flat Act (H.R. 1884/S. 915)**. We urge you to take action:

1. Call your member of Congress and use the [sample script from BJC, listed here](#).
2. Write to your member of Congress using the form from [Sisters of Mercy, here](#).

Learn about the religious, environmental, historical, and other reasons to protect this sacred land [by clicking here](#).

PACE Civic Language Perceptions Project

In 2019, the [Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement](#) (PACE) embarked on an inquiry to explore the role language might be playing in today's polarized society. The health, economic, racial, and political crises experienced over the last few years compelled PACE to understand the ways that civic language may have shifted and what we might do about it. [Read more.](#)

The [Civic Language Perceptions Project](#) seeks to understand peoples' perceptions of the language associated with civic engagement and democracy work. It includes a quantitative survey and a series of qualitative focus groups to gain broad understandings about the resonance of certain words and phrases. [Click here to learn more and explore the data.](#)

Civic Language Perceptions Project

An initiative of PACE

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The Northern California Franciscan Justice Circle formed in 2021 after the members attended a retreat at the San Juan Baptista Franciscan Retreat Center.

Here's an update from the Circle: "Our group, very geographically dispersed over the wide Northern California and Western Nevada area, has decided here in our early days to **focus on the connection between homelessness and mental health** and how a dedicated group of lay volunteers might be able to impact those issues.

To that end we've been trying to tap the experience and expertise of people and agencies dealing with that nexus of issues.



At our last meeting, via Google Talk, we were lucky to have as guest the Vice Chairman of the Humboldt County chapter of NAMI – the [National Association for Mental Illness](#). Our group was interested in hearing NAMI's take on California Governor Gavin Newsom's idea of CARE courts, which would attempt to channel those with serious mental illness issues away from the state's criminal courts and into multiple services. We discussed the sensitive issue of personal freedoms versus needed care and community safety. We are eager to hear from other experts in the near future as we feel our way forward."

If you'd like to connect with the Northern California FJC or a circle near you, [contact us](#).