

Recognizing God's Presence Among Us

In the readings for the [Sixteenth Sunday](#) in Ordinary Time, we meet several people unusually sensitive to the presence of God. Abraham, sitting at the entrance of a tent pitched among ancient oak trees near Hebron, recognizes that the “three men” he sees standing by are special. He runs to greet them and bows down, then goes to great lengths to prepare a feast for them. While hospitality is a strong value among desert nomads, Abraham goes to remarkable—sacrificial—lengths to feed the men. Mary the sister of Martha, on the other hand, is not at all concerned about feeding people; she is so aware of the divine presence of Jesus that she sets aside all her normal hospitality duties to catch every precious word of his teaching.



Reading these accounts raises questions: am I alert enough to make way for God's presence in my life? Am I ready to drop everything to welcome God the way Abraham and Mary did? Would I be ready to sacrifice my material goods—the best food I could provide, perhaps resources I was planning to use for myself and my family—to lavish them on strangers? Would it even occur to me that those three hungry-looking strangers were, as the book of Genesis says unambiguously, “the Lord” appearing to me?

The account of Mary sitting at Jesus' feet (while her annoyed sister sets the table and cuts the bread) is one that always gets to me, for I am a busy Martha if there ever was one. Most often, when I read this passage, I hear Jesus' rebuke—“Martha, Martha you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing”—as being about paying too much attention to mundane concerns and too little to spiritual matters.

Reading the Mary/Martha story this time I recalled advice from a participant in a virtual course on contemplation: “Stop multi-tasking.” Perhaps if I can focus on one thing at a time, on what is happening at this moment instead of ruminating about the past or planning for the future, I can be more open to God's presence. There have been too many times, including recently, when I realized that I missed an opportunity to give generously as Abraham did or to listen deeply as Mary did because I was not fully in the moment.

Might you become more aware of God's presence and therefore more willing to respond generously? Once the awareness is there, the possibilities to respond are endless. For example, might you reach out in compassion to victims of gun violence to help them heal from trauma and stop the cycle of violence? Might you advocate policies in your state to offer real assistance to women in crisis pregnancies and their families? Could you mobilize support for measures to stop the victimization of low-income communities by pollution and environmental racism?

There is indeed hope for the busiest and most distracted of us to turn back to God with a single, pure-hearted focus and to be ready to respond. After all, as St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Colossians, "It is Christ in you, the hope for glory."

Michele Dunne OFS
Executive Director of Franciscan Action Network.

Suggested Action:

Read over the action opportunities in this newsletter and other messages that come to you this week. Watch and listen deeply during the week to spot where God is showing up in your life and calling you to act.

Suggested Petitions:

May we all hold the desire to stop multitasking and sit in the loving presence of God. We pray...
May we strive to live undistracted from God, ready to respond as Abraham did. We pray...

Prayer:

**Dear Jesus, help me to cultivate a Mary heart in a Martha world.
My problem is not the world I inhabit, but the heart that inhabits me.
You are the one thing that can never be taken away from me.
Help me to see and hear you in my life and to respond with loving generosity.**

Amen

Call on Congress to Ban Weapons of War

In the aftermath of the most recent mass shooting incident in Highland Parks, Illinois where seven innocent people were killed and at least 24 were wounded, we renew our [call to ban high capacity weapons](#).

Representative David Cicilline's federal bill [H.R.1808](#) to ban assault weapons has [210 cosponsors](#) and it is ready for a vote in the House. We urge the House Leadership to schedule a vote on the bill now that they have returned from recess.

Passing this bill in the House will send a strong message to the Senate that it must do more to protect Americans from preventable acts of violence and terror. There are [13 Democratic holdouts](#) for the House bill and [12 in the Senate](#). The [majority of Americans support banning weapons of war](#) for civilian use. Democrats must no longer run away from the assault weapons ban.

Here are two ways to take action: [Contact your Representative directly](#) and urge them to cosponsor the bill and [sign this petition](#) from 290+ gun violence prevention groups (including many Franciscans) calling for a ban of assault weapons.

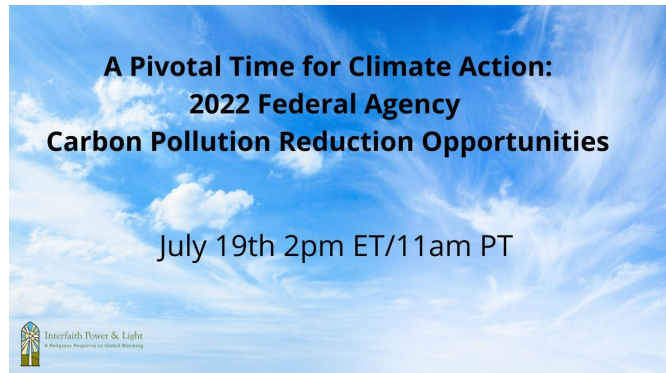
say **NO** to
#WeaponsOfWar.



A Pivotal Time for Climate Action

The recent [Supreme Court decision](#) limiting the federal government's ability to cut carbon pollution makes it clear that we need new strategies for avoiding climate disasters. As people of faith, we have a moral responsibility to care for our common home and protect it for future generations.

The good people at Interfaith Power & Light are hosting a briefing on the carbon pollution reduction opportunities at federal agencies. [Register to join in on Tuesday, July 19 at 2pm ET/11am PT.](#)



Now is the time for the Biden administration to take meaningful and immediate action to tackle the climate crisis and protect our health, air, land, water, and wildlife. That means the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, the Department of Interior, and other federal agencies must set strong standards to clean up power plants, transportation, and other pollution.

Take Action: Urge Biden Administration to Terminate Remain in Mexico Policy

In a major victory for asylum seekers at the border, the US Supreme Court recently ruled that the Remain in Mexico policy, which inhumanely returns vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants to dangerous conditions in Mexico, can be terminated. The path forward to create a humane and just immigration system is laid out in front of us.

Join the Hope Border Institute in urging the Biden administration to end Remain in Mexico as soon as possible. [Sign your name to the petition today.](#)



Save the date: Restore Asylum Now Days of Action

FAN, as a member of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC), is co-hosting two weeks of call-in days from July 18-31, 2022, and FAN's call-in day is July 27.

With the Coalition, we will start the weeks of action with a preparatory **webinar on July 18 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT** titled "[Heal Not Harm: Restore Asylum Now](#)". The webinar will provide a learning and action space for people of faith to both receive updates about



the broader asylum political landscape, and to take concrete next steps to counter efforts to keep Title 42 in place and advocate for restoration of liberatory asylum policies. [Register for the webinar using this link.](#)

The days of action hold a goal of driving calls to members of Congress to reject Title 42 legislation or amendments. As you may know, several members of Congress have continued to advance the anti-asylum agenda (recently, two appropriations bills were passed out of committee with harmful amendments that would keep Title 42 in place). **FAN has committed to mobilizing constituents for a call-in day on Wed. July 27th. Please save this date and watch for more information and suggested scripts.**

July Issue of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter

The [July 2022 issue of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter](#) highlights the exploitation of children as soldiers in armed conflict.

Thousands of children under the age of 18, some as young as eight or nine years old, are recruited and used in armed conflicts worldwide. Between 2005 and 2020, more than 93,000 children were confirmed as recruited and used by parties to conflict, with children accounting for up to 60% of armed forces, although the actual number of cases is much higher.

Please [click here](#) to read the July Stop Trafficking Newsletter focused on child soldiers. If you missed any previous issues they are archived on our [website](#).



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

This **Wednesday, July 13**, we will be having the monthly national FJC call at **1pm PDT / 4pm EDT**. We'll be hearing from Sr. Margaret Mary Kimmins, OSF about: ***Making the spiritual journey from prayer and works of charity to advocacy and action.*** If you would like to join the call, please feel free to [contact us](#).

The following [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) will be meeting this week:

- **Richmond, VA:** Mon., July 11 at 7pm
- **Delaware Valley:** Tues., July 12 at 7pm
- **Boston:** Wed., July 13 at 7pm EDT
- **Washington - Louisiana:** Wed., July 13 at 4pm PDT
- **Nashville:** Wed., July 13 at 7pm CDT
- **Northern California:** Wed., July 13 at 7pm PDT
- **Virtual National Circle:** Thurs., July 14 at 11am PDT / 2pm EDT
- **Milwaukee:** Thurs., July 14 at 5pm CDT

If you would like to join or even visit any of these Circle meetings, please [contact Nora Pfeiffer](#) for more details. We look forward to connecting with you!

