

God Never Tires of Us

Image by [falco](#) from [Pixabay](#)

How many times must I hear the gospel of Jesus before I get it? In the readings for the [24th Sunday in Ordinary time](#), we hear that our faith is a lifeline for the lost sinner, not a trophy for the well-behaved. God's lavish mercy is most available to us when we need it desperately, not when we believe we are doing well in our lives. And God never tires of or gives up on us, even when we give up on ourselves and others.

Reading Ch 32 of Exodus, it is easy to understand God's frustration with the Israelites, who "have soon turned aside from the way I pointed out to them, making for themselves a molten calf and worshipping it."

How could the Israelites be so foolish, especially so soon after God rescued them from Egypt? But are we really different? How easy it is for me to forget to turn over my life to God daily, and instead to seek answers to my problems in money, politics, human relationships—or whatever idols my culture suggests instead of God.



In fact, as ridiculous as the idea of worshipping a golden calf might sound, the Genesis story reminded me of something that happened shortly after I joined the FAN staff last year. In cleaning out offices that had not been used during two years of pandemic, I came upon a nearly life-sized golden calf made of papier mache, which had been used in street protests against the influence of money in politics. I wondered how in the world to get rid of this large, bulky item until my husband suggested I post it on Craigslist. To my astonishment, dozens of people replied, clamoring to take the calf or just telling me how "rad" it was. I guess the truth of the matter is that we humans still like the golden calf a lot!

Our fatal attraction to the golden calf is all the more reason to be grateful that Jesus came to save us from our sins and our foolishness, to tell us stories about the Father and to set an alternative example of love and faithfulness. In the stories we hear on the 24th Sunday from chapter 15 of Luke, Jesus tells of God's fathomless and inexplicable longing for each of us—the lost sheep, the misplaced coin, the prodigal son—and readiness to seek us and welcome us back. This can be extremely comforting but also hard to accept; how can I absorb that God does not tire of me, even when I tire of myself and my failings? This dilemma calls to mind the [advice](#) of St. Therese of Lisieux about "bearing serenely the trial of being displeasing to yourself" in order to be a place of rest for Jesus.

Another question is whether I show anything like God's persistent readiness to understand, welcome, and help others—or whether I have given up on some people, as the older brother wrote off his sibling in the parable of the prodigal son. Saints Francis and Clare, in their

respective rules for their communities, pointed out the spiritual danger we get into when we become angry or perturbed in response to what we see as others' misdeeds.

This week I will ask myself: on whom have I given up? Whom do I dismiss as too difficult to deal with, "never going to change" to be more the way I think they should be? Fellow citizens whose political preferences differ sharply from mine? Family members who are not in the same place as me on issues such as climate change or abortion? My unhoused neighbors who show signs of addiction or mental illness? God, help me to see all as you see them—with love that does not grow tired.

Michele Dunne, OFS
FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

Think of one group of people on whom you have given up. Pray for them and take a specific outreach or advocacy action to show that you care about their wellbeing.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those who doubt the mercy of God, we pray...

For our hearts to remain open to the enduring love and faithfulness of God, we pray...

Prayer by Kathryn Spink:

**Lord, open our eyes,
That we may see you in our brothers and sisters.
Lord, open our ears,
That we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold,
the frightened, the oppressed.
Lord, open our hearts,
That we may love each other as you love us.
Renew in us your spirit
Lord, free us and make us one.**

Amen

Join us for a 4-part Series on Confronting Environmental Racism starting Sept 8

On **Thursday, September 8th, 4-5 pm eastern**, we will hold the first of a four-part series on [Confronting Environmental Racism](#). See registration link below.

From plastics to cosmetics, fashion, fertilizer, and more, petrochemicals are everywhere in our daily lives, seeping into our air, water, soil, food, and bloodstreams. As the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy proceeds, many corporations are



The poster has a green background. At the top, it says "It's time for us to stand with communities on the frontlines of environmental racism." Below this is the title "Confronting Environmental Racism" in white. Under the title, it says "Sponsored by Franciscan Action Network, the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan Friars (OFM) US-6 JPIC Working Group". There are two small icons: a Franciscan cross on the left and a cross with a heart in the center on the right. In the middle, there are two photographs: one showing a group of people in a meeting, and another showing a person sitting on a bench outdoors. Below the photos, it says "From plastics to cosmetics, fashion, fertilizer, and more, petrochemicals are everywhere in our daily lives, seeping into our air, water, soil, food, and bloodstreams. While all Americans are affected to some extent, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and poor communities are affected much more than others." At the bottom, it says "Get more info and register to attend at www.FranciscanAction.org OR www.FranFed.org".

trying to ramp up petrochemical and plastic production to stay in business. The oil, gas and petrochemical industry have long placed their facilities in areas inhabited by Black, Brown, Indigenous, or poor communities deemed “sacrifice zones.”

As Franciscans, we are called to stand with our sisters and brothers who have been most directly affected. **It's time for us to stand with communities on the front lines of this environmental racism.**

Franciscan Action Network, the Franciscan Federation and the Franciscan Friars (OFM) US-6 JPIC Working Group are pleased to present a 4-part webinar series which will run once a month from September 8th-December 8th. At three of our four gatherings on the second Thursday of each month, we will view one 20-minute long documentary and hear from a speaker in one of the “sacrifice zones” in the U.S., while at the fourth we will discuss advocacy options with experienced activists. [Register to attend one or all the events by clicking here.](#)

The September 8th gathering and documentary will focus on the city of Houston, Texas and **we will welcome founder and director of [Fenceline Watch](#), Yvette Arellano.** [Get more information here.](#)

Join us for our Annual Gala on October 6

We would love for you to join the Franciscan Action Network for our annual gala on the evening of Thursday, October 6. Our theme will be “[Peacebuilding in the Spirit of Sts. Francis and Clare](#),” and our speakers and honorees will include **Margaret Carney, OSF** (Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities), **Gloria Purvis** (*America Media*), **Marie Dennis** (Pax Christi), and **Greg Jackson** (Community Justice Action Fund). [Click here for more details and bios of our speakers.](#)



We are delighted to host our gala **in person for the first time since 2019** and we hope that as many of you as possible will join us for **dinner and our program at St. Francis Hall, Washington, D.C. at 6:00pm.** For those out of the D.C. area, we will **livestream the program from 7:30-8:30 pm ET (4:30-5:30pm PT).** [Get your tickets here.](#)

Urge Congress to Welcome Refugees

All people deserve to live in safety, and an investment in The U.S. Resettlement Program is vital to welcome people from all parts of the world who are in urgent need of resettlement and protection, many of whom have been waiting for years to access safety. As people of faith who value the dignity and diversity of all people, we must advocate for all refugees.

We urge you to call on Congress to hold President Biden accountable to **set a refugee admissions goal of 200,000 in FY 2023, to commit to a robust investment in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), pass an Afghan Adjustment Act** so that our new Afghan neighbors have an



opportunity to apply to become lawful permanent residents, and **ensure a full restoration of asylum protections** & reject all anti-asylum proposals.

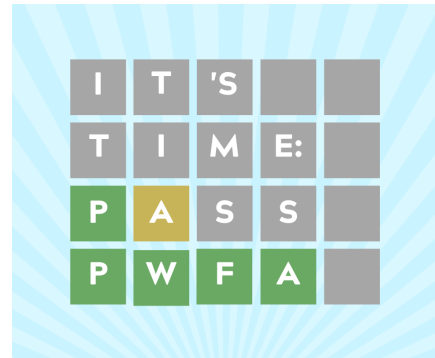
Here are some links to simplify contacting your elected officials:

1. Comprehensive ask from Church World Service: [Call your members of Congress to welcome Refugees & Rebuild the U.S. Resettlement Program.](#)
2. Focused ask from Catholic Charities: [urging passage of the Afghan Adjustment Act.](#)

Take Action on Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

The reality of persistent discrimination of pregnant workers in the workplace and the lack of clarity around employer obligations calls for new legislation to provide straightforward guidance for both employers and pregnant workers. The [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#) (PWFA) is that long-needed piece of legislation.

It has been more than a year since the PWFA passed out of committee with a strong bipartisan vote. We know that Senate Leadership is supportive and there are more than enough votes to overcome a filibuster, but PWFA is still waiting for a final vote in the Senate.



Congress needs to know that women and families cannot wait any longer-- they have a moral responsibility to act now. On Sept. 6, when the Senate is back in session, **please make a call to your senators.** [Click here to find the call-in number and a suggested script.](#)

Sr. Marie Lucey Featured in St. Anthony's Messenger

Our own beloved Sr. Marie Lucey is an icon of Franciscan spirituality and values. She has been working with Franciscan Action Network for over 10 years, first as Director of Advocacy and now as Associate Director.

Her dedication to advocacy and social justice is inspirational to many, both old and young. One of her biggest supporters is our previous executive director Patrick Carolan who wrote [this article on Marie's life](#) for the Followers of St. Francis section of the September issue of St. Anthony's Messenger magazine. We hope you will take a few moments to read it.



Send a [message to Sr. Marie by clicking here.](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The Northern California Circle has been exploring what a Franciscan response would look like to California's CARE Court ("Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment Court") proposal, which promises to help with mental health and substance abuse services to the most severely impaired Californians. The proposal was announced earlier this year by Governor Newsom as a



new solution to the homelessness crisis through court-mandated treatment and intervention to help those unhoused get off the streets and away from jail. It is considered controversial and soon faces a key vote in the state legislature.

If you'd like more information about the Franciscan Justice Circles or to find out if there is a Circle in your area, [contact us today](#).