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Reflection Date: January 15, 2022 - The 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

My Choice or God's Choice?

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We all believe that we are in control of our lives. We desperately want to be in control of our own life. But is this our Christian path? The Bible seems to tell us otherwise by asking a different question: Is it best that I choose or is it better if God chooses WITH ME? Or, to put it another way, am I “of the world” or “of God’s world”?



The readings for the [Second Sunday of Ordinary Time](#), like all good scripture, make us question

the ways of the world, the ways of men and women, and point out that God’s ways are not our ways. For example, Isaiah tells us: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to

raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” For me this is a double whammy. First, that I, the servant, shall “raise the tribes of Jacob” – what if I don’t really want to do this? What about what I think? What about what I want to do with my life? If that’s not overwhelming enough and out of my comfort zone, Isaiah then tells me God says my role – like it or lump it – is to be “as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” Wow! I am just little old me; I can barely get out of bed in one piece and brush my teeth properly and God, the creator of the universe, wants little old me to bring God’s salvation to the end of the earth??? That’s crazy!

Well, yes, you got it. Your mission, my mission, the mission of all Christians, is to bring salvation to the end of the earth. An outrageous demand on God’s part, but, what would you expect from an all powerful, all knowing, infinite being? Once we have chosen God – which IS our choice - we are part of God’s team. When we choose to be on the team, God knows best what we can do for the salvation of everybody – including little old me. Personally, although I know this in my head, I still find it hard to accept in my heart. My ego, the little me inside, is crying out: “But why won’t God just have me do and be something normal and safe and something I am comfortable with?” Isaiah tells us “Sorry, you’re on Mission Impossible. Do it. Now.”

Maybe you think Isaiah was a little extreme – you know, a crazy Old Testament prophet. You might think that in the New Testament, through the love and peace of Jesus, God’s demands are a little more reasonable. Well, if you think this, you would be wrong. As we read in John, “We have found the Messiah.” He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas [Peter]” (John 1:42). I guess when you are God’s teammate you not only get sent on impossible missions but also have your name changed. It seems to me that God’s version of love means that we must, and WILL, become courageous and we must, and WILL, become a new person – a person we never thought we could be. If God wants you to help the poor – do it. If God wants you to care for creation – do it. If God wants you to be a peacemaker – do it.

You get to choose to be on God's team but after that God, your loving Father, is working WITH you to accomplish his Mission Impossible of salvation for ALL the earth and in doing so transform you, perhaps with a new name, so that you become a new person – a true saint. Good luck on this adventure!

Gordon Kubanek, TSSF
FAN Supporter

Suggested Action:

This week, respond to calls for action on an issue that resonates with you: climate, poverty, immigration, gun violence, racial justice, or any other issue related to justice and peace. As you do so, consider prayerfully where God might be calling on you to make a difference.

Suggested Petitions:

That God might open our ears to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, we pray....

That God might open our eyes to see with compassion our sisters and brothers in their various needs, we pray.....

Prayer:

May God bless you with discomfort...

at easy answers, hard hearts, half-truths, and superficial relationships.

May God bless you so that you may live from deep within your heart where God's Spirit dwells.

May God bless you with anger...

at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people.

May God bless you so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears...

to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war.

May God bless you so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness

to believe that you can make a difference in this world,

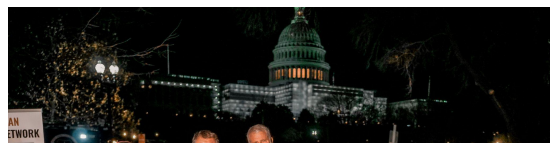
in your neighborhood, so that you will courageously try

what you don't think you can do, but, in Jesus Christ you'll have all the strength necessary.

Amen

View our "Faith in Democracy" Interfaith Vigil

Remarks by Bishop John Stowe (OFM Conv), Sr. Carol Zinn, Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Imam Talib Shareef, Rabbi Stephanie Crawley, Rev. Paul



Rauschenbush, and music by Wordsmith lit up the night in front of the U.S. Capitol on January 5. With hundreds watching online and more than 70 in person, FAN and other faith partners prayed together for national healing and peace during a deeply moving ceremony featuring diverse perspectives on the challenges to American democracy two years after the divisive events of January 6, 2021.

If you missed the event, please take the time to watch the recording, which can be [found on our website](#).

Join us for a Film Screening of “The Letter”

As Franciscans, we are called to care for all of God’s wondrous creation. Our Holy Father Pope Francis invites all people of good will to hear the cry of earth and the cry of the poor.

On **January 18, 2023 from 7pm-9pm Eastern Time / 4pm-6pm Pacific Time**, join us virtually to watch [The Letter](#), a new documentary about how spiritual values unite us in the face of the planetary emergency. After we watch the film, we’ll discuss what we can do to join the movement of people who are building a better future.



The Letter tells the story of a journey to Rome of frontline leaders to discuss the encyclical letter ‘Laudato Si’ with Pope Francis. [Watch the trailer on YouTube here](#). The exclusive dialogue with the Pope, included in the film, offers a revealing insight into the personal history of Pope Francis and stories never seen since he became the Bishop of Rome. **Join us for the virtual screening and discussion by [registering on our website](#)**. It’ll be a great way to see if you might like to organize your own local in-person screenings.

BJC's Annual High School Essay Contest

The Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) is now accepting submissions for the annual [Religious Liberty Essay Contest](#). The annual Religious Liberty Essay Scholarship Contest engages high school students in church-state issues by directing them to express a point of view on a religious liberty topic.



This year's question focuses on the importance of protecting sacred land like Oak Flat. The contest is open to any high school junior or senior, and there are no religious, GPA or extracurricular requirements. First prize is \$2,000, second prize is \$1,000 and third prize is \$500. Submissions must be completed no later than March 17, 2023. Find [more details here](#).

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

In 2010, President Barack Obama declared January National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. This Wednesday, January 11th is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, which is used to raise awareness and is part



of a significant effort to deal with issues around human trafficking. This day is connected to the Department of Homeland Security's [Wear Blue Campaign](#), which aims to increase the understanding among Americans about the issue of human trafficking.

We encourage our partners and supporters to engage with us in educating ourselves on this form of modern-day slavery. Read the latest [Stop Trafficking Newsletter](#) from the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking and get more involved.

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The NYC Area Franciscan Justice Circle is having a meeting this **Thursday, Jan. 12 at 7:30pm EST** over zoom. The focus will be related to immigration advocacy. FAN staff member Sr. Marie Lucey will give a 'lay of the land' in the new Congress in regards to immigration, and Rep. Adriano Espaillat of NY 13th Congressional District will share what will be introduced, negotiated, and hopefully become law.



You are invited to join the call directly through [this link](#). If you have any trouble, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at npfeiffer@franciscanaction.org.