

“Untie him and set him free.”

Recently, a member of the community that I am living in passed into Eternal life. We have been sharing stories about our Brother and I realized that each story recalled an individual experience. Hearing the various memories, it was easy to see how each one of us has been touched, changed and supported by our late Brother.

For me, it was marching with our late Brother in the Macy's Parade on my first Thanksgiving day in Manhattan. It was also helping to bless the circus animals on the Feast of St. Francis. But the greatest memory is how many people he ministered to as a listener, a confessor, and through the Coffee House he founded.

Two weeks from this Sunday we will be celebrating Easter. Holy Week is our time to remember through rituals how Jesus came and sacrificed himself to save us. But before that we have the story of Lazarus in the [Gospel for the 5th Sunday of Lent](#).

Lazarus was an example of human companionship and friendship, whose death was so difficult that Jesus brought him back to life. The body may fail but there is always the beauty of our human relationships.

God's love for us is reflected in this story of Lazarus! It is also reflected in our stories of people that are seeking safety, in those who help others, whether it be material help or just having time to talk and share to so many that can not find that connection in the world. Personal stories help us to connect with our fellow human beings on a deeper level, helping us to see into the experiences of others.

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
Board President

Suggested Actions:

Take time to reflect on your personal stories of those who have helped you in your life. Consider passing along the help you've received by taking an action of solidarity in favor of policies that promote the protection of God's creation or our sisters and brothers in a vulnerable situation.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those who are suffering with the loss of loved ones, we pray...

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



May we remain steadfast in our belief of eternal life through Jesus Christ, we pray...

Prayer:

Bless those who mourn, eternal God, with the comfort of your love that they may face each new day with hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that has been given. May their memories become joyful, their days enriched with friendship, and their lives encircled by your love.

Amen

Gun Violence Prevention Update; March on 3-24

There was good news this week when President Biden announced an [Executive Order](#) that will increase the number of background checks conducted before firearm sales, moving the U.S. as close to universal background checks as possible without additional legislation. Additional components of the order include increasing the effective use of “red flag” laws, strengthening efforts to hold the gun industry accountable, and accelerating law enforcement efforts to identify and apprehend the shooters menacing our communities.



While this is great news for gun violence prevention advocates, there is a need to [advocate for an assault weapons ban](#), as weapons of war do not belong in the hands of everyday citizens. You are encouraged to [take action here](#).

If you are interested in getting more involved on a weekly basis with gun violence prevention advocacy, the people at Newtown Action Alliance coordinate **Lunch & Lobby sessions** each Monday at 12pm ET (9am PT) to gather advocates, share updates, and make collective calls to Congress and the Administration about common sense gun laws. [Find out more by clicking here](#).

Marches, rallies, and walk outs are being planned nationwide for March 24th, the 5th year anniversary of the March for our Lives campaign. **RSVP [HERE](#) to join the FAN staff at a rally** with #GenerationLockdown on **Friday, March 24, 2023** at 11am in **Washington, D.C.** to urge Congress to pass the assault weapons ban legislation. March for Our Lives rallies are also planned in **Tallahassee, Florida; Lansing, Michigan; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Sacramento, California and Austin, Texas**. RSVP to attend one of these marches [HERE](#).

Take Action: Contact the White House to Oppose the Willow Project

President Biden has approved the ConocoPhillips' "[Willow Project](#)," which calls for drilling new wells in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve, and building 30+ miles of new roads, bridges, an airstrip

Photo courtesy of ConocoPhillips/AP



and a gravel mine. The proposed 30 years of oil drilling from the Willow Project will release annual emissions equivalent to 66 new coal-fired power plants. This project will harm local wildlife such as polar bears, migratory birds, and caribou. The leaders of the Sovereign Iñupiat for a Living Arctic say the project will have a devastating impact on Native communities. The people of Nuiqsut, the Native village that lies closest to the project, are opposed.

We urge you to call or email the Biden Administration to express disappointment in the approval of the Alaska Willow Project. The White House comment line (202.456.1111) is open **Tuesday through Thursday between 11a - 3pm ET (8am - 12pm PT)**. Interfaith Power and Light have developed this [Click-to-Email action](#). Here is a sample script:

Hello, my name is (NAME) and I (am a concerned citizen from STATE or your own words of introduction), I /we am/are deeply disappointed by the Biden Administration's decision to approve the ConocoPhillips Willow Project. This oil drilling project will lock our country into 30 years of fossil fuel dependence and climate pollution. I/we stand in solidarity with the local people of Nuiqsut, who oppose the Willow Project, and with frontline communities and Indigenous rights groups whose lives will be most directly affected.

Once you call or email, [let us know how it went](#).

Help FAN Find an Associate for Campaigns

Franciscan Action Network is seeking an [Associate for Campaigns](#). This entry level full-time staff position, located in Washington DC, is open immediately. The right candidate will work with us to expand, support, and mobilize FAN's network of Franciscan-hearted advocates. The position offers an outstanding opportunity to learn about and be mentored in the field of faith-based advocacy.

Learn more about the position and how to apply by [clicking here](#). Please circulate to possible applicants!



Public Comment on Asylum Ban

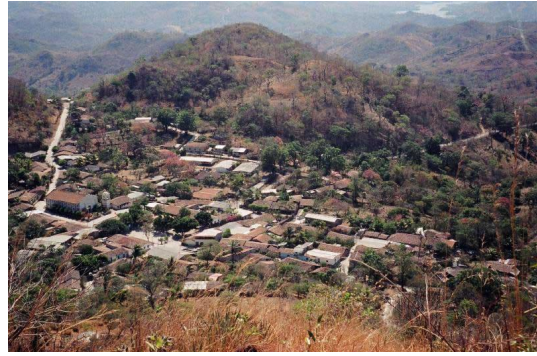
This is the final week to [submit a public comment](#) opposing the Biden Administration's proposed Asylum ban. If you'd like to learn more we encourage you to join the United Methodist Church for their webinar, "[In Defense of Asylum](#)," **TODAY, March 20 at 3pm ET (12pm PT)**. [Register here](#).

As a reminder, each comment submitted will only count if unique from all others. To help in composing your comment, [click here to access talking points and resources](#) from immigration experts. **Comments are due by March 27.**



Water Project in San Jose las Flores

In celebration of [World Water Day](#) this Wednesday March 22, we alert you to a community in extreme need of water: San Jose las Flores, located in the Chalatenango Municipality of El Salvador. In December 2022, Sr. Maria Orlandini and Merwyn De Mello of the FAN staff joined a faith delegation to El Salvador. They met the people of San Jose las Flores and saw first hand their struggle to live with dignity, great poverty and real loss.



Strict water rationing is currently practiced during the 6-month-long dry season and families take turns going without water for consecutive days. Even with these efforts, the current water source cannot sustain their year-round needs. Their mayor, Buenaventura Tobar, reported that a new well is the only solution and partners are needed to help finance the drilling and infrastructure of pipes and tanks. If you would like [to donate to help build the well click here](#).

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

The **Kansas Justice Circle** sees a strong need for education in Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and beginning with their April monthly call will start studying [CST modules](#), which include videos and discussion guides, available from the USCCB website. They are concerned about gun violence and would like to work with other organizations to build support for gun violence prevention legislation in their state. Next year, the Circle hopes to host Fr. John Dear as part of a tour for his forthcoming book, "The Gospel of Peace."



[Contact us](#) to learn how to join or form a Franciscan Justice Circle near you.