

## What is the condition of my heart?

Image by [Ben Kerckx](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In the gospel story for the [Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), Jesus tells His disciples the parable of a sower scattering seed and four different types of soil it fell upon. As parables go, this one always seemed pretty straightforward to me. God's word is the seed and the ground it falls upon is us, humanity. If we imagine ourselves in this story, there are two distinct paths: one as the vessel or ground receiving the seed, the other as the sower.



When Christ went out proclaiming the kingdom of God, His word encountered different conditions of the human heart. Some people were proud, obstinate, or too concerned with daily affairs of living to pay attention. Others were not willing to listen because they led comfortable lives and didn't want to change their way of living. Then there were willing hearts, those that were open, humbled by suffering and yearning for God's love, truth, and mercy.

We need to examine the condition of our hearts. We all must come to understand that the condition of my heart is *my responsibility*. Every day we make choices that affect the condition of our hearts. Choices to speak or listen, to give in to arrogance or embrace humility, to make time for prayer or ignore God, to reach out to the suffering or pretend they are not there. Every day we make thousands of little choices that condition the soil of our souls. God the Sower is sowing the word and we must know the condition of our hearts to enable us to turn our faith and spirituality into advocacy. Are we open to receiving this word and acting upon it for the common good? One idea is to gather like-minded friends and form a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#), or join one in your area.

The second way of imagining ourselves in this story is as the sower. Jesus used this parable to teach His disciples not to become discouraged in their preaching. There will come abundant fruit, so be faithful to God, till the soil of your soul, sow and nurture the seeds of goodness and truth. We are called to share these seeds of our faith with others. How we live our lives can be an inspiration that speaks louder than words. How do our actions reflect gospel values and the teachings of Jesus? Do we take the next step and translate our values to advocacy on behalf of those who need support? In this age of instant gratification, it's hard to continue proclaiming the good news of love, mercy, and light when we don't necessarily see the results. Jesus' message is clear: we may never see the fruits of our labor but we must persevere even when we don't notice immediate results.

Janine Walsh  
Communications Coordinator

### **Suggested Action:**

Consider taking action on behalf of a marginalized group using gospel values as your guide.

### **Suggested Petitions:**

For the strength to persevere in sowing the seeds of God's love, light, and truth, we pray...

For open hearts conditioned to receive God's mercy, grace, and forgiveness, we pray...

### **Prayer:**

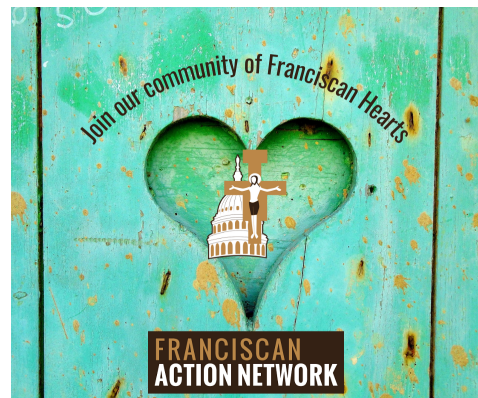
**Lord our God, we thank you for the great calling you have given us. Open our hearts that we may always have hope, that nothing discourages us, and that we have strength to work together for the common good in accordance with your will. Grant that your compassion may come to all the world, to all peoples, whom you have looked upon with mercy through your Son, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen**

## **Heartfelt Thanks to our Sustaining Donors**

**Giving monthly is one of the best ways to support FAN's work**, which channels and unites the cries of our Franciscan hearts for peace and justice.

We are so grateful for all of you who are monthly sustaining donors to FAN! You provide the consistent support that allows us to inform, inspire, and mobilize Franciscans and the Franciscan-hearted through advocacy, Justice Circles, and outreach efforts to youth. If you are not a sustaining donor, please consider [joining our community of Franciscan hearts](#) to ensure that Franciscan values are heard in our capital and across the country.



## **Religious Leaders Support Pope Francis' Diplomatic Initiatives in Ukraine**

Numerous U.S. religious leaders, including Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv. and Franciscan Action Network, have signed [this letter](#) to support the diplomatic initiatives of Pope Francis in Ukraine. We encourage you to share this with other religious persons in your community. If others would like to sign this letter, you can do so [here](#).

You can **take action** by calling on the U.S. Government to focus on diplomacy and proven peacebuilding practices in Ukraine. [Contact your Senators and Representatives here](#).



FAN's Peace Fellow, Eli McCarthy wrote this article [War in Ukraine: Christian Accompaniment and Diplomacy](#), which offers some background and examples of nonviolent action.

## Webinar: Restoring Asylum and Dignity for Migrants

On **Wednesday, July 12 at 7pm ET/4pm PT, NETWORK** and partners—including the Kino Border Initiative and Lawyers for Good Governance—will host a webinar, “[Restoring Asylum and Dignity for Immigrants: The Work Ahead](#).” They will be laying out the plan for Congressional action between now and mid-September.

Here is the [link to register](#). All registrants will receive the recording.



## Interfaith Power and Light Webinar on Resources for Faith Communities

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) created the largest climate and clean energy investment America has ever made. Now, along with the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), programs are being developed to provide resources for energy and climate resiliency improvements that can be used in houses of worship and our homes.

On **July 18th at 3 pm ET/Noon PT** the Interfaith Power and Light will host a [briefing](#) with the U.S. Department of Energy on the climate and energy resources for faith communities. Join to learn more about direct pay, the tax credits, the programs, and the role faith communities can play in helping our country address the climate crisis and ensure that all communities are supported. [Click here to RSVP](#).



## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

During our recent benefit (“[Possible Dinner for Impossible Ministry](#)”) FAN Director of Franciscan Justice Circles Nora Pfeiffer presented a **Franciscan Justice Award** to a married couple who “embody the values and action that Franciscan Justice Circles promote.” **Teresa and Jeff Redder** are Secular Franciscans from New Jersey. Teresa serves as Regional Minister of the St. Katharine Drexel Region, where Jeff serves as Councilor-at-Large. Both are active members of the **Delaware Valley Franciscan Justice Circle**.



With a true Franciscan ministry of presence, and extending their service to prison ministry, confirmation religious education, international medical missions, and much more, the Redders seamlessly and authentically blend spirituality with work for justice. They truly inspire us! [Watch their award presentation here.](#)