

Courage in the storms

Image by [Mystic Art Design](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Elijah experienced a moment of great discouragement. He had denounced the worship of false gods. In turn he was sentenced to death, so he ran and exclaimed to God that he was not able to keep preaching. In order to get his attention, God had an earthquake, wind and fire take place before him. Then there was “a tiny whispering sound.” It was in that whispering sound that God the Father revealed himself to Elijah.



As the gospel for the [19th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) begins, we find Jesus very busy. He attends to the immediate needs of the crowd. He provides direction to the disciples. He climbs the mountain. He prays. He keeps an eye on the weather. All before the onset of the storm.

Storm and discouragement occur here in the gospel as well. Whereas God the Father first brought on the storm for Elijah, Jesus goes to the Disciples amidst the storm. At Jesus' prompting, Peter gains courage and actually takes probably the most monumental “next steps,” in faith history. For a moment, he was able to heed the Lord's words and not be afraid, step out of the boat onto the water and walk toward the Lord. Then, he found himself frightened and sinking. The humanness of Peter's response makes him so relatable.

Peter's steps are not to be understood as a failure. They were profound steps of courage. Our Lord revealed himself to the disciples. He reveals himself to us now too. As he did for the disciples and the crowd, he does for us. He feeds us. He directs us. He prays for us. He comes to us. He calls us. He catches us. He reminds us. He is always with us.

Might there be another level of reveal in the gospel passage? Jesus walking on water is absolutely a miracle. But as powerful as that is, maybe even more so is God revealing to Peter what is possible by being His follower. It is in our belief in God, who reveals Himself to us, that we come to know who **we** are, a self-revelation as the beloved.

In this gospel reading, Christ did not calm the storm, but rather chose to walk through it, towards us. We are called to go forth, to journey to Christ, to help others as Christ did for Peter, during all the storms that we might face in this life. The storm may be sickness or trial. The storm may be terrible injustices to the poor and vulnerable. And as Peter displayed, may we gain courage knowing who we are walking to meet and use that courage to advocate for our fellow sisters and brothers.

Suggested Action:

Take an opportunity to help others through the storm by advocating for justice. Use the actions in the FAN newsletter.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those struggling in the storms of life, may they find courage and strength in Christ Jesus, we pray...

Remembering the horrific events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the U.S. dropped the atomic bomb, we pray for reconciliation and a world free of nuclear weapons. We pray...

Prayer:

O God, You remind us over and over in your Word that you are always with us. You tell us not to fear and you draw us close into your presence. We look to you to bring peace and calm to the storms we face. Remind us all that you are with us and that you control the waters. You're the only place we find refuge in the storms that surround us, an ever-present help in trouble. You're the only place we can find peace and strength. We ask you for holy peace, inner strength and deep courage to continue walking through the storm. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Franciscan Justice Circles: Register Now for October Conference

Please join FJC's and other Franciscan-inspired justice-seekers from across the country for the first [Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference](#) **October 13-16, 2023 in Washington, DC!** FAN is pleased to join with the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU) to create an exciting intergenerational gathering, where we will strengthen our ability to bring our authentic voices to bear on the challenges facing our communities and common home.

With the urgency of climate change compounded by disproportionate effects on people of color and those in poverty, the conference will focus on embracing an advocacy response to these interconnected issues through the lens of the Franciscan tradition. All are welcome. [Registration is open](#) and spaces are limited!



Join FAN at March on Washington

Exactly 60 years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other Civil Rights leaders organized the pivotal March on Washington, **FAN will participate in this year's March as part of our ongoing work** to help dismantle systemic racism, put an end to gun violence, reverse climate change to save our common home, and eradicate poverty in the wealthiest nation on Earth. On **August 26, 2023** we will join the [60th anniversary March on Washington](#).

It's Not A Commemoration, It's A Continuation!

If you plan to be in DC, we would love for you to join us. [Fill out this form and we will email you updates on meet-up information](#). As the nation deals with historic levels of violent hate crimes and threats to its democracy, join us in the fight for democracy, social justice, and civil rights. [Register online](#).



Environmental Racism: Chemical Plant in DC

Photo courtesy of Jacob Fenston / DCist

On July 26th, activists and community members of Ivy City, a historically black neighborhood in Northeast Washington DC, rallied to remove a chemical sealants plant suspected to have been exposing families in the area to toxic chemicals. National Engineering Products (NEP) was “grandfathered in” before modern environmental laws and doesn’t hold any pollution permits, says Parisa Norouzi, the Executive Director of Empower DC. While fumes are still pungent in the air, the community has urged DC officials and federal regulators to close NEP to protect families. [Read more about this effort in DCist](#).



As part of FAN's [environmental racism campaign](#), we know that instances like the chemical plant in Ivy City are all too common in our country. What environmental issues in your area are disproportionately affecting communities of color? We invite you to learn more about environmental racism by joining us this fall for our webinar series on environmental racism. [Click here](#) to receive updates from FAN on this series.

FAN Joins Advocacy Groups in Urging and End to Asylum Ban

FAN joined over 200 civil, human and immigrant rights organizations in signing this [letter to President Biden](#) urging him to end the asylum ban policy. In the *East Bay Sanctuary Covenant* case, the U.S. District

FAITH COMMUNITIES SAY:
RESTORE ASYLUM

#WelcomeWithDignity

Court [found](#) the Biden Administration's "Circumvention of Lawful Pathways" rule (aka the "asylum ban") to be illegal. Yet the Biden Administration continues efforts to uphold the ban. We can and must welcome people seeking asylum through a safe, orderly, and humane process.

New Report: Youth Attitudes on Guns

[Everytown](#) partnered with [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) (SPLC) and American University's [Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab](#) (PERIL) to produce a first-of-its-kind report on youth attitudes about guns, gun violence and gun safety.

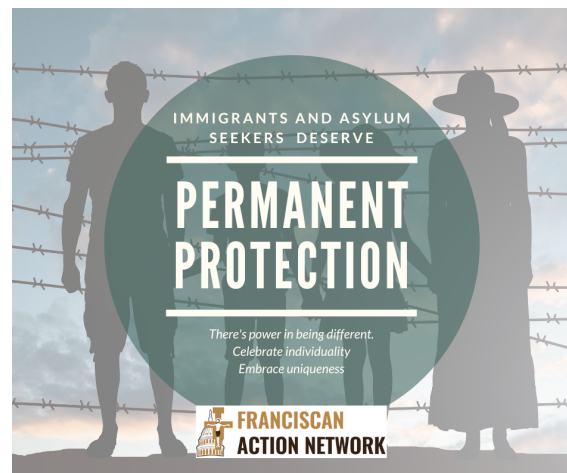
The [report](#) studied views of young people aged 14-30 on various topics. It contains informational insights into how the nation's young people are thinking about and being impacted by the prevalence of guns and gun violence in the US. An executive summary is available [here](#) and the full report can be found [here](#).



Sign-on Letter on Immigration Funding

Network Lobby has a sign-on letter asking Senators and key House members to divest from programs that militarize the border and criminalize immigrants and instead invest in programs that support immigrants and the communities that are providing care for them. You may sign on by [clicking here](#).

Their goal is to get 10,000 signatures by August 31 in order to secure press coverage when the petition is delivered to Capitol Hill on September 12. [Add your name](#) to help show lawmakers that people of faith love their neighbors and believe in justice for migrants at our southern border and across the country.



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Last month, a member of the Franciscan Justice Circle in the Mid-Hudson Valley of New York visited the [Veterans for Peace Golden Rule Peace Boat](#) at one of its stops along the Hudson River. (Pictured) The story of the peace boat began in 1958 as it was sailing to the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean in protest of nuclear weapon testing in that area. It was intercepted by our military and sent back to the U.S. In recent years, the boat was rediscovered, purchased by the Veterans for Peace, refurbished, and set sail again with the



same message due to recent developments in the war in Ukraine.

The "commander" of the *Golden Rule* urged those with concerns over nuclear weapons to continue signing petitions, writing letters to the editor, contacting U.S. governmental representatives and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of foreign governments, and holding public events.

For information about joining or starting a Franciscan Justice Circle in your area, [contact us](#).