

In the Vineyard of the Lord

Image by [Malam Siang](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In Sunday's readings for the [27th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), there is much talk of vineyards. In our day and age, many of us have very little to do with vineyards. And yet, we still eat the fruits and vegetables that grow in those vineyards. The landowner in the gospel needed his vineyard tended, so he leased it to tenants who he thought were trustworthy. When it came time to obtain his produce, the landowner was met with violence and the death of his servants, and eventually his own son.



Where can we interject ourselves into this story? How can we think of it in terms of our lives today? One of the images that came to mind for me was the words of preparation of the gifts during the Mass, when the chalice is elevated: "Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands; it will become our spiritual drink." Hearing those words, I know that someone had to work that vineyard in order for that wine to make it to the altar of our Lord. We hear those words so often, yet do we really think about the actual work of the human hands that it took to create what will become our spiritual drink?

The landowner in the gospel knew the importance of having trustworthy tenants tend his vineyard. He knew that eventually the vineyard would yield a bountiful harvest; a harvest that would earn for him and his family the wealth they needed to live. For us today, we pray that the work of human hands will flourish so that we may have a harvest to feast upon. And who are those "human hands"? Well, these days they are the migrants, the day laborers, and those who are mostly on the margins of society, yet are greatly needed to gather the harvest.

Do we think about those migrants who sweat and toil in the hot sun to bring in a harvest so that we can have fresh fruits and vegetables? They are easy to overlook when we are not the ones out in the hot sun picking strawberries for pennies. Can we imagine those people whose hands are parched from picking fruit? Do we even think about that as we go to the grocery store and pick out the fruit that someone else had to harvest? The next time you buy fruits and vegetables, and eat those fruits and vegetables, say a prayer for those migrants whose "human hands" helped get them to your table.

Again, it is sometimes difficult to imagine these parables in our own context, but Jesus told these parables for a reason. It was not just for the people of his day, but for all of us, for all time. Those parables are timeless, and their meanings touch our lives to this day. As we go about our comfortable lives, we can reimagine those timeless and meaningful stories our Lord Jesus

shared with us. Doing so can not only deepen our prayer life, but also open our hearts and minds.

Check out the work of the Franciscan Action Network including the complex issues of immigration. There is much to learn and much more to do.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS
Virtual FJC Member
Former Board Member

Suggested Action:

Advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. Advocating for policies that provide pathways to legal status and protections for migrants is crucial. This can include reforms that address issues such as the asylum processes and family reunification. [Here is an example from CWS.](#)

Suggested Petitions:

That we may stand in the vineyard of the Lord along with those who are marginalized, we pray...

That we may act for just laws and policies for our migrant brothers and sisters, we pray...

Prayer:

God of love and compassion, may we always recognize your spirit:

in the refugee family, seeking safety from violence;

in the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables;

in the asylum-seekers, seeking justice for their families;

in the unaccompanied child, traveling in a dangerous world.

Give us hearts that break open whenever our brothers and sisters turn to us.

Give us hearts that no longer turn deaf to their voices in times of need.

Give us eyes to recognize a moment for grace instead of a threat.

Give us voices that fail to remain silent but which decide instead to advocate prophetically.

Give us hands that reach out in welcome, but also in work, for a world of justice until all homelands are safe and secure.

Amen.

Recording of Transitus and Peace Prayer

The staff of FAN would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Feast of St. Francis tomorrow.

At the initiative of our Franciscan Justice Circles, on Sunday, Oct.1, FAN hosted an early celebration of the [Transitus](#) virtually with Franciscans from all over the country. Adapted from several sources of early documents, the service brought participants



through the moments of Francis' life just before his passing on to eternal happiness. We invite you to watch the recording on our [YouTube channel](#).

Tomorrow, **watch your email for a special peace prayer** we are sending in celebration of the Feast.

Take action for peace in Ukraine

Eli McCarthy prays with faith delegation in Ukraine, May 2022

Tomorrow, Oct. 4 from 9:30-10:30 am, join us in Washington DC for an [interfaith prayer and press conference](#) near the Senate. The focus of the gathering is to continue building off the energy of over 230 faith leaders signing a letter that calls for robust diplomatic initiatives to end the war and establish a just peace in Ukraine. **The gathering will be broadcast via FAN's Instagram live page.** [Follow our page.](#)



The [Global Days of Action for Peace in Ukraine](#) are going on this week. Plans have been made all over the country for prayer vigils and other events. We encourage you to [join one near you](#) or gather your family and neighbors to recite a peace prayer.

We urge you to continue to promote diplomatic negotiations and other proven peacebuilding practices. Click here to [contact your members of Congress](#).

New Environmental Justice Newsletter

As part of our "[Working for Environmental Justice](#)" campaign, last week FAN launched a new monthly advocacy newsletter, **The Current**. The publication will be a once-monthly update containing relevant news and action opportunities to support environmental justice.

Read more about the campaign on our [website](#) and [sign up here](#) to get *The Current* delivered to your email inbox.



Submit Comment for Strong Fuel Economy Standards

Our country's 286 million passenger vehicles are a major contributor to climate pollution. Right now, there's an important opportunity to make vehicles cleaner. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is proposing new federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy

**Submit your comment
to NHTSA for strong
fuel efficiency
standards!**



(CAFE) standards for vehicles sold in 2027 and beyond.

It is the moral responsibility of our nation and our sacred task as people of faith and conscience to address the climate crisis. Each of your comments helps ensure the strongest rules possible. Use this link to show your [support of strong fuel economy standards](#).

Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference Online Attendance

We are thrilled with the response we have to our first-ever [Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference](#): *Preserving God's Planet Together*, happening in Washington, DC, October 13-16, 2023. While we are now over capacity for in-person participation in the conference, we invite you to attend the online hybrid seminar Saturday Oct 14, from 1:30p-5:00p ET (10:30a-2:00p PT). Register for [online attendance](#) here.

We are genuinely looking forward to coming together in person (and online) and building relationships to strengthen our collective Franciscan voice on creation care and climate justice. Please [contact us directly](#) if you have any issues or questions.



Take Action on Understaffed Nursing Homes

Image by [Scottish Guy](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Just about everyone in America has a loved one in a nursing home, knows someone who works in a nursing home, or recognizes that they may need nursing home care in the future—even if just temporarily.

Understaffed nursing homes put the health and safety of both residents and workers at risk. The Biden administration has proposed a historic new rule that would **establish a minimum staffing standard in nursing homes** for the first time.

To ensure that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) follows through, [submit your comments](#) supporting this rule by Nov. 6, 2023.

