

Publication Date: October 31, 2023

Reflection Date: November 5, 2023 - [31st Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

“The greatest among you must be your servant”

In the gospel for the [31st Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), Jesus is critical of leaders. Jesus is talking about how well they live and think of themselves as superior to many others. Has much changed? Are we not trusting, believing, and supporting all that we are told?

Several phrases stand out: “For they preach but they do not practice;” “all their works are performed to be seen;” and “they love places of honor.” Yet all of us need to be humble before God.

Years ago, I had the honor to meet and speak with Dom Helder Camara, a bishop from Brazil who chose to live with the poor. His most famous quote is, “when I feed the poor they call me a saint. But when I ask why they are hungry or poor, I am called a communist.” He was so humble and had a heart for those who struggled with providing for their family’s needs.

Jesus, surely, is still calling us to be humble and to embrace those who ask for help rather than simply talking about issues or turning our heads away from them. Our problem is that we all seem to be weary. We prefer to have someone else do the work. So we walk away. We pray for those who are needy or involved in a disaster but do not take action to change the policies to address the problem. It’s easier to simply keep praying, but to pray and do nothing else is to say that this is God’s problem.

In the past, Franciscan Action Network held a fundraising dinner for our supporters and those with whom we work. It usually involved a few presentations and a table of food to share. [This year](#) the FAN staff had a wonderful inspired idea to change our focus and instead, to serve a meal to those in need. The response was great and the feedback we received was incredibly positive. (Thank you to those who contributed and of course if you did not do so at the time, we are still [gladly accepting donations!](#))

This is the type of humility Jesus is calling for in the gospel, the humility of a servant.

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap.
Board President

Suggested Action:

Use this newsletter to take action for an issue or cause that is important to you.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those who suffer because of systemic injustice, we pray...



For all those who work toward justice for all people, we pray...

Prayer from [Franciscan Media, Pause & Pray](#):

Merciful Jesus,
those hurt and cast aside
by society
have always been especially
welcomed by you.
Help me be a friend and advocate
for these whom you cherish;
open my eyes
to see the image of God in all.
Send your Spirit to comfort those
who have been rejected,
feeding and strengthening them
for the calling for which they were created.
Grow us all in mercy.

Amen.

Pray-In at the White House for Israel-Gaza Ceasefire

On **Thursday, November 2nd (All Souls Day)** at **12:30 PM**, Catholic and other Christian peacemakers will conduct a "Pray-In" outside the White House to call on President Biden, a Catholic, and all government officials, to heed Jesus' commandment of love and Pope Francis' plea to take the side of peace, and demand that all parties undertake de-escalation steps and an immediate ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza war as well as immediate release of all hostages held by Hamas.



Join us at our Environmental Justice webinar on Pennsylvania

Please join us on **Wednesday, November 15 at 4pm ET (1pm PT)** for the third webinar in our [series on working for environmental justice](#), which will focus on **Chester PA**.



The majority low-income Black and Brown residents of Chester, Pennsylvania experience disproportionate adverse effects on health and quality of life from the pollution released by one of the largest trash incinerators in the country, in addition to a sewage waste treatment facility, chemical manufacturing plants, and other polluting industries located in this historic city on the Delaware River. [Learn more.](#)

The trash incinerator, operated by Covanta Delaware Valley, was cited in 2019 as one of the largest polluters of its kind. Hear what the residents of Chester are demanding and how you can ally with them to advocate environmental justice. [Register to attend here.](#) **This event will be recorded and all registrants will receive a link.**

Actions to Urge Gun Violence Prevention

As the country mourns for the victims of a mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine on October 25, gun violence prevention organizations renew efforts for action.

Say **NO** to
Weapons of War



#BanAssaultWeapons

Education Opportunities:

- Nuns Against Gun Violence is hosting "Beating Guns: Hope for People Weary of Violence," a webinar with author and activist Shane Claiborne. The webinar will take place on Zoom on Wednesday, November 8, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. ET. [Get more information here.](#)
- The Gun Violence Archive is an independent data collection and research group providing an online archive of gun violence incidents collected from over 7,500 law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources daily in an effort to provide near-real time data about the results of gun violence. [Read more here.](#)

Advocacy Opportunities:

- Each week, the [Newton Action Alliance](#) hosts online lobby sessions where training is provided and calls are made to elected officials to demand change. There are two sessions each Monday: daytime and evening. [Click here for more details.](#)
- Newtown Action Alliance has worked closely with gun violence survivors on the fight to ban assault weapons. [Sign the petition](#) to urge the Senate to pass the assault weapons ban.

Letter Sign on Urging Action on Family Visa Backlog

Approximately 4 million people are stranded abroad awaiting a visa to join their family members in the U.S. The U.S. Administration can take action now to reclaim unused green cards and provide parole for people in family-based green card backlogs as well as expand family reunification parole programs.

The Hearts@Home Campaign coordinated by [Value our Families](#) has developed a sign-on letter for faith leaders to urge the

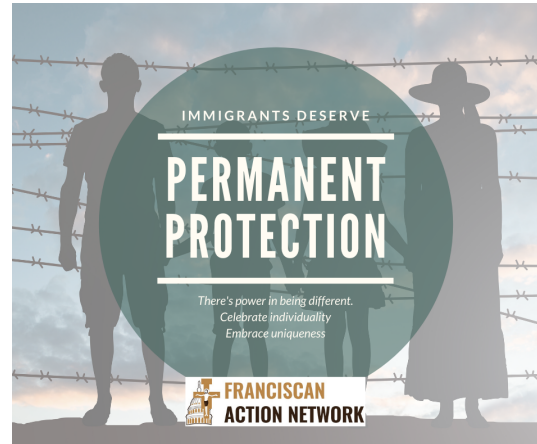


Administration to take swift action to facilitate the reunification of families who have been trapped in visa backlogs for years. [Read the letter in full by clicking here](#). The deadline to [sign on](#) is **November 8**.

Urge Congress to Fund Refugee & Newcomer Inclusion

As legislators continue to negotiate federal funding, please consider urging them to equip our communities with the resources needed to help newcomers integrate and thrive. On October 20, the Administration recognized this imperative by sending Congress a [request for supplemental funding](#) that included significant resources for vital refugee and humanitarian assistance.

Conflict, persecution, and climate change have resulted in an unprecedented 110+ million people displaced around the world. [Call on Congress to restore essential benefits](#) to arriving Ukrainians and Afghans, invest in welcoming policies, and reduce reliance on immigrant detention, deportation, and border militarization.



Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

E. Wisconsin FJC members are involved in local and state advocacy efforts including improving the conditions and oversight of affordable housing units in the city of Milwaukee which recently had a win; contacting members of Congress in support of Farm Bill including the importance of proper nutrition for at-risk pregnant women; advocating for Milwaukee County to adopt a resolution that would make it policy that natural areas and systems have a right to exist, in line with the “Rights of Nature” movement, which came to pass this month making Milwaukee County the first in the state; and promoting the “We All Belong” campaign against the rise of “christian” nationalism.



The **Mid-Hudson Valley FJC** members have been reaching out to their leaders on a variety of issues including: urging Congress to act on the Assault Weapons Ban of 2023; awareness raising on care for our common home; interfaith peace events; contacting their members of Congress to call for a ceasefire in the Middle East conflict; sending cards of condolence, prayer and sympathy to local Jewish and Muslim houses of worship.

The **Connecticut-Rhode Island FJC** has kept moving forward in their pursuit of continual conversion after reading Laudato Si' by delving into The Earth Charter and continuing to share and come up with personal and local actions, especially ones that can be taken within one's church community.

If you are interested in connecting with a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) (FJC) or learning more, please contact FJC Director, [Nora Pfeiffer](#).

