

Publication Date: July 16, 2024

Reflection Date: July 21, 2024 - [16th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Collaborating Across Faiths

Image by [John Hain](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In the readings for the [16th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), we hear about the need to unify our efforts as we are but sheep, lost without a shepherd.

It's often been said to me that work is best done together rather than individually. For example, climate change, systemic racism and poverty, and the inhumane treatment of migrants are such large and overwhelming issues to tackle by oneself, but become less so when taking action with friends. I take special notice that the scripture for the first reading (Jer 23:1-6) mentions that we all need a *shepherd* to lead us to God, which to me emphasizes the importance of collaborating across faiths albeit with different shepherds. For Christians, this shepherd is Jesus, for Muslims this shepherd is Muhammad, for Buddhists this shepherd is the Buddha. Together we can follow our shepherds to coalesce our God-given talents and gifts into a reality of justice. As civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We must all learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality."



Working together is easier said than done, but working together across faiths is a valiant challenge. A critical lesson for me in my faith journey was balancing reflection and discernment with faithful action. In the Gospel of Mark (6:30-34), before Jesus encouraged them to rest, "The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught." I was moved to action through faith by this statement. A shepherd alone can only do so much; we must be God's action-taking hands in the world together with our fellow disciples. How much more beautiful it must be to the shepherds that their sheep *choose* to care for the rest of the flock out of their own free will?

You have already taken the first step to become a part of a community of faithful action-takers through receiving and reading this newsletter. Perhaps the next step of discernment is joining a Franciscan community of justice seekers through a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#)? By joining a Justice Circle, you can learn more about what it means to understand and truly love our neighbor and listen to them, and to be moved to action and advocate for our collective God-given rights and human needs. How truly inspiring it is to me that there are thousands of us together as a flock of Franciscans working to *be* the change the world needs.

Gabriela Martinez
Associate of Campaigns

Suggested Action:

Find a friend and grab a coffee or lunch to discuss taking faithful action in your community through joining or creating a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#).

Suggested Petitions:

For those whose voices and communities have been stripped from them, we pray...
For the faith community to work toward a right relationship for justice in our world we pray...

Prayer:

My shepherd, help me to not be afraid of the flock, to love my neighbors as myself, and to take faithful action together with my brothers and sisters to be the change you call us to be in this world.

Amen.

Join us for a Nuclear Weapons Webinar Tomorrow

Tomorrow, **July 17 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT**, join Franciscan Action Network for a special informational webinar: "[Nuclear Weapons: What you don't know can hurt you](#)." **This event will be recorded and all who register will receive a link to watch.**

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF, Justice and Peace Coordinator for the Felician Sisters of North America, will moderate this discussion on ways to be peacemakers in a troubled world. She will speak with experts including **Ira Helfand** and **Maylene Hughes** of Physicians for Social Responsibility as well as **James Acton** of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



Registration for this event is free. If you are able, we ask that you please consider donating to help support the costs of our webinars [Click here to register](#).

FAN Statement on Assassination Attempt

Franciscan Action Network deplores the heinous attempt to assassinate former President Donald Trump, which resulted in the death of two people and wounding of two others, including the former president. We express our deep sorrow for the suffering caused by this horrific and inexcusable attack, and we offer our prayers for healing and our condolences to all those traumatized by it. We call for an end to the tide of violence sweeping our country and our world.

As Franciscans, we have called persistently for nonviolent resolution of political differences in the United

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States, including the proper conduct of the democratic process via peaceful campaigning and free and fair elections, and we will continue to do so. We are committed to participate as voters and to serve as peacemaking poll workers and poll chaplains in the upcoming elections. We humbly ask our sisters and brothers to eschew violence, retaliation, and incendiary or demeaning language, and to join us in praying and working to heal our wounded and polarized society...

[Read the full statement and prayer on our website.](#)

FAN Speaks at Poor People's Campaign Moral March

RNS photo/Jack Jenkins

On June 29, FAN Associate of Campaigns Gabriela Martinez spoke at the Poor People's Campaign Moral March on Washington and to the polls. She joined other faith leaders calling for poor and low-wealth Americans to vote and make their voices heard in the 2024 election this November. Thousands of clergy, union members and activists rallied with affected poor and low-wealth people near the U.S. Capitol calling attention to an array of issues at stake that impact the poor and communities of color.



Gabby's remarks, which are quoted in this [article from Religion News Service](#), mention her personal experience growing up near polluted sites and called for action together. See more photos from this event and others we have joined on our [FAN Shows Up webpage](#).

Thank you Order of Friars Minor, Our Lady of Guadalupe Province

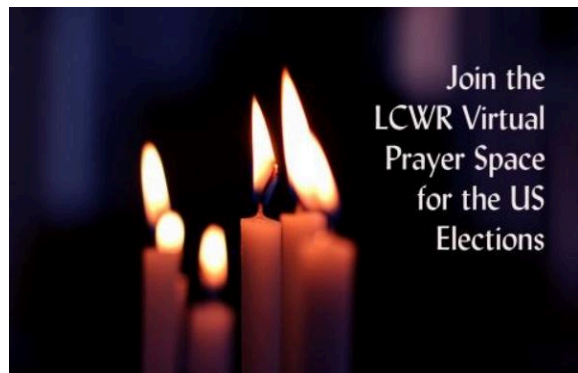
With over 800 years of history, the Order of Friars Minor continues to serve the poor and underserved all over the United States. The friars work actively on direct service and advocacy issues that mirror FAN's and we are grateful to the OFM's recently-unified Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe for their consistent support as an institutional member of our organization. Learn more about [the friars' work here](#).



FRANCISCAN FRIARS
Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Join LCWR Virtual for a Contemplative Prayer Vigil

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), as part of a collective discernment on "What is ours to do in this time," will host 24 hours of contemplative prayer throughout the days of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions in July and August, as well as the national elections in November. These days of prayer are open to all. There will be no presentations or comments



during the virtual gathering. To participate, log in, review the orientation to the gathering in the waiting room, and join women religious from around the world as they pray in silence. [Find the schedule and more information by clicking here.](#)

New Report on Conditions at U.S.-Mexico Border

HOPE and Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción (DHIA) just published [Pain as Strategy: The Violence of U.S.-Mexico Immigration Enforcement and Texas' Operation Lone Star against People on the Move in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez.](#)

The report documents systemic abuses against people on the move in the region by Mexican immigration enforcement, Texas Operation Lone Star, and U.S. immigration policies. The two organizations will host a webinar on **July 17, at 1:00 pm MT/3:00 pm ET** to provide an update about conditions in this region of the border and discuss recommendations. [Register here.](#)



BORDER OBSERVATORY 2024

Pain as Strategy

The Violence of U.S.-Mexico Immigration Enforcement and Texas' Operation Lone Star against People on the Move in El Paso-Ciudad Juárez

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Six members of the **DC Area and Boston Franciscan Justice Circles** (*pictured*) participated in FAN's [Peace and Justice Pilgrimage](#) to Assisi, Italy June 23-30. With 37 total pilgrims, the trip was a beautiful opportunity to walk in the footsteps of St. Francis and St. Clare, peacemakers in their own time whose courageous nonviolence, compassion for others, kinship with creation, and work for peace and reconciliation continue to inspire Franciscans worldwide in their personal spiritual journeys.



The **Connecticut - Rhode Island Franciscan Justice Circle** recently signed on to an open letter to the Connecticut delegation of the US House of Representatives as part of a coalition of faith leaders and faith groups in CT, asking the members to prevent nuclear war by supporting H.R 77, [Embracing the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#). "Experts are sounding the alarm that the risk of nuclear war is greater than it has ever been since the Atomic bombings of Japan," the letter stated, noting the taxpayer dollars spent each year to maintain and upgrade the country's nuclear weapon arsenal as well as the environmental harm from testing and maintenance of nuclear weapons.

Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

Raleigh-Area, NC FJC Interest Meeting: Wed. July 17 from 7:00-8:00pm via zoom

Virtual FJC (limited mobility): Thurs. July 18 from 11:00am-12:00pm Pacific / 2:00-3:00pm Eastern via zoom

CT-RI FJC: Tues. July 23 from 7:00-8:00pm Eastern via zoom

To be connected with any Franciscan Justice Circle or to find out more, please contact FAN

Director of Justice Circles [Nora Pfeiffer](#).