

Bread for One Another

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In the gospel reading for the [Twentieth Sunday of Ordinary Time](#), Jesus is speaking to a large crowd that came to Capernaum looking for him. Just days before, Jesus fed this crowd from only five loaves of bread and two fish. In light of this miracle, the people hoped that Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary and Joseph the carpenter, would consent to being their king. In other words, Jesus was speaking to a crowd that felt some deep longing within themselves and wondered whether Jesus might be able to satisfy that yearning. But their gaze was fixed on Jesus as an earthly king and Jesus challenged the crowd to see him instead as the “living bread that came down from heaven.”



*“I am the living bread that came down from heaven;
whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world.”*

Notice that Jesus doesn’t soften or temper his language. He is not speaking poetically or metaphorically. His words are strong: “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.” In next week’s gospel, we will hear the disciples in the crowd say, “This saying is hard; who can accept it?” And we will learn that many of his followers returned to their former way of life, and “no longer accompanied him.” Yet, some continued to walk with Jesus, learning what it meant to pour themselves out as bread “for the life of the world.”

That, too, is our call: to pour ourselves out as bread for one another. In our second reading from Ephesians, St. Paul describes some practical, concrete ways to be bread for one another: “Pay attention to how to behave and how to live, what your attitudes are. Do not live as the unwise do, but live as responsible persons. Do not let yourself be ignorant, but understand what the will of God is. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

In these next months, as we approach federal and state elections, we have an opportunity to be bread for one another, agents for change, in service for our democracy. We can draw on Franciscan values of peacemaking and justice to respectfully and courageously challenge the polarization and dehumanization in our language and actions.

Sr. Louise Lears, SC
Creation Care Advocacy

Suggested Action:

Notice how your own language might feed violent interpretations of politics. Replace references to “battleground states” and “war chests” with other phrases or descriptions, such as “states that are crucial” and “money raised for elections.” Learn about [FAN’s work for the peaceful operation of American democracy](#) and consider becoming a poll chaplain or poll worker.

Suggested Petitions:

For those whose daily need for healthy food, clean water and proper shelter goes unmet, feed them with all the good things of Christ for life now and in eternity. Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

For those whose lives have been broken by violence and crime, feed them with hope and a new life in Christ. Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Prayer (adapted from [NOLA Catholic.org Mercy is Endless Feeding Prayer](#))

Lord, You are the Bread of Life, the One who satisfies our soul's deepest desire with the joy of salvation. We come to you with gratitude for all that we have. Open our eyes and the eyes of all to see you as the only Bread for spiritual hunger but, also, to see your presence in the faces of all who have physical hunger. Give us openness of soul and courageous, willing hearts to be with our sisters and brothers who hunger for so much. For when we care for them we, in fact, care for you. We ask this in the name of the One whose mercy is endless, Jesus, the Lord.

Amen.

Congratulations to Br. Cristofer Fernandez, OFM Conv.

FAN congratulates Br. Cristofer Fernández, OFM Conv. (pictured, center) who played a key role in our [2023 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference](#) engaging with young adults learning advocacy. Br. Cristofer made his Solemn Vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience on Friday, Aug. 2 along with Friar Joseph Krondon, OFM Conv., and Friar Raad Eshoo, OFM Conv. at St. Louis Catholic Church in Clarksville, MD. Minister Provincial Friar Michael Heine, OFM Conv., was the principal celebrant of the Mass and Friar Bishop Michael Martin, bishop of Charlotte, presided. Prayerful best wishes to Br. Cris and his community!



Guns in Haiti Webinar Advocacy Opportunities

On July 30, FAN cosponsored a webinar focused on the interconnections between U.S. gun policies and the trafficking of weapons to Haiti that fuels gang violence in the country. If you missed the event, you can [watch it on YouTube, here](#).



The webinar sought to raise awareness to the fact that the majority of the weapons and ammunition used by the gangs in Haiti come from the United States. During the webinar, a number of U.S. bills and policies that support a decrease in weapons leaving our country were mentioned. The Quixote Center has prepared a [list of the legislation here](#). Additionally, in-person and online visits to Capitol Hill are being planned for September 25 and 26. If you are interested in being part of either the in person visits in DC or the virtual visits, please contact Toby Harkleroad (tharkleroad@rjmusa.org).

Webinar: Migration Realities in the US

On Thursday, September 5 at 1pm ET / 11am PT, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) will host a [webinar](#) and discussion on the migration landscape in the United States, with particular focus on changes in recent years. A panel of experts will address migration from select sociological, demographic, resettlement, legal and policy perspectives. They will speak to the root causes of migration, the issues raised by "border" narratives and politics, the challenges of refugee protection and resettlement, recent demographic changes, the legal and policy realities, and constructive ways forward. [Click here to register](#).



A Common Insanity: New Film on Dangers of ICBMs

To learn more about the dangers of delivery systems for nuclear weapons, consider viewing a new documentary. '[A Common Insanity](#)' features an extensive interview with whistleblower / peace activist Daniel Ellsberg and delves into the dangers of **intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs)**.

Watch the new [trailer for "A Common Insanity" here](#) and share it with your networks.



Season of Creation Series of Conversations

The Laudato Si Movement will host a series of three conversations on Mondays in August beginning today (7-8:15pm ET / 4-5:15pm PT) to explore how to approach the ecological crisis in light of our faith, with our communities and families, during the Season of Creation (Sept 1-Oct 4).

August 12: Hope and Act with Creation: Maximizing our Impact

August 19: Managing resistance: How to work with people who don't support ecological issues in the Church

August 26: Communicating Climate as Catholics

[Click here to register](#).



LAUDATO SI'
MOVEMENT
Catholics for Our Common Home

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The monthly national call for all Franciscan Justice Circles is tomorrow, **Wednesday, August 14 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT**. The call will be facilitated by Associate of Campaigns Gabriela Martinez. There will be prayer, a brief check-in, some sharing of updates, and upcoming events. Please mark your calendar and reach out to [Gabby via email](#) if you need the Zoom link.



Please contact FAN staff at FJCInfo@franciscanaction.org to connect to one of our 20+ [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) or find out more about forming one near you.