

Publication Date: August 27, 2024

Reflection Date: September 1, 2024 - [22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

“Be doers of the word, not hearers only”

Image by [Bob Dmyt](#) from [Pixabay](#)

The readings for the [Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) speak to simplicity, fidelity, diligence, and honesty in following God’s laws. In Deuteronomy (Dt 4:1-2, 6-8), Moses tells the Israelites neither to add nor subtract from the law he gave them, but to observe it carefully, “Thus will you give evidence of your wisdom and intelligence to the nations, who will hear of all these statutes and say, ‘This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.’”



In the reading from James (Jas 1:18), we are told:

*“Be doers of the word and not hearers only...
Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this:
to care for orphans and widows in their affliction
and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”*

In being doers and not hearers only, we are to actualize the conditions intended by the law, for instance, “to care for orphans and widows” through direct service to the poor, and also through advocacy for changes in structures and systems that deny human dignity and perpetuate suffering. We can be doers of the Word in so many ways. But what does it mean “to keep oneself unstained by the world”?

Jesus gave an answer to this question with great fervor in the familiar passage from Mark’s Gospel (Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23), where he really confronts the scribes and pharisees as they challenge him on cleansing rituals while lacking fidelity to the law in so many more important ways, especially in loving neighbor: “Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me’... Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.” His long litany of those things that defile includes two that are of particular importance this election season: deceit and slander.

As told by Bonaventure in his *Major Life*, St. Francis looked with particular abhorrence at the “vice of detraction,” recoiling as if from a snakebite, especially when there was doubt about the veracity of a negative report involving another person. In one instance, he commanded an investigation on the spot, with a severe correction if it proved not to be true. He was reported to have believed “a detractor feeds on the blood of souls....”

While it seems that casual accusation, with a near disregard for truth, has become a fixed element of media interviews and social media postings involving politics, the children of St. Francis offer an alternative path:

“And this is my advice, my counsel, and my earnest plea to my friars in our Lord Jesus Christ that, when they travel about the world, they should not be quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words (cf. 2 Tim. 2:14) or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them.”

When persons of any belief, persuasion or temperament interact in disagreement with a Franciscan, they should walk away feeling respected and heard, and hopefully with a willingness for more conversation. In this election year, let us use opportunities at every level to replace the plague of slander and detraction with the courteous, humble, and loving dialogue expected of St. Francis’ followers, in the hope that once more we will hear it said: “This great nation is truly a wise and intelligent people.”

Joe Makley, OFS
JPIC Animator OFS-USA

Suggested Action:

At an event in your faith community with prayers for a free and fair election, promote a serious formation on civil dialogue. Read [On Civility in Political Communication](#) by Albert Merz, OFM.

Suggested Petitions:

May every faith community embrace civil dialogue, we pray.

May all political candidates be challenged to say only what is true and necessary, we pray.

Prayer:

Oh God, bless us in our humble efforts to be doers of the Word. When we take action against unjust structures, systems and practices contrary to the life and dignity of the human person, purify our thoughts and words from anything that could harm another’s reputation. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus, who preached justice and taught us the meaning of love.

Amen

Help FAN find a Communications and Development Coordinator

FAN’s longtime Communications Coordinator Janine Walsh is leaving for a new opportunity. We will miss Janine very much! Please help us to recruit a dynamic individual to serve as Communications and Development Coordinator. This is an entry level full-time staff position, located in Washington DC, and is open immediately. This is a fast-paced position with significant room for creativity that offers an outstanding opportunity to play a pivotal role within a faith-based advocacy organization.

FAN is a nondiscriminatory, nonpartisan 501(c)3 organization and is committed to building a diverse,



equitable, and inclusive community among staff, board, and our broader network.

Click here to [read and download the full job description](#). To apply, send a resume and cover letter to jobs@franciscanaction.org.

FAN 2023 Annual Report

The last year was an exciting one for Franciscan Action Network (FAN), with some notable breakthroughs as we began building our network of 47 religious communities and more than 12,000 individual members into a dynamic intergenerational Franciscan movement for justice, peace, creation, and human dignity. We invite you to read through our [2023 Annual Report](#).



2023 Annual Report

Coverage of Israel-Palestine Peace Delegation

Image courtesy of Ken Butigan

National Catholic Reporter published this [article](#) on August 23 explaining the peace delegation led by FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy. Also on the delegation was Ken Butigan, Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies professor and strategy consultant with Pace e Bene (FAN's partner in our June 2024 pilgrimage to Assisi). Ken joined this delegation hoping to support a just and lasting peace for all — longing for an end to all violence on all sides. Read [Ken's post about the trip here](#).



If you would like more information about the campaign, [contact Eli McCarthy](#). If you feel inspired to donate to the campaign, [click here](#) and type "Christians for Ceasefire campaign" in the section marked "In Honor of."

Register for the 2024 Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Fall Series

The Catholic Nonviolence Initiative will present their third annual 6-event series beginning September 16, "Synodality and Nonviolence." The series brings together students from Catholic Universities across the U.S. and around the world for conversations and reflections on the intersection of nonviolence and Synodality.

Monday 9/16, "Synodality 101: An Overview" features delegates and participants of the Synod. One panelist is Wyatt Olivas, the youngest synod delegate, a student at the University of Wyoming. [Learn more and register for these free online events by clicking here](#).

SYNODALITY & NONVIOLENCE

Catholic Nonviolence Initiative Fall Series 2024

Join us as we bring together students from Catholic Universities across the U.S. and around the world for conversations and reflections on intersection of nonviolence and Synodality.

Featured Speakers

Visit our website for a complete list of speakers.

- Wyatt Olivas**
Synod delegate,
Student, University of Wyoming
- Sr. Filo Hirota**
Member, Preparatory commission for
the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of
the Synod of Bishops
- Kevin Ahern**
Theological ethicist and public theologian
Professor of Religious Studies, Manhattan
College
- Charlene Howard**
Executive Director, Pax Christi USA
- Eli McCarthy**
Professor, Georgetown University
Just Peace Fellow, Franciscan
Action Network

- Sept 16 | 7-8:30 PM ET**
Synodality 101: An Overview
What is unique about this Synod on Synodality? Why did Pope Francis declare that synodality is what God expects of the Church in the 21st century? Come learn about the history of synods and implications for today from speakers involved in the planning and participation at the Synod on Synodality.
- Sept 23 | 7-9:00 PM ET**
A Listening Church: Listening, Discernment and Mission
This session will explore the Conversations in the Spirit model, recognizing the influence and history of discernment, contemplative listening, nonviolent communication, and restorative justice circles that are present in the Synodal process. Participants will witness and/or participate in a Conversation in the Spirit as part of the evening program.
- Sept 30 | 7-8:30 PM ET**
Synodality: Journeying Together towards a Nonviolent Church and World
Participants will learn from the experiences of diverse global movements that have harnessed the same principles guiding the synodal process to drive social change and foster nonviolent solutions in their own contexts.
- Oct 7 | 7-8:30 PM ET**
Living a Life of Synodality: Nonviolence in Action - Part 1
This session focuses on the practical applications of nonviolence and how they can effectively be integrated into our daily lives, as we seek to address key issues raised at the synod, including the complex question of legitimate self-defense in contemporary times.
- Oct 21 | 7-8:30 PM ET**
Living a Life of Synodality: Nonviolence in Action - Part 2
In this session, three speakers will draw connections between nonviolence as a collective way of life for a synodal people.

Monday 9/23, "Synodality: A Listening Church" explores practical applications of "listening to each other" as modeled at the Synod Assembly. As an example, the circle process of restorative justice will be presented by Heather Thompson, who reconciled with the man who murdered her brother.

Monday 9/30, "Synodality and Social Justice Movements." Panelists include Dr Kevin Ahern from Manhattan College who, from 2003-2007, served as the president of the International Movement of Catholic Students, a global student movement in more than 70 countries.

Remaining events include:

Monday 10/7, "Nonviolent Skills in Action"

Monday 10/21, "Embracing Nonviolence as a Collective/Communal Way of Life" featuring FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy.

August 2024 Stop Trafficking Newsletter

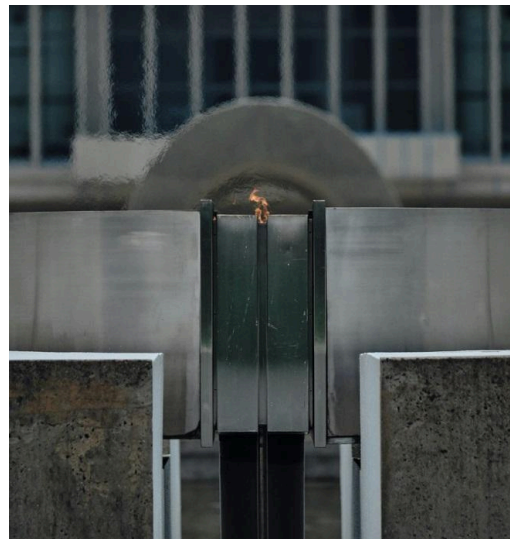
Human trafficking occurs everywhere and traffickers always prey on the vulnerabilities of their potential victims. The August edition of the Stop Trafficking newsletter from the [Alliance to End Human Trafficking](#) explores trafficking on college campuses and how college students, while vulnerable, are taking steps along with their school to combat trafficking through education and awareness. Please [click here to access the August newsletter](#).



Forum on Nuclear Weapons

In his 2022 pastoral letter, [Living in the Light of Christ's Peace: A Conversation Toward Nuclear Disarmament](#), Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico, called for dynamic discussion on nuclear disarmament.

On Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024, the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies (IACS) and University of New Mexico will host a groundbreaking forum on nuclear strategy. The "Forum on Nuclear Strategy: Disarmament & Deterrence in a Dangerous World" will feature high-ranking public policy experts, influential spiritual leaders, and prominent academics exploring strategic and ethical responses to the rising threat of nuclear war with discussions aimed at securing long-lasting peace across the globe. For more information and a full list of participants, [please click here](#).



The forum will be livestreamed on the IACS YouTube channel at [YouTube.com/@iacsusc](https://www.youtube.com/@iacsusc).

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

A mix of compassion, community and solidarity bring people together in local small groups we call [Franciscan Justice Circles](#), creating space for local engagement in social and environmental justice rooted in Franciscan spirituality. If you would like to learn more about these Circles or connect with any meetings mentioned below, please contact FJC director, Nora Pfeiffer [here](#).

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Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

Central Virginia FJC: Wed. Aug. 28 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. Sept. 3 at 12:00pm EDT via zoom

Boston FJC: Tues. Sept. 3 at 7:00pm EDT in person

Kansas FJC: Tues. Sept. 3 at 7:00pm CDT via zoom

Cincinnati FJC: Wed. Sept. 4 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

Virtual FJC (limited mobility): Thurs. Sept. 5 at 11:00am PDT / 2:00pm EDT via zoom

Reading, PA - Area FJC Conversation: Thurs. Sept. 5 at 7:00pm EDT *in person* and via zoom

Delaware Valley FJC: Tues. Sept. 10 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

Monthly National FJC call: Wed. Sept. 11 at 1:00pm PDT / 4:00pm EDT via zoom

NYC-Area FJC: Wed. Sept. 11 at 7:30pm EDT via zoom

Rochester, NY FJC: Thurs. Sept. 12 at 3:30pm EDT via zoom

SoCal FJC: Thurs. Sept. 12 at 6:00pm PDT via zoom

Central Indiana: Fri. Sept. 13 at 1:00pm EDT via zoom

DC-Area FJC: Sat. Sept. 14 at 10:00am EDT in person