

Publication Date: Tuesday, November 5, 2024

Reflection Date: Sunday, November 10, 2024 - [Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Widows do the right thing

The readings for the [Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) challenge us with the faith and trust of widows in situations where the culture made them vulnerable. In the first Book of Kings, the widow of Zaraphath gave the last of her flour to the prophet Elijah, in obedience, even at the point of starvation, and was rewarded by God with a jar that never emptied. In the reading from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus points out to the disciples that the widow's two coins, given with faith from her necessity, were worth much more to God than the contributions from wealthy people. The lesson of the widow's mite can be read in different ways. We could say it's the thought that counts, or more specifically, the love that's measured. We could take comfort that, as with every sparrow that falls, God sees our sincere gestures, however humble.



The widows in these stories held back nothing from God. They gave all they had to live on. We can't ignore the warning for us in the parade of wealthy people who did hold back, who gave only from their excess. If we wish our gifts to be valued, we must give wholeheartedly, of our very selves, and like the widows, practice a radical dependency on God. Success in weakness and the emptiness of material wealth are central threads in our teaching. St. Francis famously recoiled from money and threatened his friars with consequences for merely touching it. Yet we live in a culture that marches along in search of accumulated wealth as if the scripture is meant to entertain rather than renew us.

In the passage from Mark's Gospel, Jesus' story of the scribes who "devour the houses of widows" must also give cause for reflection. They took part in a system of exploitation, where widows were unprotected and could easily lose their property. Jesus' implication was that the scribes knew enough to be culpable.

Today, most of us have direct involvement in a system that devours the houses of widows in our time. We buy the gas, oil, cheap textiles, and everything that depends on the relentless resource extraction that prowls the world generally without regard for the humans in its wake. As Pope Francis put it in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "In this system, which tends to devour everything which stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule." Our daily actions—what we consume and how much—can cause harm. We need to pray, learn, hear the cries of the earth and of the poor, reflect on our daily choices, and see what we can change.

It is easy to feel we do not have enough to help the situations of mass suffering and cultural oppression in the world. In these readings, we are called to reassess the value of the little we have and to contribute it with a sincere heart and purpose. If you are reading this, you are aware of the multitude of opportunities FAN offers to get involved, to contribute, to make connections, and to take action. We have the widows for a guide. We need to get ourselves up and cast what mites we have into the treasury in the firm belief that God will provide the rest.

Joe Makley, OFS

Animator, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission, OFS-USA

Suggested Action:

Research where the things you buy are coming from. Are they being made sustainably? With fair labor practices?

Suggested Petitions:

For those who are forced to work in unethical and unsafe working conditions, may they be protected and may the companies that are exploiting them see the error of their ways and change... we pray.

May government officials hear and act for Franciscan values, especially care for creation... we pray.

Prayer

Oh God, bless us in our humble efforts to end our complicity with oppression. When we see structures, systems and practices that are contrary to justice, and take action to challenge them, make us aware of when we need to change ourselves first. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, who preached peace, love, and justice.

Amen.

Praying for Peace during Elections

Please join with our Network in praying for free, fair, and peaceful elections in the United States this week. Please also pray that the nearly 300 individuals who signed up to be poll chaplains or poll workers through FAN will be safe and able to fulfill their roles as trustworthy, peaceful presences at polling places today. Here is a photo of two Secular Franciscans, Jeanne Kiley OFS and Kathy Gallucci OFS, who are serving as poll chaplains in North Carolina, receiving the blessing of their fraternity's spiritual assistant. Thank you to all our wonderful poll workers and chaplains!

Last week, FAN hosted a pre-election prayer vigil and discussion, bringing together our Franciscan-hearted community to foster peace and unity. If you missed the event, we invite you to watch the recording and explore the resources we shared.

Button: [\[Watch the Recording\]](#)

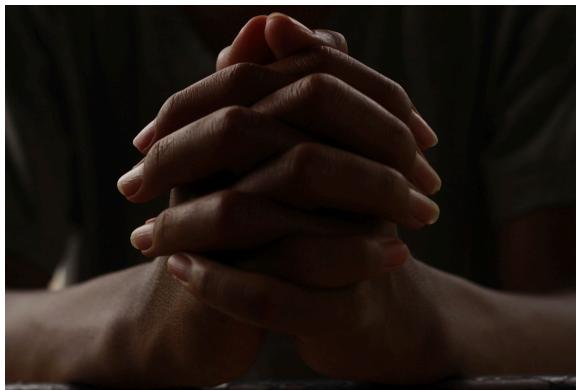
Button: [\[View the Slides\]](#)

During the call, Chris Crawford from Protect Democracy emphasized the importance of consulting official state websites for reliable election updates. Visit the [Federal Electoral Commission](#) to find your state's site.

Join the LCWR Virtual Prayer Space for the Election

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) invites everyone to join a virtual space of silent, contemplative prayer during the days surrounding Election Day, from November 4 at 12:00 AM ET until November 6 at 11:00 PM ET.

This time of quiet reflection is open to people of all backgrounds, fostering unity beyond culture, faith, and politics. The prayer space will remain silent, without presentations or comments. Simply log in, review the brief welcome in the waiting room, and join sisters and supporters worldwide in peaceful contemplation.



Button: [Learn more and register here](#)

Register Now: Nov. 19 for “Cicero, IL: Underwater and Under Pressure”

Cicero, IL is a majority-Latino city near Chicago that faces disproportionate exposure to environmental degradation. Cicero faces many negative environmental impacts: the city’s inaction on water infrastructure leading to flooding as well as a chemical manufacturing facility spewing air pollution. Activists have been pushing city and state officials to help Cicero with little response. Join FAN on **Tuesday, November 19, at 7 pmET/4 pm PT**, to hear from the activists taking action, and learn what people outside of Chicago can do to help. Be sure to tune in to learn more, take action, and find inspiration - you won’t want to miss it!

Button: [Register here](#)



LEARNING
HOW
TO

FAN on *Learning How to See*

FAN Executive Director Michele Dunne OFS and Sr. Joan Brown OSF were interviewed by Brian McLaren of the

Center for Action and Contemplation about Franciscan approaches to care for creation as part of the podcast, "Learning How to See," posted on October 31.

Button: [Click here to listen.](#)

Legislative Advocacy Resources

Many members of our network joined FAN staff for a virtual advocacy workshop on October 23. [Click here to watch](#) and see below the resources that we shared:

- **Slides** from the workshop, with how-tos for engaging with your member of Congress and information about the legislation we advocated for at the Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: the Assault Weapons Ban and Asunción Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Bill. [Link](#)
- **Spanish version of the slides** on the how-tos for engaging with your member of Congress. [Link](#)
- **Worksheet** to help you prepare for meeting with the office of your member of Congress on any legislation for which you might want to advocate. [Link](#)
- **Read-ahead** page on the Assault Weapons Ban and Heat Illness bill for personal use with more detailed information [Link](#)
- **Leave-behind** page you can give to congressional staffers you meet with about the legislation [Link](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Has your faith journey led you to explore how you can get more support in the ways you can put the Gospel into action in response to God's love? Referred to as the Two Feet of Love in Action, charitable works and social justice are two ways of responding to God's love that are complementary and equally necessary. A [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) connects Franciscan-hearted individuals looking to join with others locally to engage in social and environmental justice rooted in Franciscan spirituality. Conversations are happening across the country.

Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. Nov. 5 at 12:00 pm EDT over zoom

Kansas FJC: Tues. Nov. 5 at 7:00 pm CDT over zoom

Virtual FJC (limited mobility): Thurs. Nov. 7 at 11:00 am PDT / 2:00 pm EDT over zoom

Central Indiana FJC: Fri. Nov. 8 at 1:00 pm EDT over zoom

Washington DC - Area FJC: Sat. Nov. 9 at 10:00 am EDT in Person

St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Mon. Nov. 11 at 12:30 pm EDT in Person

Connecticut - Rhode Island FJC: Tues. Nov. 12 at 7:00 pm EDT over zoom

DE Valley FJC (PA, NJ, DE): Tues. Nov. 12 at 7:00 pm EDT over zoom

Boston FJC (PA, NJ, DE): Wed. Nov. 13 at 7:00 pm EDT over zoom

Contact FAN staff [Nora Pfeiffer](#) to find out more or to connect with an upcoming meeting.

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