

Publication Date: July 15, 2025

Reflection Date: July 20, 2025 - [Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Receiving the Stranger, Receiving God

[The readings from Sunday, July 20](#) offer wisdom that stretches from Genesis to Jesus. The first reading opens to ancient Abraham paused on his journey with his tents under a great tree. Seeing three men on the horizon in the heat, Abraham went out to them and begged the strangers, "Please do not go on past your servant." Abraham had deep spirituality, yet it is unclear if he knew that the LORD was present as he offered hospitality to the men. Abraham's goodness was enough motivation for him to run into the tent to rush Sarah, "Quick, three measures of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls."



Hospitality, care for the stranger without expectation of anything in return, are virtues that make Abraham God's choice to be father to multitudes. We know from the wider story that the stranger's bold statement to Abraham, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son," caused Sarah to laugh at what an absurdly miraculous gift a child would be.

Luke's gospel begins abruptly. Jesus enters a village, and he is met and welcomed by a woman named Martha. In this reading, we don't know what Martha and Mary believe about Jesus; all we know for sure is that Martha was focused on being sure that Jesus received proper hospitality. Like with Abraham, we don't know if these holy women knew that the LORD had come so near to them; yet, Martha's acts of service and Mary's undivided attention at Jesus' feet are clearly in the spirit of welcome and love passed down to them from Abraham and Sarah. Our wider knowledge of Scripture affords us the satisfaction that these sisters could not have expected they would be rewarded with the miraculous return of their dead brother to them.

Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to strangers was so meaningful that God provided them new life to carry on their family's goodness. Martha and Mary's hospitality results in Jesus' heart being moved so much that life is restored to the dead. Wisdom about living our love are what St. Paul considered "the riches of the glory of this mystery."

We are called, today, to serve and attend to the needs of strangers, because that is wisdom that Jesus and Paul have passed down to us. This same call guides the work of the Franciscan Action Network, as we advocate for justice, peace, and care for the marginalized in our society. Knowing how God worked in the lives of Abraham and Sarah and their descendants, we cannot fathom what greatness God will make of our hospitality to the strangers of this world.

Toby Harkleroad, OFS

Director of Mission Advancement for the Religious of Jesus and Mary

Suggested Action: Please take a moment today to [urge your senators to reject H.R. 4](#) and protect essential aid and programs, so that, like Abraham's hospitality to strangers, our care for those in need can bring new life and hope in these challenging times.

Suggested Petitions:

That we may offer hospitality without hesitation, like Abraham and Sarah.

That we may listen with love and serve with joy, like Martha and Mary.

Prayer

God of Welcome,

open my heart.

Make me quick to serve,

slow to judge,

ready to love.

May I meet You

in every stranger.

Amen.

Happy birthday, Sr. Marie!



The staff and board at FAN joyfully celebrate the 90th birthday of Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF, Associate Director and a beloved presence in our community. Sr. Marie's lifelong commitment to justice, peace, and the Franciscan way continues to inspire all who know her. We give thanks for her prophetic witness, deep compassion, and unwavering voice for the vulnerable.

Please join us in a prayer of gratitude for all the blessings in Sr. Marie's life and the gifts she shares with us. Happy birthday, Sr. Marie!

Today! Please urge the Senate to Protect Lifesaving Aid and Public Media

Your voice is urgently needed today, Tuesday! The House of Representatives recently voted to pass a package of spending cuts, called rescissions, that were requested by the White House. [H.R. 4](#) cancels \$9.4 billion in *previously approved* federal funding for foreign assistance and public media. The Senate is expected to vote Tuesday or Wednesday of this week! If this rescissions bill passes, many more might follow, eliminating even more essential programs. Your voice can make a difference. Please act today!



FAN is eager to join our network's voice to that of [Catholic Relief Services](#)— which assists the poor and vulnerable in over 100 countries around the world— to protect life saving aid before it is too late.

[\[Click here to take action\]](#)



Good Trouble Lives On: Webinar and Capitol Hill Gathering

Please consider joining FAN and our partners in the Faithful Democracy Coalition for two meaningful opportunities to honor the legacy of Congressman John Lewis and protect the right to vote. **Tonight, at 7:30 pm ET**, a national webinar will bring together faith voices and congressional staff to explore how communities can help protect access to the ballot. [Click here to register](#) for the webinar. On **Thursday, July 17 at 10:00 am ET**, people of faith will gather at the House Triangle on Capitol Hill to encourage Members of Congress to support key legislation, including the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. [Click here to sign up](#) for Thursday's witness on Capitol Hill. Whether participating online, in person, or by helping spread the word, all are invited to be part of this shared witness. [Click here to find](#) another "Good Trouble Lives On" event near you.

Make a difference through sponsoring FJLC 2025

Spots for the [2025 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Love in Action](#) are filling fast, and most general registration slots are now booked. Spots have been reserved for sponsors, and there are still [openings for young adult participants](#).

Now is a great time to consider sponsoring the conference. Sponsors receive a range of benefits and make it possible for more people to join this powerful weekend of faith and justice. [Click here to learn more](#) about sponsorship options. You can also support a young adult by [funding their registration](#). A gift of \$250 offers a subsidized ticket scholarship, and \$425 covers full registration for a young adult (excluding travel and lodging). If you're part of the general population and still hope to attend FJLC, you can [join the waitlist](#) in case additional spots become available.



Take Action for Nuclear Disarmament



The U.S. House of Representatives recently introduced [H. Res. 317](#), a resolution calling for bold steps to reduce nuclear weapons and promote global disarmament. It urges Congress to renounce first use of nuclear weapons, limit presidential authority to launch nuclear attacks, and cancel plans for new nuclear arms, among other important measures.

This growing movement aims to raise awareness about the urgent risks posed by nuclear weapons and encourages people to contact their representatives to support policies that prioritize peace and justice. [Click here](#) to learn more about H. Res. 317 and take action.

Franciscan Justice Circles

The JPIC committee members of **St. Mary's Church in Pompton Lakes, NJ** continue to participate in peaceful rallies in the area as well as public witness at a busy intersection.

The **CT-RI FJC** signed on in support of [H.Res. 317](#), urging the United States to lead the world back from the brink of nuclear war and halt and reverse the nuclear arms race.



Upcoming [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) (FJC) gatherings:

Boston FJC: Wed. July 16 at 7:00 pm ET over Zoom

NYC-area FJC: Wed. July 16 at 7:30 pm ET over Zoom

Virtual FJC (ltd. mobility): Thur. July 17 at 2:00 pm ET / 11:00 am PT over Zoom

Phoenix FJC: Thur. July 17 at 5:00 pm MST over Zoom

New Mexico FJC: Sat. July 19 from 2:00-4:00 pm MT In Person

Driftless Region FJC (WI & MN): Mon. July 21 at 6:00 pm CT over Zoom

CT & RI FJC: Tues. July 22 at 7:00 pm ET over Zoom

Texas FJC: Tues. July 22 at 7:15 pm CT/ 6:15 MT over Zoom

SE Wisconsin FJC: Thur. July 24 at 4:00 pm CT over Zoom

To find out more about any of the [FJC](#) gatherings coming up or for information about joining or forming a Circle, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org.

