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Reflection Date: June 28, 2026 - [Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Who's in First Place?

That's right: Who's in first place?

No, I'm not talking about the New York Knicks.

I can't be talking about the World Cup because they're still playing as I type this.

And baseball? We are not even close to World Series time...but we can be pretty sure it's not going to be the Mets or the Red Sox (sorry, Sox fans).

The Seattle Seahawks were *last* year's football champs but this year's regular season hasn't started.

There are so many 'first place' holders that it can be hard to keep up (tennis, ice hockey, NCAA teams, spelling bees, and many more).

So who's in first place?



Photo by Fauzan Saari on Unsplash

Well, what does the gospel reading for the [Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) tell us? Jesus says HE should be in first place...in our hearts. Ahead of fathers, mothers, children, and

—although Jesus doesn't itemize these—aunts, uncles, grandkids, siblings (what??), friends, sports, cars, school, stars of stage or screen, singers, influencers, and on and on.

Jesus wants to be our Number One.

He doesn't say we can't love (or like) any of these other folks—just as long as we keep Jesus in first place. In fact, loving Jesus most of all means that, like St. Francis and St. Clare, we're naturally going to love all the living things God created—animals, plants, trees, flowers, birds...okay, maybe not stink bugs, but let's focus on people.

Jesus wants us to love *all* people...while we love Him most of all. Yes, this means even our enemies, people we don't like, people who don't like us, people who are unkind. That was the message we just heard from Matthew: I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44).

When we love Jesus most of all, we bring Jesus to everyone with whom we interact. For we have been taught: "Whoever receives you receives Me and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me"

No, it won't be easy. Being a disciple of Jesus isn't easy—but it's our Franciscan mission, our call: to live the gospel. And living the gospel brings blessings to disciples—just as caring for Elisha brought God's blessing to the woman of Shunem (and her husband).

We can show Jesus is number one through the way we treat others, our respect for creation, in our worship, and by building His kingdom by restoring relationships and fostering peace and justice. Together, as members of the Franciscan Action Network, we can show our commitment to putting Jesus first by taking action to build this Kingdom.

Sr. Karen Stapleton, OSC

FAN Board Member

Suggested Action: "Jesus, you hold first place in my heart": Put this note as a reminder on your smartphone. If you don't have a smartphone, use sticky-notes and put this message where you will see it every day (on your mirror, on your refrigerator door, on your desk, on the doorway to your home). We all need this reminder to ensure that our actions for justice are grounded in the firm foundation of our commitment to Jesus.

Suggested Petitions:

When faced with circumstances beyond our control, help us to be patient with ourselves and one another, and feel the comfort of Your love, we pray to the Lord

For those who feel unloved, that they will come to know love through people of faith, we pray to the Lord

For those who struggle with hatred for others, may their hearts be opened to the ways of God's endless love, we pray to the Lord

Prayer

Lord, when I'm overwhelmed with daily work and struggles, when I'm feeling frustrated and abandoned, help me to remember that You are Number One in my life and that with You first in my heart, I can overcome all obstacles and endure all challenges. And Lord, as You are always with me, may I also be present to my sisters and brothers in their struggles.

Amen.

Thank You for Your Support!

On behalf of all of us at FAN, thank you to everyone who supported and participated in our June 16 Benefit, ***Dignity First: Nourishing Lives, Transforming Communities***. It was an uplifting and inspiring evening, and a powerful reminder of what is possible when people come together in a shared commitment to human dignity.

Throughout the program, we reflected upon the many ways human dignity is upheld through both service and advocacy. From the ministry of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit, to the work of Sr. Norma Pimentel accompanying migrants at the border, to the efforts of FAN and our Franciscan Justice Circles advocating for policies that protect the most vulnerable, we were reminded that **dignity becomes real when people take action**. Each of these ministries reflects a different expression of the same Franciscan commitment to stand with those on the margins and work for a more just and compassionate world.

We are grateful not only for your generous financial support, but also for your prayers, participation, and faithful witness. FAN's work is strengthened by a community of people who care deeply and who believe that every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Thank you for being such an important part of the FAN family.



Rosie Davila

God bless you for your generosity and for your commitment to human dignity!

Peace and all good,

Michele Dunne, OFS
Executive Director

Because of YOU, we stand together in advancing human dignity through service and advocacy. [Click here](#) to see one segment of the Benefit on our shared work over this past year.

Apply to be a FAN Intern This Fall



Are you interested in becoming FAN's next fall intern—or do you know someone who might be great in this role? Applications are now being accepted until July 15 for this part-time position during the fall semester. This is a paid position based in Washington DC that offers substantive experience and training in advancing justice, peace, care for creation, and human dignity. More information is available [here](#).

Webinars Exploring AI and Christian Values

Register for 'Brother, Sister, Robot: Being Franciscan in an age of AI'

The second webinar in a four-part series in 2026: **Brother, Sister, Robot: Being Franciscan in an age of AI** will take place on **July 9 at 7:00 PM ET**. The webinar offers a reflection on AI using the Franciscan values of poverty, minority, and community to offer a new vision of Franciscan life in an age of artificial intelligence, featuring **Sr. Iliia Delio, OSF, PhD**. You can register [here](#).

Watch the Recording: 'Magnifica Humanitas: Disarming AI, Being Fully Human and Integral Ecology'

Did you miss our June 9 webinar on Pope Leo's new encyclical? Kim Daniels of Georgetown University, Scott Hurd from Catholic Charities USA, Nichole Flores of the University of



Virginia, and Paul Scherz from Notre Dame considered deeper questions about our relationships with God, each other, creation, and technology. **Watch the recording [here](#).**

Take Action to Solidify US-Iran Peace Deal



Lebanon and Iran: MOU signed

The U.S. and Iran have agreed to a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to stop the war, including the war in Lebanon. However, Israel has not signaled support, particularly regarding Lebanon. [Contact your Congress Member](#) to keep the pressure on to ensure the ceasefire holds and to stop the war in Lebanon.

Complicit Corporations

FAN Just Peace fellow Eli McCarthy participated in an [advocacy action](#) at the National Cherry Blossom Festival office to drop Chevron as a sponsor. This is part of a national campaign to boycott and divest from Chevron for their role in enabling the Israeli military's atrocities in Palestine and Lebanon. Multiple large U.S. festivals have already dropped Chevron. The representative of the office agreed to help us set up a meeting with the sponsorship decision-makers. Please consider joining the Christian-rooted [Complicit Corporation campaign here](#).

Early Bird Price Extended for 2026 Conference

Registration is open for the **2026 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Ours to do** on **November 7-9, 2026** in Washington DC with early bird registration prices now extended through **August 15**. Through Franciscan formation, inspiring speakers, hands-on training, and civic engagement on Capitol Hill, we'll explore how to live out our Franciscan values and advocate for a more just and peaceful world. Learn more, hear from people who attended last year's conference and register [here](#). Sponsorship information is available [here](#).



Franciscan Justice Circles

At the **Ohio FJC** June meeting, one of their members shared about the systemic injustices faced by veterans who suffer traumatic brain injury and the large number who have died by suicide after being in the Iraq/Afghanistan wars (for every 1 combat death, 5 have died by suicide). The struggles faced include inadequate healthcare, substance abuse, unemployment and underemployment, and lack of housing, among others. The Circle is continuing this conversation, exploring possible approaches and ways to support veterans, along with various letter writing campaigns, prayer vigils, and other actions relating to other social and environmental topics of concern and interest.

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

CT-RI FJC: Tue. June 23 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Texas FJC: Tue. June 23 at 7:15 pm CT / 6:15 pm MT via Zoom

Winston-Salem FJC: Wed. June 24 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Massachusetts FJC: Thur. June 25 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

W. Pennsylvania FJC: Thur. June 25 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom

SoCal FJC: Thur. June 25 at 6:00 pm PT via Zoom

SE Wisconsin FJC: Fri. June 26 at 4:00 pm CT via Zoom

Twin Cities FJC: Mon. June 29 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

Ohio FJC: Wed. July 1 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

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

Central MD FJC: Thur. July 2 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

To find out more about any of the [FJC](#) gatherings coming up or for information about joining or forming a Circle, please sign up [HERE](#).