

Publication Date: July 14, 2026

Reflection Date: July 19, 2026 - [Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Those Who Are Just Must Be Kind

In his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, “We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.” The struggle for freedom and justice requires courage, persistence, resilience, and faith.

One of the greatest obstacles to building a more just society is complacency—a willingness to acquiesce to an unjust status quo by pursuing only our private good or anesthetizing ourselves with consumerism, intoxicants, or other ephemeral distractions.



Photo by John Cameron on Unsplash

But for those with a serious commitment to justice, there are other temptations that can lead us astray. In the first reading for the [Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) (Wisdom 12:13, 16-19), we are told that “those who are just must be kind.” When we struggle for justice, we are always at risk of mirroring the worst behavior of those who are working to undermine the common good. And we are perhaps even more susceptible to pride—the hubristic conviction that our actions must be right because our cause is just. This command to be kind is therefore a critical reminder that justice must be rooted in love.

Kindness is grounded in love—willing the good of another person. Our actions are kind when they reflect a sincere belief in the value and dignity of another person. When the struggle for social justice becomes abstract rather than rooted in its personalist foundation of seeking the flourishing of each and every person, it can easily embrace unjust means or veer from its pursuit of the common good.

When we remember that those who are just must be kind, we are reminded that justice and mercy are not at odds. The God of Love is the architect of the Kingdom of God, our vision of justice fully realized. We therefore must avoid the temptation to cast off those who undermine the struggle for justice, seeing them as irredeemable and unworthy of mercy. The communion we seek is not with a select band of perfect, sinless like-minded folks, but with all who are made in the image of God. The door to redemption must not be slammed shut. The merciless are never just.

An essential virtue in building a just society that is rooted in love is humility. At a time of deep injustice, this can be very difficult for those who are working diligently to overturn this throwaway culture. When we see the poor and marginalized suffering because so many with wealth and power are motivated by greed and cupidity rather than a sense of duty, when our right to participate in our own government is undermined by personality cults and megalomania, when a culture of indifference leaves so many feeling alienated, isolated, and left behind, we feel righteous anger. And we should.

But we cannot let this morph into the belief that we alone have all the answers and that anyone who disagrees with our goals is simply a villain. This fosters a totalitarian mentality that is fundamentally at odds with our ultimate goal of communion and the essential means of pursuing it in a fractured, polarized democracy that desperately needs good citizens.

Instead, we can counter toxic polarization through loving witness. We can show respect to those who have different backgrounds and values, even as we oppose the harmful policies they may support. We can remain committed to dialogue and persuasion, searching beyond simplistic slogans for shared values. We can be firm in our commitment to the poor and vulnerable, while being open to new insights and evidence. We can work to expand coalitions through inclusion rather than shrinking them in pursuit of ideological purity. We can be courageous while being kind.

Being part of the Franciscan Action Network helps us to orient ourselves in this approach. When we work with others who share this commitment to a justice that is rooted in love and kindness, it is much easier to avoid these temptations. As we work to protect God's creation, uplift the poor and vulnerable, and affirm human dignity, together we can remain committed to humble service on behalf of a justice that is rich in mercy.

Robert Christian

FAN Director of Communications

Suggested Action: Participate in the [‘Good Trouble Lives On’ Weekend of Action](#) in your local community. John Lewis was inspired by the vision of Dr. King of pursuing justice rooted in kindness and love. Come together with others to celebrate and renew this vision.

Suggested Petitions:

For all who seek justice, that our actions reflect love, kindness, and mercy, we pray to the Lord.

For humility, so that we may avoid the hubris and self-righteousness that act as obstacles to communion with all, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer

Dear God,

Please help us to be courageous in our commitment to justice for all, particularly those who are ignored and discarded. Help us to keep this commitment grounded in love and care for each person, a reflection of your abiding love for all of your children.

Amen.

Call and Urge Your Senators: Protect Temporary Protected Status for Haiti

Please call and urge your Senators to support S. 4814— legislation that would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and ensure that Haitian TPS holders are not forced to return to dangerous and unstable conditions.

Last month, the Supreme Court allowed the Trump administration to continue its aggressive immigration crackdown by issuing rulings in two cases. The justices ruled that the administration can terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 350,000 people from Haiti and 6,100 from Syria. The ruling clears a path for the potential deportation of hundreds of thousands of more people, many of whom have lived in the U.S. for decades. This decision is likely to have implications for TPS holders from about a dozen other countries as well. In a separate ruling, the court has said that the



administration can turn away migrants arriving at the U.S Mexico border and prevent them from applying for asylum. FAN will continue to advocate for asylum seekers as well.

On July 10, the deadline for the termination of TPS for Haiti was extended to July 24th. [Click here to see the notice](#). **Please continue to call your Senators throughout July.**

The US Catholic Bishops (USCCB) [released a statement](#) in response to this decision, saying, “Revoking the legal status of hundreds of thousands of people residing in our country creates a moral crisis when returning to their country of origin is not a safe or reasonable option. If we are truly to affirm the God-given dignity of every human person, we as a nation cannot turn a blind eye to such an injustice and the impossible choices it will create for families and communities.”

Guidance on how to call and email your Senators is available [here](#).

TAKE ACTION BUTTON

<https://franciscanactionnetwork.salsalabs.org/protecttps>

‘Good Trouble Lives On’ Weekend of Action



You are invited to take part in local events during the **Good Trouble Lives On Weekend of Action, July 17-19**. This is a national mobilization honoring the legacy of Congressman John Lewis. Grounded in the theme “**Teach! Reach! Preach!**”, this three-day effort brings together people of faith, community leaders, and advocates to promote civic education, voter engagement, and the sacred responsibility of participating in our democracy.

Inspired by Lewis’ call to make “good trouble” through peaceful, nonviolent action for justice, these nonpartisan events offer opportunities to learn, serve, and accompany our neighbors as we work toward a more just and inclusive society. We invite all Franciscan-hearted people to attend a local event and continue the important work of building our beloved community. To learn more or to find an event near you, please use the following link:

<https://www.goodtroubleliveson.org/>

Urge the EPA to Protect Creation

People of faith from across the country are calling on EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin to protect human health, defend vulnerable



communities, and uphold our shared responsibility to care for God's creation.

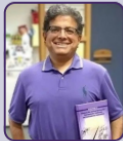
Recent EPA decisions and proposals would weaken key environmental protections, roll back safeguards against dangerous pollution, and reduce consideration of the real human costs of poor air quality and climate change. These choices threaten the dignity of human life, the well-being of current and future generations, and the communities already bearing the heaviest burdens of pollution and environmental harm.

You are invited to join other people of faith in adding your name to this letter urging Administrator Zeldin to reconsider these harmful actions and use his position to protect creation and promote human flourishing.

[Add your name](#) button.

Active Nonviolence Updates

MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS
TUESDAY, JULY 14
7-8:30 PM EST

		
Prasad Venugopal University of Detroit Mercy	Jessica Sun Pax Christi USA Young Adult Caucus	Eli McCarthy Georgetown University Catholic Nonviolence Initiative

Webinar Tonight: "Building a Civilization of Love: Magnifica Humanitas" on Tuesday, July 14, 7-8:30pm ET, featuring Eli McCarthy, FAN Just Peace Fellow. [Register Here](#).

Important Letter Released: Twelve Provincial Ministers, representing the vast majority of male US Franciscan Religious, recently made a direct appeal to Secretary of State Marco Rubio to help stop the rising violence against Christians and other Palestinians in the Holy Land. You can **read the**

full letter [here](#).

Update on the [Complicit Corporation Campaign](#), Chevron and Palantir: The 227th General Assembly (GA) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) voted unanimously this week to [divest](#) from Palantir.

In the News: Read '[Pro-Palestinian interfaith coalition protests Christian Zionist summit](#)' in *Religion News Service*.

Take Action: [Contact Congress](#) to support Creative Peacebuilding and vote 'no' on the National Defense Authorization Act with over \$1 trillion for the Pentagon.

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

Thank you to the members of many Franciscan Justice Circles have responded to the call to invite their Senators to support S. 4814— legislation that would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to designate Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and ensure that Haitian TPS holders are not forced to return to dangerous and unstable conditions. The **Mid-Hudson Valley FJC** also signed on as a group to a collective letter urging the passage of S. 4814 with the hope that our Haitian sisters and brothers will be treated with compassion, dignity, and justice.

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

Connecticut - Rhode Island FJC: Tue. June 14 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
DE Valley FJC (DE, NJ, PA): Tue. June 14 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
Michigan FJC: Wed. June 15 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
Virtual FJC (ltd. mobility): Thur. June 16 at 11:00 am PT / 2:00 pm ET via Zoom
Pacific Northwest FJC: Thur. June 16 at 1:00 pm PT via Zoom
Metro NYC-area FJC: Thur. June 16 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom
SoCal FJC: Thur. June 16 at 6:00 pm PT via Zoom
Arizona FJC: Thur. June 16 at 6:30 pm MST via Zoom
SoCal FJC: Thur. June 16 at 6:00 pm PT via Zoom
Winston-Salem NC FJC: Wed. June 22 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
Massachusetts FJC: Thur. June 23 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
W. Pennsylvania FJC: Thur. June 23 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom
Twin Cities FJC: Mon. June 27 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom
Colorado FJC: Mon. June 27 at 7:00 pm MT via Zoom
Bay Area & Northern CA FJC: Mon. June 27 at 7:00 pm PT 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](#).