



Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

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STATEMENT FROM FAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ON ARIZONA SHOOTINGS

Now that we have reflected on the tragic shooting in Arizona, let us first and foremost remember to keep in our prayers and thoughts Congresswoman Giffords, Judge John Roll, Christina Taylor Green, and others who were killed or injured on Saturday, January 8. We also need to keep their families and friends in our prayers. Luke 6:27-28 tells us: “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” In the Spirit of Jesus and the tradition of St. Francis and St. Clare, let us pray for Jared Loughner, the shooter.

Over the next few weeks you will hear a great deal of talk on the need to tone down the political rhetoric. You will also hear a lot of political rhetoric blaming one side or the other for the shooting. After a week or so a new crisis will emerge; it will take over the headlines and the discussion of civility will be pushed to the back page. For a few weeks the tone of the political conversations may change, but after period of time, if we are true to form, we will be back to “business as usual.” Our national conversations on policy will continue to experience a great degree of inflammatory language. It is language which exaggerates differences and hardens positions and language which is provocative in nature and uses violent imagery at times.

As part of our Franciscan tradition, we understand the need to reverence each other, to recognize that we are all children of God and therefore all brothers and sisters connected to each other through God. This reverence is manifested in how we treat each other in both words and actions. How do we treat the cashier at the grocery store when we have been waiting in line for ten minutes to buy a gallon of milk? When we walk down the street and see a homeless person, do we look at him or her with disdain or pity, or do we see a sister or brother in Christ and respond accordingly, the way Jesus and Clare and Francis would have? When we talk about civility, we should remember that the word civility does not mean to be polite but rather it means to respect and care for each other.

The Franciscan Action Network (FAN) has offered some principles for public conversation based on the life of Francis and our Franciscan traditions. Our purpose in proposing these principles is to be mindful of a Franciscan way to promote policy reform and to demonstrate peace in an ongoing process of transformation. We have been asking people to join our efforts and make the F.R.A.N.C.I.S. Commitment to Civility in Discourse. Share it with others and join in the effort to help transform our public conversations in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare! Change in our public discourse will only happen if we change, if we treat each person as a son and daughter of God, as our brother and sister, with dignity and respect.

Please help FAN to spread the word. Take the F.R.A.N.C.I.S. Commitment to Civility in Discourse at www.franciscanaction.org/franciscancommitment. Then send it to your friends and ask them to take the pledge. Send the pledge to your Congressperson and Senators. Most of all, remember to try and live the pledge in every interaction with every person every day.

Peace and All Good
Patrick Carolan, Executive Director