

Creating a New Earth

As we continue our journey through the Easter Season and await the festival where we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, perhaps we should take some time and reflect. Do we view the Resurrection and the Pentecost as a static events that happened some 2000 years ago? Last Tuesday I was at Mass at the Monastery, in his homily the priest talked about the Resurrection not as a one time event, but rather an ongoing transformation that happens in each of us everyday. [Sunday's second reading](#) from Revelations starts with: "Then I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away...."



What if the purpose of the Incarnation and Resurrection was not so we could go somewhere else, but rather so we, with God, could create a new Earth? I occasionally, in my meditations, will imagine what a new Earth a new Heaven would be like. The first thing I imagine is that Heaven and Earth are not separate places. Earth is not a place where we start out with hopes of getting to Heaven. Earth is the place where we create Heaven. On this new Earth, children would not have to hide under their desks frightened that they might get shot. We will turn our weapons into plowshares. On this new Earth, not a single child will go to bed hungry. When we saw them hungry, we fed them. On this new, Earth there will be no walls separating us. When we saw the stranger, we welcomed them. On this new Earth, we will not destroy the environment. There will be a covenant with God, us, our descendants, and every living creature; the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth. On this new Earth, some children will not be living in mansions while others live on the streets. "If your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as though he were a stranger and a sojourner, and he shall live with you." On this new Earth, abortion will not be an issue. Not because we criminalize and demonize. But rather because every child will be welcomed and cared for from conception to natural death regardless of their circumstances. On this new Earth, we will not be waiting to go to heaven, we will create heaven.

In his book *The Universal Christ*, Richard Rohr says: "The true and essential work of all religion is to help us recognize and recover the divine image in everything." Think about how wondrous, how awesome this new Earth would be if everyone that looked at you saw the Imago Dei and you saw the image of God in every blade of grass, every bird, every person from the destitute homeless person to the Pope. Sometimes I think we complicate our faith. We believe that we are too small to understand. We have to have volumes and volumes of rules on how to pray, and hold our hands. Whether we should stand or kneel. We think that if we don't follow these mysterious rules that we do not really understand and we will not go to Heaven. Jesus made it very simple. In our Gospel reading this week Jesus says: "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."

This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." If we saw the image of God in everything, how could we not love every creature, every person?

St. Angela of Foligno, a 13th century Franciscan mystic, said: "My soul in an excess of wonder cried out: 'This world is pregnant with God!'" In the next few weeks leading up to Pentecost, reflect on this image of a new Earth pregnant with God. Then instead of sitting around waiting for Jesus to come and create this new Earth, reflect on what you can do with God to be a co-creator of the New Earth. Then, when Pentecost Sunday comes and we are filled with the Holy Spirit, don't sit meekly and quietly in your pew or your home. Stand up! Shout from the mountain tops that you are one of the disciples who is here, not preparing to go to Heaven, but to *create* the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth.

Peace and All Good

Patrick Carolan
FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

This week, spend some time reflecting on the phrase, "a new Earth pregnant with God." Put an image together in your mind of what it would look like. Maybe write or draw what you imagine.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those who suffer violence and indignity for their faith; may the Risen Lord grant them peace, joy, and abundant hope. We pray...

For all Christians, may the Lord's commandment to love one another as he loved us be the mission for everything we do. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**Almighty ever-living God,
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery within us,
that those you were pleased to make new in Holy Baptism
may, under your protective care, bear much fruit
and come to the joys of life eternal.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

Amen

Wear Orange: National Gun Violence Awareness Day June 7th

On January 21, 2013, Hadiya
Pendleton, a high school student
from the south side of Chicago,



#wearingorange weekend

marched in President Obama's second inaugural parade. One week later, Hadiya was shot and killed on a playground back in Chicago. Soon after this tragedy, Hadiya's childhood friends decided to commemorate her life by wearing orange, the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others.

June is Hadiya's birth month and 5 years ago, a broad-based coalition asked people nationwide to join in what Hadiya's friends started for the 1st National Gun Violence Awareness Day. **We invite our members and friends to join in the 5th National Gun Violence Awareness Day on June 7th. Wear orange and demand a change.**

Organizations and communities can [sign on here](#) to participate and host an action. Get more information and find events near you at [Wear Orange](#).

Shareholders of GEO Group Demand Implementation of Human Rights Policy

During the annual shareholder meeting of GEO Group, one of America's largest private correctional/detention facilities, a majority of shareholders supported a shareholder resolution sponsored by religious investors raising concerns about possible human rights violations in GEO's detention centers.



The [proposal](#) requested a report on implementation of the company's human rights policy, "Respect for Our Inmates and Detainees," adopted in 2000 in response to another shareholder resolution.

We applaud these shareholders for their advocacy.

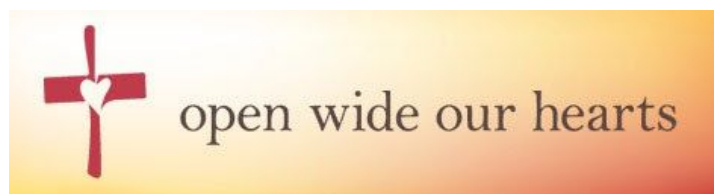
Webinar on USCCB's Pastoral Letter on Racism

US Catholic Mission Association, along with Catholic Mobilizing Network and the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) are sponsoring a webinar

tomorrow, May 14th, 2019 at 2pm

ET / 11am PT on the 2018 pastoral

letter on racism from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Attendees will hear several panelists discuss our ability to witness, engage in inter-religious and cross cultural dialogue, collaborate with others on behalf of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, and cultivate the spirituality and ministry of reconciliation.



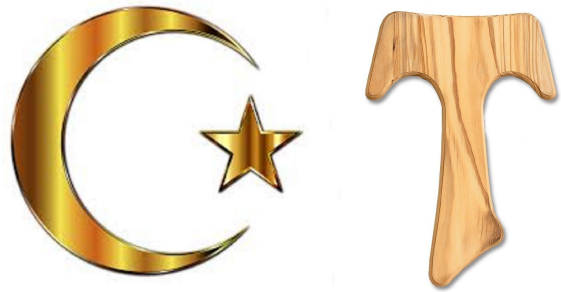
[Click here to register](#) for the webinar.

This Friday: Franciscans To Fast in Solidarity with

Muslims During Ramadan

We have been making you aware of the Muslim holy observance of Ramadan which began at sundown on May 5th and continues to June 4th. Each year, during the 9th month of the Islamic lunar calendar, 1.5 billion Muslims participate in this season when, from sunrise to sunset, they fast from food, drink, and general sinful behavior, such as violence, arguing, and lying. It is

seen as an opportunity for Muslims to rediscover their own belief, improve their character, and ensure they bring benefit to society. The idea is to develop a deeper understanding of where you are and what you have in order to become a better person.



Because we wish to stand in solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers, and honor their beliefs, we invite all our members and friends to [join us in a day of fasting on Friday, May 17th](#). On this day, we as Franciscans will fast for peace in all hearts, peace in all minds, and peace in our world. [Sign up here to join us](#).

Iftar is the main meal of the fasting day, which occurs at sunset every day of Ramadan. Our friends at Shoulder to Shoulder host a [nationwide listing of interfaith Iftar's](#) to attend this Ramadan as an opportunity to connect with your local Muslim community. Get [more information on Ramadan and Iftar here](#). They say it so beautifully: "This year it feels more important than ever to share light and life with each other as we continue to build communities filled with respect, justice, and equity for all people." We hope you consider attending an [interfaith Iftar](#) this year.

Many Voices, One Prayer for America from Bend the Arc

Last week, over 100 Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, and Buddhist faith leaders came together to [pray](#) as a demonstration of solidarity in the face of shootings and attacks at synagogues and mosques, temples and Black churches, schools and sacred sites. The prayer lifts up many voices, faiths, races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, ages, abilities, and visions all declaring together; will not be divided as we fight the white nationalists who seek to erase us all.



Watch the powerful video and find the prayer in its entirety at [Bend the Arc](#). We encourage you to post and share it on social media.

Take Action: Sign this Petition to End the Muslim

Ban

For the first time since the Muslim Ban was issued, Congressional Democrats have introduced legislation in both the [Senate](#) and [House](#) to combat these atrocities. The National Origin-Based Antidiscrimination for Nonimmigrants (NO BAN) Act would immediately rescind the Muslim ban as well as President Trump's asylum ban and refugee ban, definitively ending these discriminatory abuses of authority by the Trump administration.



FAN has partnered with several good governance organizations in issuing [this petition](#) to put an end to the racist and harmful ban on travelers to the United States from five Muslim-majority countries. This ban continues to keep families separated and serves only to entice fear in the 'other.' We hope you consider joining this effort and [sign the petition to end the Muslim ban](#).

New Resources for World Day of Migrants and Refugees

We made you aware in a previous newsletter, the theme chosen by the Holy Father for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) is "It is not just about migrants". In response to his experience in Lampedusa and Lesbos, The [Migrants & Refugees Section](#) is a small action-oriented Vatican office personally directed by Pope Francis to ensure that those forced to flee are not shut out or left behind. Each month new materials offer a sub-theme with different texts and images.



The campaign also offers monthly reflections, brief information and multimedia materials, from a variety of viewpoints, to deepen our appreciation of this year's WDMR theme and to nourish our pastoral activities, as the Church seeks to accompany migrants, refugees, internally displaced and victims of human trafficking, as well as the local poor and excluded.

Last month the campaign began with the sub-theme, "[It's also about our fears](#)". This month's new sub-theme is "[It's also about charity](#)". Find these and other resources in several languages [here](#) which can be downloaded, used and shared freely.

Take Action: Call your Senator and Urge Support for

VAWA

On April 4th, the House passed H.R. 1585, a bill to reauthorize the [Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA).

This landmark law was originally passed in 1994 to protect domestic violence survivors and survivors of sexual violence by providing funding for survivor services like emergency shelters, counseling, and much more. Since 1994, VAWA has been reauthorized with bipartisan support in the years 2000, 2005 and 2013. Each time, programs were fine-tuned, improvements were made and important constituencies gained protections under the law. Now H.R. 1585 now moves to the Senate for a vote.

We encourage our members and friends to [contact your senators](#) and urge them to support reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.



New Podcast from Franciscan Friars of the Holy Land

[Following Francis](#) is a podcast from the Holy Land Franciscan Friars that offers a new way to connect with your Catholic faith and add Franciscan spirituality to your life. Subscribe for new episodes on the first and third Wednesday of each month, as host Chris Dwyer chats with friars and special guests to:

- Share Franciscan spirituality, including prayers and reflections for listeners
- Discuss the tradition, significance, and practice of Catholic holidays and feast days
- Tell behind-the-scenes stories of Franciscan Friars and their work in the Holy Land
- And more!



We urge you to subscribe using your favorite podcast player: [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#), or [Spreaker](#).

U.S.-Iran Saber Rattling Intensifies

May 8th marked one year since the Trump Administration [withdrew](#) from the Iran-Nuclear Agreement.

Most experts agreed that while it was not a perfect agreement, it gave a foundation for building bridges and



Iran has kept its agreement not to increase uranium enrichment and to be monitored. Instead of building on the agreement, however, the U.S. withdrew and increased sanctions against Iran, even on May 2nd threatening to impose sanctions against countries buying oil from Iran. So, on May 8th, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced a partial break with the accord, setting a 60-day deadline to get relief from sanctions, or it would resume enriching uranium to a higher level than now allowed under the agreement.

While Iran's dispute is with the U.S., European nations are put in the middle by having to decide whether to preserve the 2015 accord or yield to growing U.S. pressure to completely isolate Tehran economically and politically.

Experts on a May 1st [National Iranian American Council \(NIAC\) panel](#) think that while President Trump is not eager for a war with Iran, he is being pushed by Secretaries John Bolton and Mike Pompeo. In a legislative response, the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act of 2019 was introduced by Senators Udall, Durbin and Rand Paul, S. 1039. The Friends Committee on National Legislation, (FCNL) has more [background information here](#).

We encourage our members and friends to [click this link](#) and urge your member of Congress to cosponsor the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act of 2019.