

Publication Date: April 13, 2020

Reflection Date: April 19, 2020 - Second Sunday of Easter

Mercy in the Time of COVID-19

Image by [D Casp](#) from Pixabay

On the upcoming [Second Sunday of Easter](#), we should be basking in the radiant light of Easter, rejoicing in Resurrection as we worship with our parish communities in churches fragrant with white lilies, singing songs of joy and praise. Not so in Easter Season 2020. We are sheltering in place (those of us fortunate to have a home), feeling more like the disciples huddled in the Upper Room on Holy Saturday.



The First Reading from Acts describes a rare *utopian* moment in the first days of the Church: disciples devoted themselves “to the communal life, to breaking of the bread and to the prayers... All who believed were together and had all things in common.” We know that this ideal community didn’t last long, but we hold onto this description hoping that someday it may again be realized. This Easter Season feels *dystopian*, as COVID-19 continues to spread, sicken, and kill. Among our government leaders are some who lie, sow confusion, and turn the blame on others. The world is a very scary place.

But this Sunday is also Sunday of Divine Mercy as proclaimed by Pope Francis. Between utopia and dystopia, we can find firm footing in Divine Mercy. The word “mercy” in the Hebrew scriptures is defined as *God’s Covenant Love* expressed in various ways: God’s enduring love for us invites our commitment to covenant love for God, shown in love for others. The First Letter of Peter tells us to praise “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable... In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials...” This “little while” seems very long; we yearn for it to end.

The Gospel urges us to trust that Jesus waits to come to us in our sheltering “upper rooms,” as he did to the first disciples. He assures us, “Peace be with you.” See how I have been wounded for love of you. I have risen from the dead. “Peace be with you.” May we cry with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!” We are “those who have not seen and have believed.” And for this we are blessed by Jesus himself. We are bathed in the light of *Divine Mercy*. May our hope be renewed. May we open our arms and hearts in mercy to others.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

Each day this week, identify one blessing for which you are grateful. "Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good, God's love is everlasting." (Ps. 118)

Suggested Petitions:

That we may show gratitude for Divine Mercy by extending mercy to others, especially those in need of assistance during this pandemic, let us pray.

That Easter hope continues to burn in our hearts and give us peace, let us pray.

Prayer by St. Vincent Pallotti

Eternal Father, it is your will that all should be saved.

Great is your mercy.

With deep faith in Christ's death and resurrection, we pray:

send forth, O Lord, laborers into your vineyard and spare your people.

**O Holy Spirit, enkindle in all hearts your ardent love
that can do all things.**

May all arrive in heaven to sing your divine mercy.

Amen

You're Invited: Join us for a Virtual Franciscan EAD Gathering

Together at EAD in 2019

Because we aren't able to have our in-person gathering at EAD, the staff at FAN has decided to have a virtual gathering with our Franciscan friends whom we typically see in Washington, DC as well as anyone who hasn't been able to make it before and is interested.

We invite you to **join us at the time we would have been together in Washington** to gather as Franciscans and reflect on the vision of Saints Francis and Clare.

Our Zoom video call will be held **Friday, April 24th at 2pm ET / 11am PT**. [You must register to be on the call](#).

We have invited Sr. Joan Brown OSF, Executive Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light to be our guest speaker. She is a Franciscan Sister of Rochester, Minnesota. Sr. Joan will connect us with the theme of EAD weekend, which is "Imagine, God's Earth and People Restored." We will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and 5th anniversary of Laudato Si together!

Don't forget to [register in advance](#) for this meeting. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Hope to see you all there!



Franciscan Mission Service Online Auction

Our very good friends at [Franciscan Mission Service](#) had to cancel their annual benefit due to the coronavirus global pandemic. This is a huge financial hit to a great organization doing all kinds of good in the world.

To help recoup some funds, FMS has set up an [online auction](#) with over 30 special items to bid on, like hand made quilts and table runners, books, services and even tickets to a Broadway Musical.

Bidding will close at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow, April 14th. We hope you will help them out by [looking at their online auction and bid generously!](#)



Protect Asylum Seekers and Immigrants During COVID-19 Crisis

In the midst of this global pandemic that knows no borders nor color of skin, now is the time to come together --U.S. born citizens, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees--to work through this challenging time. When one person is at greater risk of COVID-19, we are all at greater risk.



The #Faith4Asylum team has put together a letter to federal leaders, calling on them to include immigrants and asylum-seekers in all COVID-19 recovery plans to keep families and communities together in this crisis. **Your support is needed.** If you are signing for a faith-based [organization, click here](#) to sign on. If you are an [individual, click here](#) to sign on. **The deadline for signatures is tomorrow, April 14th.** FAN has signed on.

It is imperative that Members of Congress and the administration hear from constituents and people of faith on this important issue. **We encourage our members and friends to sign on.**

Interfaith Connections During Ramadan

For the past several years, Shoulder to Shoulder has helped facilitate and uplift multi-faith connections during Ramadan through their [United States of Love Over Hate](#) campaign. Usually this has happened around



welcome to
my table

CONNECTING THROUGHOUT
RAMADAN FROM HOME TO HOME

RAMADAN 2020

real dinner tables sharing food, face to face. For many of our Muslim neighbors, Ramadan is a time when they are often gathering, with their families, friends, and the wider community, to break the fast each evening and to connect with one another.

This year looks quite different. Concern for public health prevents in-person gatherings but physical distancing should not mean social isolation or an end to interfaith engagement. So, for Ramadan 2020, our friends at Shoulder-to-Shoulder are launching an initiative called [Welcome to My Table](#).

This initiative connects households to households, one-on-one or in small groupings to virtually share an Iftar meal ([what's an iftar?](#)). They have even developed a [system for pairing households](#) to one another.

We hope you will [consider signing up](#) to share in a virtual iftar meal this Ramadan.

Earth Day Has Gone Virtual

As the world has gone digital, so have plans for [Earth Day](#). In a time where community and togetherness are needed more than ever, the youth strikers along with the Climate Strike Movement are determined to continue to build up our collective power as a movement. They have been working hard to adapt and transform the 3-day Earth Day Climate Strikes into a 72-hour, action packed livestream digital strike event -- [Earth Day Live](#) -- happening from April 22 to 24.

April 22, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, will kick off a [three consecutive day livestream](#) that will bring together celebrities, activists, performers, and thought leaders for an empowering, inspiring, and communal digital experience.

The fights against the coronavirus and the climate crisis go hand-in-hand, and as we work to flatten the curve of this pandemic, we must strive toward the longer term goal of building a society rooted in sustainability and justice. Don't miss out! Head to [earthdaylive2020.org](#) to get involved.

