

Open Our Eyes to Recognize You

Image by [Stefano Ferrario](#) from Pixabay

Several years ago, while working in an outpatient diabetes management center I met a patient who, based on how she presented herself, frightened me to the point where I found myself frequently backing away and distancing myself from her during our first appointment together. Reflecting on this later in the day, I grew angry with myself. I did not want to dislike, or perhaps even worse, fear someone because of appearance. Yet, I realized that my fear of her was real.



I knew I was scheduled to see her several times during the next few weeks. In prayer that evening I felt in my heart that I needed to “just talk with her” during our next scheduled appointment.

About five minutes into our next appointment I said to her “I never met anyone from (mentioning her country) before.” That was all it took. We sat and talked about her country and her family. Over the course of several weeks, we became friends. My eyes (and heart) were opened and I now saw and knew a woman who exuded peace.

The [Gospel reading this week](#) of the disciples on the road to Emmaus accompanied by Jesus Christ is the story of each one of us. How many times do we not recognize peace, the image and likeness of God, in those people we live with, work with, meet on the street?

The Gospel teaches us that our eyes need to be opened, “but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.” (Lk. 24:16) When I first encountered a person that I now consider my friend, my eyes certainly were prevented from recognizing the image and likeness of God in her! Fear had me seeing things much differently than I would envision them once my “eyes were opened and recognized” (Lk. 24:31) the image and likeness of our God of peace in my new friend.

Many people and experiences in our lives help us encounter our God if we are able to be open. It was through the recognition that my fear, though very real, was wrong, which led to reflection and prayer. Naming the cause of my struggle, and praying with it, led me to a clearer sight – God’s way of seeing this new person in my life.

A microscopic virus has opened our eyes to the interconnectedness of all humanity, of all creation. Your life is tied with mine. What happens to you somehow affects me, whether you live half a world away or in my backyard. As we reflect on how our lives have changed in the past few months, let us pray that our “eyes are open, and we recognize him” in each individual person we meet.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
FAN Member

Suggested Action:

Consider any experiences or people in your life where your eyes are closed and pray to God to open them.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those on the front lines of the coronavirus, first responders, health care workers, hospital staff, nurses and doctors; May they be sustained throughout this difficult time. We pray...

During this Easter season we pray that the risen Lord Jesus settle deeply in all our hearts and burn within us a passion for justice. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**May your people exult for ever, O God,
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,
we may look forward in confident hope
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.
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

This Friday: 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 this **Friday, April 24th at 2pm ET / 11am PT**. [You must register to be on the call.](#) **The deadline to register is today, Monday, April 20th.**



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. **Registration will close at the end of the business day today.** After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Hope to see you all there!

Undocumented Workers Face Additional Anxiety During Pandemic

Amid the anxiety we are all facing due to the coronavirus pandemic, some in our communities are dealing with additional stress if they are undocumented.

FAN continues to work (from home) monitoring the various ways in which migrants and refugees are affected by the current situation, from the asylum-seekers expelled from the U.S. in April to the people already living in the country without documents and therefore no access to free COVID-19 tests or treatment.



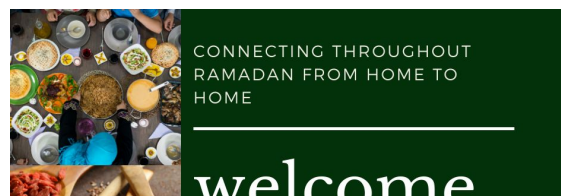
The nonpartisan [Migration Policy Institute](#) (MPI) has a myriad of research and analysis on the intersection of the immigration population in U.S. society. This [report](#) from MPI outlines the number of immigrant workers at jobs both on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic and in industries hit hard by layoffs. This [report](#) from ABC News indicates there are 27,000 Dreamers working in the healthcare field who face an uncertain future as they wait for a decision from the Supreme Court on the case challenging the Trump Administration's 2017 decision to end DACA.

Immigrants in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention centers continue to fear exposure to the virus. Catholic News Service [reports](#) that Bishop Mark J. Seitz in El Paso, TX is asking local authorities to release nonviolent migrants at his local ICE facilities. In California, four Bishops belonging to the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity wrote this [Op Ed](#) calling for release of those detained.

FAN continues to challenge our elected officials and expand the voice of those on the margins who struggle to be heard. We hope you will maintain or recommit to uphold your [St. Clare Pledge](#) and contact your elected officials and remind them what is important to us as their constituents.

Make Interfaith Connections During Ramadan

With Ramadan beginning at sundown this Thursday, April 23rd, we remind our members and friends to check out Shoulder to Shoulder's [United States of Love Over Hate](#) campaign.



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.

Join Virtual Earth Day Starting This Wednesday

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. Additionally, the faith community has posted resources on a special [Faith Call to Climate Justice page](#) on the Earth Day site. We encourage you to look for ways to engage with your faith community this week.

**EARTH DAY
IS EVERY
DAY AND
ANYWHERE
YOU ARE**

#EarthDay2020

4.22.2020 | Worldwide

earthday.org

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.

Protect Our Vote Virtual Town Hall Series

FAN is a faith partner of the Declaration for American Democracy coalition which is hosting a [virtual town hall series](#) called, "Protect Our Vote: Defending Democracy During COVID 19." This series aims to talk about the need for swift action from Congress to secure our right to safely vote in our

**PROTECT
OUR
VOTE**

Defending Democracy During COVID 19



elections and the solutions that will allow us to do just that. The town hall will serve to train activists on how to take action so that we can ensure no American has to choose between their health and their right to vote.

We encourage those interested to join in the [Facebook Live kick-off event](#) TONIGHT, April 20th at 8pm ET / 5pm PT and listen to key leaders in our government and activist community offer tips on how everyday people can help win funding and reforms to protect our democracy. [RSVP here](#) to join in the discussion.

One way several good governance organizations are working towards these protections is to demand all states pass [no-excuse absentee voting](#). The World Health Organization has made it clear: the best way to protect all human beings is to maintain social distancing. In order to preserve public health and voting rights, state officials must minimize obstacles to casting ballots from the safety of homes and shelters. [Click here to sign this petition](#).

Additionally, the Faithful Democracy coalition, of which FAN is a lead organizer, is putting together a sign-on letter calling for \$4 billion for election security and vote-by-mail ballots in the next stimulus package. [Sign on your state or local organization by clicking here](#).

Easter Reflection Guide: "Easter with an Amazonian Face"

During this Easter season, it is important that we reflect on the themes of interconnectedness, fragility, and solidarity especially as we face a worldwide pandemic together.

To help us facilitate these reflections, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns and their partners in the Inter-Religious Working Group on Extractives have developed a new resource: "[Easter with an Amazonian Face: Weekly reflections on resurrection from participants of the Amazon Synod](#)."

The seven-week guide "invites us to encounter God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and in the beauty and suffering of the Amazon region and its people." It features the reflections of participants from the Amazon Synod, an international gathering of Catholic and Amazonian indigenous leaders in Rome last October.

We hope our members and friends are continuing to connect with one another and reflect on the resurrection as one Franciscan family.

Easter with an Amazonian Face

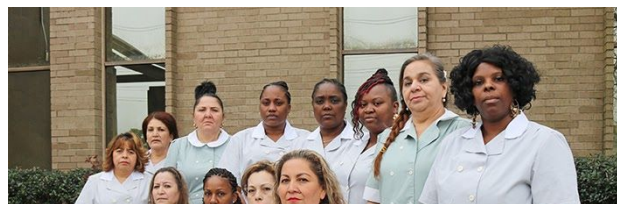
Weekly reflections on resurrection from participants of the Amazon Synod



Interreligious Working Group on Extractive Industries

Hospitality Workers Deserve More Protection

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to decimate the hospitality industry and unemployment claims are on the rise, there are concerns that not enough is being done



to help American workers.

Consider the many workers in theme parks, sports and event venues, airports, hotels, and convention centers who face long bouts of unemployment. The federal stimulus checks recently distributed are a good start, but it's not going to be enough if people are out of work for months.

[Unite Here](#) is a labor union that represents 300,000 diverse working people employed in the hotel, gaming, food service, manufacturing, textile, distribution, laundry, transportation, and airport industries. For our members and friends interested, click here to find [resources and actions steps recommended by Unite Here](#).