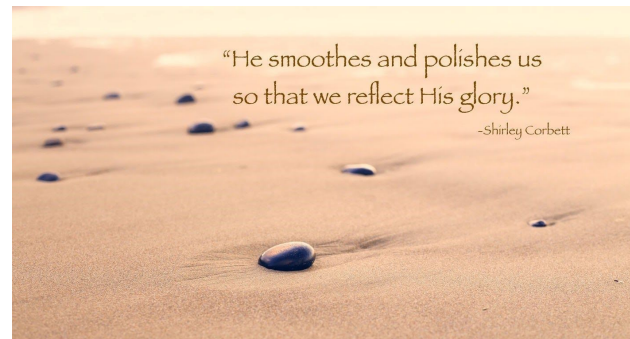


Publication Date: May 4, 2020

Reflection Date: May 10, 2020 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

God's Many Dwelling Places

In our readings for this [Fifth Sunday of Easter](#), we are invited to reflect on various aspects of what it means to dwell, to live in and within the presence of God. In the first letter of Peter we hear, "Come to God, a living stone...but chosen and precious...and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house."



We don't often think of stones as being alive or living. Oftentimes, especially in the past we even spoke of the earth, the soil and the planet as simply being matter, inanimate and simply here to serve and provide for humanity. The Native Americans and other indigenous people have always held the belief that all of creation is sacred and embodied with spirit and life. Hopefully, in our ever growing sense of integral ecology, people are beginning to view the earth, the planet and all elements of creation in the same way. May this growing consciousness help us to recognize that each person is a creation of God, connected with one another and with all of creation. Creation is truly the "spiritual house" that God has created and given to us. Francis of Assisi recognized this gift at a time when the worldview was so very limited, yet he got it!

The pervasiveness of the COVID-19 virus is truly a challenging and bold lesson that our world and all people are integrally interconnected. This pandemic reaffirms the research of Edward Norton Lorenz, a North American Theoretical Meteorologist, in what is known as the Butterfly Effect. In 1972 while addressing the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Lorenz stated: "a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil can produce a tornado in Texas." In what we have come to know as chaos theory, he taught that small perturbations in one seemingly isolated location can cause enormous changes on the other side of the world and throughout the world. To quote Pope Francis, "Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society." (Laudato Sí, no. 91)

Jesus' words in the gospel can bring some comfort and reassurance in this time of strife. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places." With the ever growing number of worldwide deaths in this pandemic, we may hear this passage with a totally new and distinctive perception. God's dwelling places are infinite and boundless. With God there is always enough and actually more than enough. May we grow in our awareness and attentiveness to God's gracious and merciful presence within us and all around us and so contribute to building and reverencing God's indwelling and loving presence in our midst.

Let us pray that God's healing mercy be poured forth upon us and all people affected by this virus.

Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Actions:

Spend time in meditation this week, concentrating on God’s dwelling within you and all of creation.

Suggested Petitions:

For all of humanity at this time of illness, anxiety, and fear. May we know deeply in our heart the mercy and love of God who dwells within each of us. We pray...

For the leaders of our church. May they allow the Holy Spirit to guide them in everything they say and 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

Did you miss our webinar with Sr. Joan Brown, OSF?

Each year, Franciscans gather at the Ecumenical Advocacy Days’ (EAD) annual conference to build relationships and momentum to engage in advocacy opportunities and take action together. Because of the pandemic, the in-person gathering was cancelled and the Franciscan Action Network hosted a [virtual gathering](#) to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and reflect on our call as Franciscans today.



We were honored to have Franciscan Sister of Rochester, MN, Joan Brown OSF, Executive Director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light as our guest speaker. Sr. Joan’s talk was inspiring and challenging as she declared society to be in an “evolutionary, transformational moment” and called for us to be repairers of the world.

For those who missed the gathering, you can watch the recording on our website, [here](#).

Monday Morning DACA Prayers Registration

Each Monday for the past several weeks, FAN has joined a group of Dreamers and immigration advocates in [online prayer time](#) from 9:30a-10a eastern, before the Supreme Court decision on DACA is announced. This prayer time will continue each week at the same time until a decision is rendered from the Court.

We invite those interested to join in to hear updates on DACA, testimonies from DACA leaders, and be led in prayers by and with DACA recipients and allies.

To join, you must register at:

<https://bit.ly/DACAPrayersRSVP> to receive the secure Zoom Link and Password through email. If you have trouble getting into Zoom, the Morning Prayers will be [livestreamed on Facebook, here](#).



March for our Lives Hosts Peace is Essential Digital Rally

FAN's commitment to peacekeeping allows us to be involved in many gun violence prevention initiatives. In May of 2018, when students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School coordinated the March for Our Lives rallies all over the country, FAN staff attended the DC rally and [many Franciscans took part](#) in their own communities.



This Wednesday, May 6th at 2pm ET / 11am PT, March for Our Lives and Community Justice Action Fund will hold the [Peace is Essential digital rally](#) to call on partners, members, and the broader community to unite our calls for change that will lead to safer communities and donate to local organizations on the front lines of the fight to end gun violence.

This new effort aligns the two organizations to help local organizations in need of vital support as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, demand change that will lead to safer communities through advocating for new policy changes and holding policy makers accountable to bring about that change.

Register Here for Wednesday's rally: <https://bit.ly/2xZhF69>

Take Action: Ecumenical Advocacy Days Webinar and Congressional Ask

Every year the faith conference known as Ecumenical Advocacy Days ends with a Lobby Day when attendees are guided through visits to Capitol Hill to meet with their Members of Congress about a



predetermined “ask.” This year was no different.

Last week, on what would have been Lobby Day, EAD organizers hosted a [Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2020](#) webinar online featuring guest speakers Rev. Dr. Betty Whitted Holley, Archbishop Mark MacDonald, and Shanta Ready Alonso who each spoke briefly about this year’s “ask.”

The full recording of the webinar can be found on the [EAD website](#). We also encourage our members and friends to participate in the “[EAD Ask](#)” and write to your Member of Congress urging short-term relief and long-term recovery packages that address historic systemic racism and wealth disparities, and meet the immediate needs of those most severely affected by COVID-19. There are many resources at the bottom of the [EAD Ask page](#).

JFI Action: Email Congress on Further COVID-19 Relief Packages

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be a Church for all God’s children.



While steps have been taken to help slow the spread and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic in the United States, there are still many people who have been left out of safety and welfare. The Justice for Immigrants campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has developed this [email action to Congress](#) offering reasonable demands for the next COVID-19 relief package in order to ensure that no one is left behind and that everyone is safe.

[Click here](#) to see the action in full and write to your elected officials.

Act Now: Respond to the Immigration Ban

President Trump’s most recent Executive Order to “cancel legal immigration” bans many immigrants from entering the United States and keeps families apart for at least sixty days. Faith leaders reacted strongly, including FAN when we released this [statement](#).

As members of one Franciscan family, we can not let fear-mongering and scapegoating distract us from what is really going on. With chaos swirling around us, our faith anchors us to the truth: that even (or especially) in times of tumult we care for our neighbor, protect the vulnerable, and act with compassion and fierce, revolutionary love.



The Interfaith Immigration Coalition, of which FAN is a member, has put together this [succinct explanation](#) with clear, easy instructions to take

action on behalf of our immigrant sisters and brothers. [Click here to take actions](#) that show immigrants and refugees ARE welcome in the United States.

We Can Both Protect Our Health and Vote Securely

Because of the coronavirus, our election schedule has already been thrown way off course. Primaries held during the outbreak such as in Wisconsin have put voter's health at risk and some states have postponed them in the interest of public health. The pandemic has served to highlight the obstacles many already face when voting.



The Faithful Democracy coalition, of which FAN is a lead organizer, hosted a webinar last week to offer ways the faith community can mobilize to ensure that the 2020 primary and general elections are safe and fair in the context of COVID-19. The [recording of the webinar can be found here](#). The coalition also is sending a letter to Congress today calling for \$4 billion for election security and vote-by-mail ballots in the next stimulus package.

Last week, U.S. Senator Kamala D. Harris (D-CA) introduced the [VoteSafe Act](#), legislation which would provide nationwide early voting, expand vote-by-mail, and improve the safety of polling places. Our next stimulus package must include money for elections. We will continue to monitor this and any other election security legislation and keep you informed of any coordinated actions.

Finally, in the interest of preserving public health *and* voting rights, FAN has joined other good governance groups in a petition that all states pass [no-excuse absentee voting](#). The best way to protect all human beings is to maintain social distancing. State officials can help accomplish this by minimizing obstacles to casting ballots from the safety of homes and shelters. [Click here to sign this petition](#).