

EPIPHANY and epiphanies

[Epiphany](#), upper-case E, Manifestation of Jesus the Christ; treasured story of Magi (wise ones), a Star, journey from the East, Gifts offered to The Child, a warning obeyed. Each image holds an opportunity for deep reflection. But this year, when the vicious coronavirus snakes its way into our homes, our communities, our workplaces, and our parishes, my thoughts turn to lower-case epiphanies, defined by Merriam-Webster as moments of sudden revelation, intuitive grasp of reality, a revealing



scene or moment. All of us have experienced such epiphanies in our lives, moments when we deeply felt the rightness of an action or decision, or when we had a new insight into an old truth.

What epiphanies have the frightening pandemic offered us? Perhaps a greater appreciation of families and friends with whom we are unable to gather in person. Perhaps an awakening to the beauties of Creation—winter sunsets, intricate designs of trees stripped bare of leaves, all that we more closely observe in walks in woods or parks or by lakes or on mountain trails. Maybe invitations to spend quiet time in prayer and reflection, which may lead to insights about the real first Christmas, not the sanitized, Hallmark version, but the scriptural story of exclusion, odorous animals, dirty shepherds, bloody birth—made both glorious and challenging by God’s gift of Emmanuel. Perhaps we have greater awareness of neighbors near and far who may need our generous assistance with food and shelter.

An epiphany that is needed by all of us is the realization that once we emerge from the menacing threat of this pandemic, we must not try to return to “normal.” Normal was a country of severe economic inequality, of racism woven into the cultural and institutional fibers of our nation. Normal was corporate power in the hands of a few and political indifference to “the cries of the poor.” It was ecological devastation for short term economic gain—and more. Once the biblical Magi realized that this particular star was different and unique, they acted; they set out on a journey that led them to the great Epiphany, the revelation of the Christ Child whom they worshipped and to whom they offered their gifts. May we act on pandemic epiphanies to assure that we do not return to “normal.” Warned in a dream, the Magi returned home “by another way.” May we have the wisdom to heed the warnings of a terrible virus in order to return to post-pandemic life determined to create “another way,” lighted by justice, peace, mercy, and compassion for ALL.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

Take some time to reflect on an excerpt of a prose-poem written by Kitty O’Meara in March, 2020, which became a beacon of hope for millions who read her post. It begins “and the people

stayed home,” and dares to imagine: “And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.” ([source](#))

Suggested Petitions:

We pray that in this dark night of coronavirus, we may look to God’s star of hope to guide us.

We pray...

We pray that we may be generous in sharing gifts we have received. We pray...

Prayer: (Excerpt from a poem by Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, a wise woman)

**I hope a star comes out for you today
A new one you’ve never seen before.
I hope it’s bright and kind
and shines down hard and long and well
To help you see the things you’ve never seen before
To help you see the things you really need to see.
I hope it touches you with gentleness
and runs along beside you all year long.
This star
oh, how I hope it comes
Running, Leaping, Laughing, Bounding,
Shining in your life.**

Amen

Merry Christmas from All of Us at Franciscan Action Network

We take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas season and a happy, healthy New Year!

The FAN offices will be closed this week and through the New Year. We will reopen on January 4, 2021.

Keep in mind, due to the pandemic, our staff will continue to work remotely. Please contact the staff directly via individual emails or by using our [website contact form](#).



World Day of Peace: Friday, January 1, 2021

Photo credit: ANSA, Vatican News

Established by Pope St. Paul VI in 1967, the first World Day of Peace was observed on January 1, 1968. This Friday, Pope Francis urges all “men and women of good will” to foster a culture of care in his message for the [54th World Day of Peace](#), which was released last week.



The Holy Father traces the evolution of the Church’s *Culture of Care* and offers the Church’s social doctrine as a “compass” to advance the “path of fraternity, justice and peace between individuals, communities, peoples and nations.”

Recognizing a surge in various forms of nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and wars and conflicts, the Pope stresses that “There can be no peace without a culture of care,” noting how the “massive Covid-19 health crisis” has aggravated deeply interrelated crises such as those of the climate, food, the economy and migration.

Read the [entire World Day of Peace message](#) here.

Faithful Democracy Working to Get Out the Vote in GA and Looking Forward to 2021

FAN’s Jason Miller teamed up with [Faithful Democracy](#) members Faith in Public Life and All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church in D.C. to help get out the vote in Georgia. Together, they coordinated a postcard campaign reaching potential Spanish speaking voters in the state. A big thank you to the 35 FAN members, colleagues, and friends who helped to send out 1300 of the 4,000 postcards!

Faithful Democracy has big plans for 2021 as the House has indicated that once again they will introduce the For the People Act as one of their first bills—expanding voting rights and getting big money out of politics. To [sign onto a petition urging Congress to pass the bill click here](#).



Advocacy for Advent - Let’s Keep up the Good Work

This year the staff of Franciscan Action Network sent an email each Sunday of Advent with a reflection on our different issue areas. Contained in these reflections were ideas for a work of charity along with a way to take action by emailing elected officials. We had a great response each week and wanted to share these results with you.

1. [Hunger/Covid relief](#): 310 emails sent by 174



supporters

2. [VAWA bill with strong tribal provisions](#): 273 emails sent by 153 supporters
3. [Arctic drilling](#): 1,497 emails sent by 877 supporters
4. [Gun Violence Prevention](#): 149 emails sent by 83 supporters

Thank you to everyone who took action! Wonderful work! Let's keep up the advocacy in 2021.