

## Nails Not Needed

A few years ago, a priest shared a story about visiting a chapel in Namibia where, as he prayed, he noticed that something was different about the wooden crucifix. When he went closer to examine it, he saw that there were no nails holding Jesus on the cross. Why? It dawned on him that it wasn't the nails that held Jesus on the cross—love did.

Image by [Jeff Jacobs](#) from [Pixabay](#)



Have you ever wondered if the excruciating agony of Jesus' crucifixion was really necessary for our salvation? How could a loving Father God demand the torture of the Son? Certainly God could have chosen another way without so much pain and blood. Wasn't it enough that God became human? But that's the point. Paul reminds us that the Christ came "in human likeness."

In our humanity, we all experience suffering. Only some are tortured. Not all undergo great physical pain. But each of us suffers in some way: loneliness, isolation, depression, rejection, anxiety, abuse, death of loved ones, financial insecurity, impact of racism, spiritual emptiness; not an exhaustive list. For more than a year, the whole human family has suffered with the global pandemic. Is the reason for Jesus' Passion not only about, or even mainly about, payment for our salvation, but about God "in human likeness," desiring to enter fully into the human experience? Is it more about God being present with me in my suffering than it is about saving my soul?

In the [Palm Sunday narrative of the Passion](#), all the palm wavers disappear; the "Hosannas" are traded for cries to "Crucify him!" Jesus is deserted by almost all his closest friends and disciples. From an instrument of torture he cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But the good news for us is that we can be sure that God in human likeness knows and understands our suffering and never abandons us. God is with us, even when we don't feel God's Presence. Self-emptying love is what kept Jesus on the cross.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF  
FAN Associate Director

### **Suggested Action:**

Hold a crucifix or cross in your hand. Share a personal or communal suffering with Jesus. Ask yourself: "How is my self-emptying love manifested?"

### **Suggested Petitions:**

That we sing our Hosannas of praise in times of joy and periods of suffering. We pray...  
That our understanding of and gratitude for God coming "in human likeness" be deepened. We pray...

Prayer by Karl Rahner, SJ

Only in love can I find you, my God.  
In love the gates of my soul spring open,  
allowing me to breathe a new air of freedom and forget my own petty self.  
In love my whole being streams forth out of the rigid confines  
of narrowness and self-assertion,  
which make me a prisoner of my own poverty and emptiness.  
In love all the powers of my soul flow out toward you,  
wanting never more to return,  
but to lose themselves completely in you,  
since by your love you are the inmost center of my heart,  
closer to me than I am to myself.

Amen.

## Today is World Water Day, Celebrate and Protect Sister Water!

What does water mean to you? [World Water Day](#) is an annual United Nations Observance focusing on the importance of fresh water and calling attention to the need to safeguard this precious resource for everyone.

The theme for this year's [World Water Day](#) is 'Valuing Water.' We Franciscans appreciate how 'precious and chaste' our Sister Water is. We invite our members and friends to take part in lifting up stories and joining the conversation about water on social media today. Find some great social media resources [here](#).

Everyone has something to say about our most precious resource. Tag your stories, thoughts and feelings with #Water2me and help shape the 2021 #WorldWaterDay campaign.



## Webinar: Climate Change, Forced Migration and the Catholic Church

On **Tuesday, March 25 at 3pm ET (12pm PT)** join in this webinar hosted by the [Justice for Immigrants](#) campaign and learn how the Catholic Church has taken a proactive approach to fighting climate change, the role climate change plays in forced migration, and how it affects the most vulnerable among us.

Click here to join: [bit.ly/Climate\\_Migration](https://bit.ly/Climate_Migration)

JFI Webinar: Climate Change, Forced Migration, and the Catholic Church

Thursday, March 25th, 3PM



## Virtual Way of the Cross for Economic and Ecological Justice

FAN is proud to be a co-sponsoring organization in this year's presentation of the [Economic and Ecological Way of the Cross](#). Due to continued concern over the spread of COVID-19, we have once again decided to present the event virtually.

We invite you to join us on **Good Friday, April 2, at 12noon ET (9am PT)**, for our live virtual Way of the Cross, which provides a prayerful way to walk the steps of Jesus times of financial and ecological crisis. [Click here to register via Zoom](#) or watch the presentation live on [YouTube](#).

If you are unable to join us at that time, you can [click here to download the script](#) for the presentation, which you can use to pray on your own or with your community.



## Educate, Pray, Advocate in Solidarity with Seafarers

Each year, the [Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking](#) (CCOAH) launches a Campaign that begins during Lent to raise Catholic awareness of forced labor in the fishing industry. This year, due to the global pandemic, a new humanitarian crisis has emerged that is severely impacting all men and women who work at sea. [Read about it here](#).

Thus in 2021, CCOAH - together with [Stella Maris](#) and the [Apostleship of the Sea of the United States of America](#) (AOS-USA) - are urging Catholics and all people of good will to pay witness to the life of the seafarer and to leverage their voices as community members and consumers to uplift the safety and wellbeing of one of the world's most invisible group of essential workers.



Join us this Lent and Spring as we elevate the visibility of the seafarers' plight. [Click here](#) to download some background about the Campaign and more information. Stay tuned as new materials and activities will be released each week.

## Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia Join Resistance against Environmental Racism

Chester, Pennsylvania is a small city south of Philadelphia located in Delaware County. The motherhouse of [The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia](#) (FAN Institutional Members) is in Aston, PA just 6 miles from Chester. The sisters are active members of the [Chester Residents](#)





[Concerned for Quality Living](#) and in a recent community newsletter shared that Chester is "home to the largest trash incinerator in the country (Covanta), a sewage waste treatment facility and sludge incinerator (DELCORA), chemical manufacturing plants, and other polluting industries."

The sister's newsletter contains an impassioned plea to [read the message from Chester Residents](#) in order to be fully aware of the toxic trash incineration happening in the area. They request residents participate in an action alert by signing onto a letter to the Chester City Council and Delaware County Council urging an end to the pollution.

We share this story as an example of how a small group of people can lift up the cries for justice for the sisters and brothers of their community most affected by environmental racism, and join in advocating for clean air, Zero Waste and justice in their area.

## Join in Faith Climate Action Week April 16-25

[Faith Climate Action Week](#) is Interfaith Power & Light's annual program of climate-themed worship services and sermons that spans ten days of activities around Earth Day, with this year's dates being April 16-25. [Join the community](#) of people of faith preaching, teaching, and acting to heal the climate in 2021.

[A free download of the Faith Climate Action Week kit is now available by clicking here.](#)

The theme of this year's Faith Climate Action Week is **"Sacred Ground: Cultivating Connections Between our Faith, our Food, and the Climate."** We will examine how our food systems contribute to injustice and to climate change, and how our faith traditions call us to respond with practical solutions.

Click [here to download the Sacred Ground Guide](#) which includes faith-based discussion materials, suggested short films, a Garden Blessing ceremony, and more.



## Save the Date: The National Iftar April 22nd

[Muslim Advocates](#) is honored to invite you to [The National Iftar](#), co-hosted by Rep. André Carson, Rep. Ilhan Omar and Rep. Rashida Tlaib. **All are welcome.**

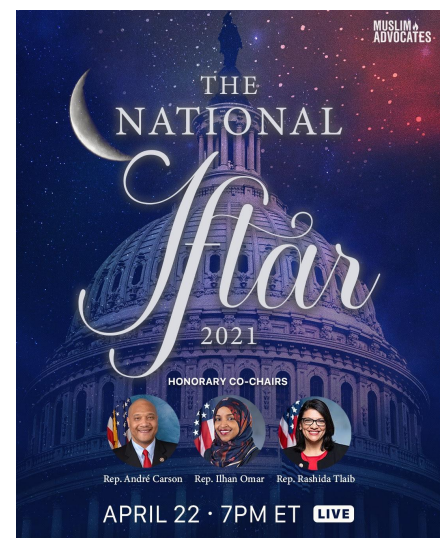
Last year's celebration was so extraordinary and this year will feature new history-making speakers, stirring performances for all ages, and an intimate conversation with the three Muslim members of Congress on the most pressing issues of our times. **This is a free event, but registration is required.**

When: Thursday, April 22 at 7 PM ET

Where: Your Living Room

[Registration is free but required.](#)

This one-of-a-kind online event was described by last



year's attendees as "encouraging," "uplifting" and "truly special." And this year's celebration will be even more memorable. [Get your free tickets by clicking here.](#)