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Reflection Date: April 4, 2021 - Easter Sunday

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## Clear out the Old Yeast

Image by [Andreas Lischka](#) from [Pixabay](#)

We've lived among a pandemic for more than one year. I remember my deep sadness last Easter at not being able to enjoy the annual rituals at my parish during Holy Week. I was depressed that I was not able to join with my fellow parishioners in my faith community to sing "Hosanna" on Easter Sunday. Watching it on tv was just not the same, I lamented. How could I ever be satisfied?



Now, one year later, new habits have formed. Grabbing a mask as I walk out the door and washing my hands when I come in the house is second nature. I've watched mass on tv so much, I have developed a deep connection with the Spiritual Communion prayer. These habits that seemed so foreign to me last Easter are now my "new normal." In meditating on [Sunday's second reading](#) from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, I wondered, was God clearing out my "old yeast"?

My oldest daughter was one of so many who began baking during the shutdown last year. She honed her skills and learned how to make delicious loaves of bread. My favorite is her herb and olive oil focaccia. I watched her in awe as I was never a great baker. Chemistry was not one of my favorite subjects. I couldn't understand why the ¼ tsp of salt *had* to be in there! How can such a small amount of salt matter that much? I remember, when I was young, being frustrated that a cookie didn't come out the way it was supposed to. My mother looked at the recipe card and asked if I added the right amount of salt. At my angst, she laughed understandingly and said "Chemistry matters in baking." It was these memories that stirred in me as I read St. Paul's words.

"Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become fresh." They say "old habits die hard" but it's amazing what you can do when motivated. Think back to this time last year. How long did it take you to acquire new habits like grabbing a mask or sanitizing your hands more often? One year of living with a pandemic, we find ourselves developing new habits, perhaps even better ones than the old. With fresh yeast, we can join together to celebrate "sincerity and truth." Who wouldn't want a slice of that?

This Easter season, let us discover the empty tomb and ponder the mystery of the Resurrection. Let us "clear out the old yeast" in our hearts to be strengthened in our faith so as to develop new habits. Habits like Jesus had: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick and dying, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, welcoming the stranger, and loving the 'unlovable.'

How, you may ask? With a little fresh yeast and some chemistry. Welcome those who may think differently than you...they are the yeast. Add in the chemistry of other cultures and soon you have beautiful, bountiful ideas to develop and nurture new habits of justice for all.

Janine Walsh  
FAN Communications Coordinator

**Suggested Actions:**

Consider this week the changes that have taken place in your life over the last year. What has changed for the better? What “old yeast” needed clearing out?

**Suggested Petitions:**

For all those struggling to find hope and peace, may the Resurrection of Jesus offer guidance. We pray...

For those who have lost a loved one to violence, may the love of the Risen Christ offer solace and peace of mind. We pray...

**Collect Prayer:**

**O God, who on this day,  
through your Only Begotten Son,  
have conquered death  
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,  
grant, we pray, that we who keep  
the solemnity of the Lord’s Resurrection  
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,  
rise up in the light of life.  
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.**

## **Join Online: 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. The observance of Christ's passion is an opportunity to reflect on the ways we have broken our covenant with God at the expense of other persons and creation. At each station, we will focus on a different economic or ecological challenge or sign of hope for our times. Persons of all faiths are welcome. [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.



### Virtual Economic & Ecological Way of the Cross

Christ's passion is an opportunity to reflect on the ways we have broken our covenant with God at the expense of other persons and creation.

GOOD FRIDAY | APRIL 2, 2021 | 12 PM - 1PM ET



## Register Today for Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference

Registration for the [2021 Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) Conference is now open!

[Join us on April 18 - 21, 2021](#) for the opportunity to advocate for climate justice and support the global movement centered and led by people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts due to historic racial and colonial inequalities.

### 2021 Online Event and Theme



Imagine! God's Earth and People Restored

It was announced last week that the **Most Reverend Bishop Michael Curry will preach at the ecumenical worship service on Sunday, April 18, 2021!**

We continue to see how the historic reality of colonialism and structural racism has designed systems that live on today through environmental racism and a myriad of other injustices that grew out of the same evil roots. Throughout 2020, these systemic issues manifested themselves in the disproportionate number of racial and ethnic minorities who became sick with and died of COVID-19, as well as the continued extrajudicial killing of Black men and women. The Earth and its people are groaning. We are called to respond.

This year's #EAD2021 conference hopes to passionately advocate and reimagine a world that lives out the values of justice, equity, and beloved community. [Register before April 1st to get the early bird discount!](#)

## Take Action: Urge Congress to Ban Assault Weapons

Last week saw another mass shooting in our country. Upon hearing about the victims in Boulder, FAN released a [statement](#) with a renewed call for a nationwide ban on assault weapons.

We know a federal ban on assault weapons is possible because we've done it before, in 1994. However, political pressure and hefty campaign contributions from the NRA caused the ban to expire in 2004 at which point mass shooting deaths increased by 347%. We must renew the national ban on weapons of war.



Thoughts and prayers are useless without good works and we must urge President Biden and the 117th Congress to [ban weapons of war](#). With a President and a Congress that support gun reform, now is the time to build bipartisan support for legislation to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. [Take action today](#) and urge your member of Congress to pass legislation banning assault weapons.

## Catholic Climate Covenant's Earth Day Program is

## Now Available

Catholic Climate Covenant has announced their new 2021 Earth Day program, "[Restore Our Common Home](#)" is now available. The free one-hour educational program is intended for Earth Day (April 22), the 6th anniversary of Laudato Si' (May 16-24), or whenever works for you. The interactive program includes prayers, readings, a short video, discussion questions, and suggested "restoration" activities.

The program package includes a Facilitator Program Guide (with all the materials, script, and instructions for an event organizer), a printable Participant Program Guide (suitable for in-person group events), and an Online/Individual Participant Program Guide (suitable for online [i.e. Zoom] events or for individual use.) [Click here to download your copy.](#)



## Plan on Attending Virtual Refugee Advocacy Days

[Refugee Council USA](#) (RCUSA), its members and partners will host a **special virtual refugee advocacy week from Monday, April 19 to Friday, April 23, 2021**. [Help is needed](#) during the week to champion pro-refugee legislation, federal funding for the resettlement program, and oversight over the administration's rebuilding of the program.

By agreeing to participate, you will be expected to attend the following:

- at least one training session the week prior
- a prep meeting with fellow constituents from your state (on Mon. Apr. 19th at a time TBD)
- 2- 3 virtual legislative visits with your Members of Congress

Legislative visits will be scheduled between 9am-5pm ET (6am-2pm PT) Monday, Apr. 19 - Friday, Apr. 23rd. **Please make sure to note on the RSVP form any "blackout" times when you are not available.**

If you are interested in participating, please sign up via the [RSVP form](#), here. We invite refugee and immigrants' rights partners, former refugees, new Americans, resettlement staff, faith leaders and people of faith, and individuals who support refugees to consider participating.



## Take Action: Urge the Administration to End the Death Penalty

Our good friends at [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#) are asking what it will take to end the federal death penalty?



**CATHOLIC  
MOBILIZING  
NETWORK**

As the Biden administration approaches the 100-day mark, Catholics are calling on the president and his attorney general, Merrick Garland, to take concrete action against the federal death penalty. President Biden is the first president to publicly oppose capital punishment and spoke out against the thirteen executions carried out by the Trump administration in its final days. However, since taking office, Mr. Biden has yet to act. This [article](#) outlines the different avenues available to the administration and Congress to abolish the death penalty.

We urge our members and friends to urge an end to the death penalty by [signing on to this petition](#) from CMN. We must uphold the sacred dignity of every person.