

We also are sent out

Image by [Anja](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Year after year, we hear about “doubting Thomas” on the [First Sunday after Easter](#). But this Gospel is actually much larger than the doubt of Thomas. It is about our being empowered by the Spirit to go out into the world to “restore all people to unity with God and each other in Jesus Christ.” This is God’s Mission, and we have all been commissioned to play a part in it by virtue of our baptism.



The doors where the apostles had gathered were locked, trying to keep the unsafe world outside, like many of us have been doing in response to COVID-19. The apostles were afraid for their lives, but locked doors and their own doubting hearts could not stop Jesus from coming to them where they were. Jesus came to them and greeted them with “Peace be with you”. The Apostles rejoiced at seeing their Lord again, but his greeting of peace was not just “Hello” -- it was a goodbye as well. Their Lord had risen, but he was also leaving them. His work on earth was finished and he was going to return to the Father. He was commanding them to continue his work of reconciliation to the world. Jesus doesn’t ask the apostles if they want to be sent out into the world to continue the mission he started; he simply sends them out as the Father had sent Him.

We are also sent out each and every day to live the Gospel in the context of our daily lives. Jesus believed that the apostles could continue his work -- and so can we. Can we put aside our own doubts and believe that we can make a difference in the world? I truly believe that we can make a difference. Does this mean that we will always succeed in seeing our goals become reality in all cases? The answer is, regrettably, no. But I believe that we can all make a difference in the world by simply standing up and demanding that our society could do better and by giving the gift of our presence, by serving those in need or being a voice that demands justice for the marginalized.

When we get involved in feeding the hungry, providing for the homeless, serving those in need, or demanding that all God’s people be kept safe, we make Christ visible in the world and we do make a difference. We make a difference not only to those we serve, but by opening ourselves to being transformed by the encounter as well. Our call is to simply bring the gifts of our presence, our faith and our hope, so that we can make a difference in the lives of those we encounter daily.

For now, let us always remember the Easter greeting:

The Lord is Risen, Alleluia

He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia

Tom Mariconda, TSSF

Suggested Action:

Stretch yourself in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount and be open to experiencing Christ in a new way. Learn about a ministry or group that moves you beyond your comfort zone and then consider volunteering there.

Suggested Petitions:

God of mercy, we pray for all in any kind of need or trouble: For those whose lives are closely linked with ours, and those connected to us as part of the human family. For refugees and prisoners; for the sick and suffering, the lonely and despairing; for those facing violence; for all held down by prejudice or injustice especially all migrants and all members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Awaken in us compassion and humility of spirit, as we seek and serve Christ in all persons. Amen

Hear our prayers, Holy God. Breathe your Spirit over us and all the earth, that barriers would crumble and divisions cease. Make us more fully your co-healers of the broken world. Unite us with all people in bonds of love, that the whole earth and all its peoples may be at peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer based on 2 prayers from Episcopal Book of Common Prayers:

**Almighty and most merciful God, we remember before you
all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us
to forget: the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick,
and all who have none to care for them. Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the
people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as
their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to heal those
who are broken in body or spirit, and to turn their sorrow
into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for
our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

Register Today for Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference

Registration for the [2021 Virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) Conference is open. Good news! **Early bird registration has been extended through April 7.** Make sure to register now before prices go up!

2021 Online Event and Theme



[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.

It was announced 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.

Take Action: For the People Act Week of Action

The For the People Act—passed the House in March and recently introduced in the Senate as S.1—would protect the freedom to vote, end gerrymandering, and increase transparency and accountability in our government. Voting is a sacred act and we must ensure that as all human beings have dignity, that all Americans have equal access to the vote. That's why we're inviting you to **join the For the People Week of Action during the Congressional Recess this week (April 5th - April 9th)**. [Join in actions](#) planned for virtual lobby visits and teach-ins.

The [For the People Act](#) could come up for a vote in the Senate in a matter of weeks if we lean in now. It's urgent. Right now, state legislators in **47 states have introduced over 360 restrictive voter bills** intended to suppress the vote in communities of color, of young people, of lower income people who move more frequently. After record voter turnout in the last election, we cannot let politicians silence our voices.

Several states have specific actions to take and advocacy at the federal level is always welcome. [Click here to find more information](#). We urge our members and friends to join us on Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms by posting daily Social Media Storms that will focus on a different theme that relates to the For the People Act. Sample posts and graphics are available in this [digital toolkit here](#).

We urge you to participate in any way you can.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

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**We must reform our
democracy to empower
We The People.**

**That's exactly what the
For The People Act
will do.**

IIC Webinar Recording and Resources

As a follow up to the recent Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) webinar, "[A Faithful Response to the Border: Welcoming Migrant](#)

I N T E R F A I T H
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I M M I G R A T I O N

[Children and Asylum Seekers](#)", IIC members have created a new action toolkit focused on welcoming migrants, especially unaccompanied minors, at the border and beyond.

The [Welcoming Migrants Action Toolkit](#) provides information and resources aimed at equipping people to engage in both individual and collective action. Content includes:

- National and local organizations that work with asylum seekers and unaccompanied children
- Reflection and worship resources
- Action alerts and advocacy opportunities
- Background information on asylum and immigration policies
- Asylum sponsorship information

Please share the [webinar recording](#) and [toolkit](#) with your networks and faith community!

Solidarity with Seafarers Campaign

We have mentioned in this newsletter about the [Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking](#) (CCOAH) Solidarity with Seafarers campaign that is focused on the impact of all men and women who work at sea. The recent [blockage of the Suez Canal](#) has put the importance of sea transport in the news. You can [read more about the campaign here](#).



Mother Mary, Star of the Sea, help us to deepen our solidarity with the 1.5 million seafarers worldwide, who work at sea for months at a time, far from home, for the wellbeing of the human family.

Several new resources have been developed:

- This [Resource Booklet](#) contains backgrounders, prayers, bulletin inserts, social media, and calls to action to help us make a difference in the lives of seafarers and fishers.
- This [Prayer Service](#) in honor of Our Lady Star of the Sea, the protector of seafarers and fishers.
- This set of [social media graphics](#) for people of faith to use to promote the hard work and sacrifice of seafarers who toil at sea.

We will continue to bring you updated information and resources to use to bring attention to our brothers and sisters who work at sea.

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.

Save the Date: Franciscan Action Network Annual Gala Benefit

We hope you will **save the date** and plan on joining the staff and board of Franciscan Action Network at our annual gala **Thursday, October 7th at 7:30pm ET (4:30pm PT)**. We are excited to announce virtual attendance will be made available again so that folks from all over the country can join us to celebrate.

Last year's event was a great success and we are gearing up for another fun evening. Won't you join us? Watch our [website](#) for more information.

