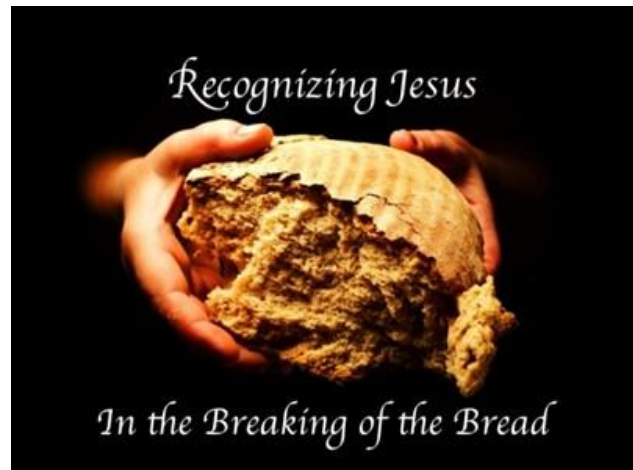


Opening Our Minds to Christ

Recently, in reading Pope Francis' newest book, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, I found his words full of hope and the possibilities of God's unfolding future. In the midst of this seemingly endless pandemic and the pains to dispel racism and poverty, there are signs of hope in promoting change and the awareness for true equality, equity and working for the common good of all people.

One line in Francis' book stood out for me. "A fruitful thought should always be unfinished in order to give space to subsequent development." On a light note one might think that these words were found in a fortune cookie. However, for me, they go right to the heart of our readings for this [Third Sunday of Easter](#). The fruitful thought of God's resurrected love and Christ's ongoing and revealing presence should always be unfinished to give us the room and the space for subsequent developments. We cannot, should not, look upon the revelation of God's dynamic presence and the resurrected life of Christ as simply an historical event to be remembered and celebrated. Our God is not static!



Speaking of discernment and being open to the continuing guidance of the Holy Spirit, Pope Francis also wrote, "Tradition is not a museum, true religion is not a freezer, and doctrine is not static but grows and develops, like a tree that remains the same yet which gets bigger and bears ever more fruit. There are some who claim that God spoke once and for all time - almost always exclusively in the way and the form that those who make the claim know well."

In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter was bold in holding the people and their leaders accountable for the death of Jesus. "The author of life you put to death, but God raised him from the dead; of this we are witnesses." He acknowledged that their actions were the product of their own ignorance and their inability to see beyond what they believed and held to be true. We hear in both this reading from Acts and in the First Letter of John that repentance is always available if we are open to "knowing" the Christ and seeing God's divine action unfolding. God's mercy is not static!

Our gospel invites us to reflect on another post-resurrection event. The events of Christ's appearances to his disciples and followers had to have been a tremendous paradigm shift in their understanding, their comprehension of faith and of God's presence, Christ's presence, beyond the limitations and boundaries of our human reality. Jesus' words were calm and reassuring, "peace be with you," "touch me and see," "have you anything here to eat?" His words and invitation to the basic human gestures of touching and eating can be seen as ways in which he opened their minds to a new and different reality of divine presence and resurrected life. Christ's presence is not static!

We live in a post-resurrection world. Alleluia! But are we living with a static and stayed notion of the teachings of scripture and the presence of God? We must take Pope Francis' words to heart. "Tradition is not a museum, true religion is not a freezer, and doctrine is not static but grows and develops..." If we are open to God's redeeming, merciful and unfolding ways then we must let go of old and bias attitudes and behaviors that limit our vision and judgment of people based on their religious beliefs, their skin color, facial features, country of origin and sexual orientation. We cannot be static!

Margaret Magee, OSF
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

This week let us pray our gospel acclamation into reality. May we open our minds to Christ and awaken our hearts and lives to a justice that promotes goodness for all people. "Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us; make our hearts burn while you speak to us."

Suggested Petitions:

For our hearts to be open to God redeeming and unfolding ways in this lifetime. We pray...
For the courage to seek forgiveness from our merciful God. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

**May your people exult for ever, O God,
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,
we may look forward in confident hope
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.
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

Fratelli Tutti: Finding Sisterhood and Brotherhood to Overcome what Divides Us

Franciscan Action Network is excited to present a [series of discussions](#) that will unpack the directives in Pope Francis' latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* to help heal divisions and guide us towards better unity. As a way to enrich our understanding and reflection on the encyclical, we will host four conversations in relation to specific topics:

- [Fratelli Tutti on Culture and Society](#), with Kim Daniels & Heidi Schlumpf on May 5



- [Fratelli Tutti on Racism and Anti-Racism](#), with Olga Segura & Ralph McCloud on May 19
- [Fratelli Tutti on Economics](#), with Tony Annett & Meg Clark on May 26
- [Fratelli Tutti on Governance and Politics](#), with Amy Uelmann & David Cloutier on June 16

Each event will follow the same format with moderated discussion followed by Q&A, where attendees will be encouraged to submit questions for the panelists. The four events will each begin at 7pm ET (4pm PT) and be moderated by our own Executive Director, Stephen Schneck. [Click here to learn how to sponsor these events.](#)

Please note: There is a separate registration link for each discussion. Once you register you will be emailed a unique link to join the event(s). We hope you will join us for these enriching discussions.

Migrant Center of New York and FAN Sponsor DACA Information Session for Spanish Speakers

Along with our friends at the Migrant Center of New York, Franciscan Action Network is proud to cosponsor an information session on DACA.

This **Wednesday, April 14th, 2021 at 7pm ET (4pm PT)** please join in a DACA Information Session which will be presented **in Spanish** with Attorney at Law, Frank Alvarado, Esq.. More information can be requested by contacting Franciscan Martinez at fmartinez@stfrancisnyc.org or Fr. Julian Jagudilla at jjagudilla@stfrancisnyc.org

Registration is required at bit.ly/DACAinfoSpanish



Catholic Sisters Work to Abolish Human Trafficking

Recently, the issue of human trafficking has been in the news. The **Today Show** featured a segment on the work of [Talitha Kum](#), the Catholic Sisters working on abolishing human trafficking. In case you missed the segment, please [click here](#). Additionally, the National Catholic Reporter recently hosted an hour-long webinar on [Human Trafficking: It's Closer Than You Think](#) featuring FAN friend and supporter, Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF.



No corporation should profit from or facilitate sexual exploitation. Unfortunately, many well-established brands, companies, and organizations in the United States profit as major mainstream contributors of sexual exploitation.

The [National Center on Sexual Exploitation](#) has published an annual Dirty Dozen List since 2013. Their goal is to expose companies that perpetuate sexual exploitation through pornography, prostitution, sexual objectification, sexual violence and/or sex trafficking.

The Dirty Dozen List also includes online actions for those who want a voice in the culture. The Dirty Dozen List is a highly successful tool to this end, already changing culture with more than 50 policy changes at major corporations. When a company makes a positive change to stop promoting sexploitation, it has a ripple effect that influences countless lives.

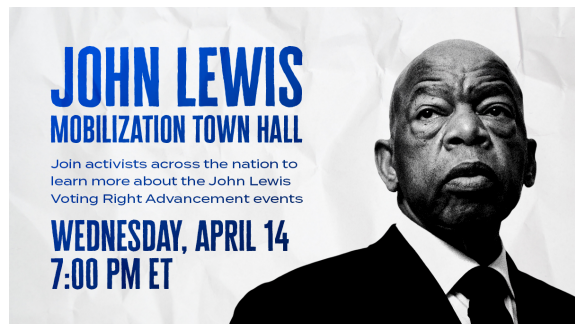
The April issue of the [Stop Trafficking Newsletter](#) highlights the National Center for Sexual Exploitation annual list of entities they deem worthy to name and shame. You can find past issues of the Stop Trafficking Newsletter on [FAN's website](#).

Join the John Lewis Mobilization Town Hall

The voting rights of America's Voters of Color and Youth Voters are under attack nationally by state legislators introducing and passing laws to suppress their participation in elections. Join activists on **Wednesday, April 14th at 7pm ET (4pm PT)** for the [John Lewis Mobilization Town Hall](#).

This town hall is for activists and local organizations to learn more about the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Day of Action on May 8th where we will take the streets for more than 100 "Votercades" in more than 100 cities. [Click here to sign up](#).

Join in to [learn how you can help mobilize](#) to pass the For the People Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and more. Together, we can build a better democracy.



Capuchins take Homeless Ministry to the Streets

Photo credit: Gregory L. Tracy

The [Boston Pilot reported](#) last week about local Capuchin friars and volunteers who have taken their ministry to the streets with their Capuchin Mobile Ministries van. Last month, Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley came by to bless the specially designed van which is used to serve the physical and spiritual needs of the homeless in Boston and Cambridge.

Since August, the Capuchin friars and some volunteers have taken the van out one or two days each week, making stops at locations where homeless people typically gather. They offer food, water, coffee and hot chocolate to the hungry. They also give out tote bags with toiletries, clothing and more. In addition to serving these physical needs, the friars also listen to people's stories, pray with them, and give them information about spiritual resources and social services. [Read more here](#).



We offer our sincere congratulations to the Capuchin Mobile Ministries. We pray for the

continued success of your ministry.

Join in the National Iftar Celebration on 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 7pm ET (4pm PT)

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.](#)

