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Reflection Date: November 28, 2021 - First Sunday of Advent

Keep Hope Alive

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In [this week's Gospel](#), Saint Luke refers to the actions of the sun, moon, stars, roaring sea, and the waves as heralds of the second coming of Christ. (Lk 21:25) From prehistoric times human beings have experienced the majesty and power of creation as revelatory of the greatness of our God. Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*, "Saint Francis invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness." (LS, 12)



In a year when many throughout the world suffered from fires, floods, drought, heatwaves, and "once in a century" storms, and when nearly 1 in 3 Americans experienced a weather-related disaster, we may be, hopefully, waking up to the fact that humankind has put the earth on a path of unsustainability and destruction.

As we light the first Advent candle, traditionally the candle of hope, we look with hope to those dedicated to lovingly caring for and stewarding all of God's creation which has been entrusted to us.

Many individuals and faith-based organizations have committed to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. A collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations and "all men and women of goodwill" (LS, 3), the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform takes a "ground-up approach rooted in the strengths and realities of communities around the world." We are all invited to take "decisive action, here and now" as we journey towards a better future together. (LS, 161)

Perhaps in the next four weeks, as you prepare for the celebration of the birth of our Creator, you may consider joining a group in your parish, online, or in your geographical area that is engaged with walking the path of renewing our earth together.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
FAN Member and Supporter

Suggested Actions:

[Go to the Laudato Si Action Platform](#) to find more information and join or start a group either at your parish, online or in your geographical area.

Many impacted by climate change are displaced. Find out if you have any refugees in your geographical area and how you may come to their aid.

Suggested Petitions:

Creator God, please help us be more aware of how to better care for all you created. We pray...

Creator God, please protect all those impacted by climate change and show me what is mine to do to come to their aid. We pray...

Collect Prayer

**Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.
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

Take Action: Urge Congress to Pass the Build Back Better Act

The House of Representatives passed the Build Back Better Act with a bipartisan vote. This bill would fundamentally transform our society's support for children and families. It contains historic investments for childcare, universal pre-k, affordable housing, clean energy, and immigrant protections. Our good friends and partners at FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) have developed a [petition](#) to raise our voices to our elected officials.

As is usual, there will be many last-minute efforts to cut things back and undermine some of the most important policies, especially those that support low-income families and renewable energy. [Urge your senators to oppose any harmful amendments](#) that would weaken the bill.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted structural weaknesses in the U.S. economy. As we recover, we're presented with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform our economy to address these inequities. [Tell Congress to pass the Build Back Better Act as is.](#)

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Summary of COP26 - Public Engagement Matters More than Ever Before

As the COP26 UN climate conference negotiations closed, the outcomes were considered by most to be a story of "good news, bad news". Going forward requires hope found in the rising tide of concern about climate change, and people's willingness and desire to show up, demand change and be part of the



solution. It's up to us to hold our national, state and local government accountable to the pledges made by the USA!

Here are some outcomes to focus on:

- Countries should come to COP27 in Egypt next year with stronger pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.
- President Biden pledged that the United States would cut greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030.
- Wealthy nations should “at least double” funding to assist developing countries from the hazards of climate change.
- Leaders from over 120 countries, representing 90 per cent of the world’s forests, pledged to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030.
- More than 100 countries agreed to cut emissions of methane by 30 percent by 2030.
- More than 40 countries – including major coal-users such as Poland, Vietnam and Chile – agreed to shift away from coal, one of the biggest generators of CO2 emissions.
- Countries should escalate the effort to “phase down” unabated coal power and “phase out” inefficient fossil fuels subsidies.
- New transparency rules ensure that everyone can assess what other countries are doing by 2024.

As Congress debates the next fiscal year's budget right now, [urge your members of Congress](#) to include funding for the Green Climate Fund and other mechanisms that provide climate finance internationally. We will continue to bring you opportunities to engage with your elected officials about these pledges to hold our country accountable.

Virtual 9th Annual National Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence

Our partners at [Newtown Action Alliance](#) and other gun violence prevention organizations will once again be honoring all victims of gun violence this year. While the pandemic continues to be a factor, the typical in-person vigil for a large crowd will not be happening this year. However, a small group of families, survivors, students, and advocates will come to DC on December 8th to hold a virtual vigil. Here are ways you can support the vigil and related actions.

LOCAL VIGILS/EVENTS TO #EndGunViolence:

If your group is hosting a local vigil service or an event in December then please go to [this webpage](#) and fill out the form so that your event can be added to the map for sharing with the GVP community.



PHOTO SUBMISSION FOR VICTIM TRIBUTE VIDEOS:

We encourage the families whose loved ones have been taken from them by gun violence to submit the photos of their loved ones for the tribute videos. If you have NOT YET submitted a photo of your loved ones lost to gun violence for the National Vigil Tribute Videos then please do so [HERE](#).

CROSSPOST VIRTUAL VIGIL ON FACEBOOK:

The virtual vigil will be held on December 8th at 7pm on Facebook. Please sign up [HERE](#) to crosspost the vigil on your Facebook page. It's tragic that over 900,000 Americans have been killed or injured by guns since the Sandy Hook tragedy. We are hoping our partners and sponsors will crosspost or share the vigil on their Facebook pages to honor ALL victims of gun violence.

SIGN ON TO THE 9TH ANNUAL SANDY HOOK ANNIVERSARY LETTER TO CONGRESS:

The Sandy Hook Anniversary Letter urges Congress to endorse/embrace the Denver Accord and pass a strong package of comprehensive gun safety measures to reduce ALL forms of gun violence in our nation. [Please sign on by December 8th.](#)

Faithful Democracy Requires Hopeful Vigilance

We're one year away from the 2022 midterm elections, and we've got work to do. The staff of FAN have been [in front of the White House](#) (pictured) and out on the streets in Washington, D.C. with DE Valley Franciscan Justice Circle members and other good governance partners over the last month rallying for the #FreedomToVote.



More than 400 new voter suppression bills were introduced in 49 states during the 2021 legislative sessions, and as of October, 19 states have enacted 33 new laws making it harder to vote. **So what can you do now? Here are two actions:**

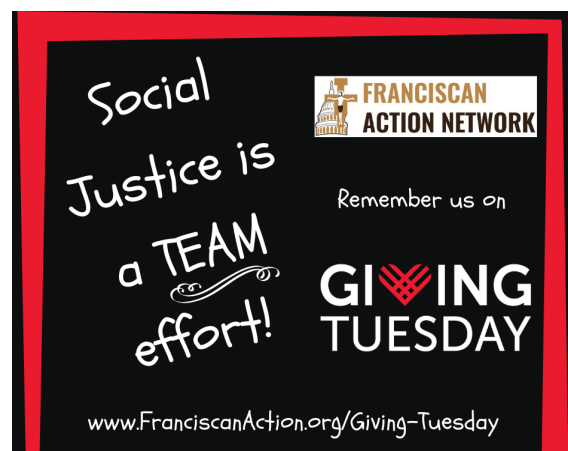
1. **Call your Senators at 1-888-885-1748** and tell them to not let anything stand in the way of passing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.
2. **Host your own Screening** of one of the films from our good friends at [Brave New Films](#) to reignite the conversation and make sure your community is prepared for Election Day.

Gather a group, show one of the timely films listed here and discuss action steps to ensure your community is prepared to cast their ballot and be counted. The stories presented in [Suppressed: The Fight to Vote](#), [Racially Charged: America's Misdemeanor Problem](#), and [Following Their Lead: Youth in Action](#) are as relevant today as they have ever been. The fight to be seen and heard continues.

Remember to Support FAN on Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday has become an international celebration of giving. This year, on November 30th, #GivingTuesday will once again show the power of communities coming together to support the causes closest to our hearts.

We have three days for shopping and getting deals- Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday. [Giving Tuesday](#) is a day for giving back. People all over the world participate in this annual event to remember the "reason for



the season." This year, Franciscan Action Network will be participating to ensure we can continue to be out on the frontlines of faith based advocacy for climate, peacemaking, immigration and human dignity. Our goal is to raise \$2,000. [Can you help out by pitching in \\$20-\\$100 today?](#)

St. Francis and his friars went out on the roadside asking for alms to fund their work. That is what we need to do to continue to be your Franciscan voice in Washington. Just like him, we are in solidarity with the poor and marginalized, we care for creation and raise consciousness on the need to hear "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." [We need your support to do it!](#)

More Advent Resources from FAN Members and Partners

As the Christian holy season of Advent approaches, the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) partners invite you to [sign up](#) to receive our updated Advent devotions, which will include stories from Haitian migrants, advocacy opportunities from Cameroonians, actions to end the deportation of Black migrants, and more.

Additionally, FAN members, the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia have Advent reflections and a calendar that you can access on their website by [clicking here](#).

