

Challenge and Joy in a Rosy Dawn

In the Gospel (Luke 3:10-18) for the [third Sunday of Advent](#), the crowds ask John the Baptist the most basic question, “What should we do?” The query follows John’s call to “produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance” and his warning not to rely merely on religious heritage (“We have Abraham as our father”) for salvation.



So, as we continue to proceed through Advent, what should we do? The Gospel is clear and straightforward: “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none...whoever has food should do likewise.” Do not abuse your authority or privilege, and do not be greedy.

These directives seem like the most basic guidelines of human decency, but do I always abide by them? In our society, in which wealth and privilege are unequally distributed, it is far too easy for me to slip into my comfort zone and stay there. Recently I was shopping when a store clerk remarked to me, “just looking at your coat makes me feel warmer.” I noticed that she was wearing a thin cotton hoodie on that chilly November day and recalled that I had two more warm coats in my closet at home. Dorothy Day said, “if you have two coats, one of them belongs to the poor.” It was time to rethink and redistribute the goods with which I had been blessed.

If I want to go beyond the simple act of donating a coat in winter, how else might I rethink what it means not to be greedy and not to abuse my privilege? Might I take care this Christmas to give more to those in need in my community than I spend on gifts for my family and friends? What about looking at the structural privilege and greed in which I participate, wittingly or not? Personal charity, while essential, cannot correct our society’s drift toward ever-greater inequality. What are the laws and practices in my city, state, and nation that I should support to correct inequity in education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and access to voting? What about needed adjustments in taxation to pay for it?

Beyond using my resources and my vote on behalf of justice, what about lending my presence and my voice? John the Baptist and Jesus were not afraid to speak up publicly, and neither should I fear to show public solidarity with my sisters and brothers who have been impoverished and marginalized. Prayerful reflection this Advent might well show me new ways that God is calling me to action as this new year dawns.

While challenging us, the mass readings also remind us that this is a dawn of joy. This is Gaudete Sunday, in which the rose-colored candles and vestments signify the rosy dawn of Christ’s imminence. And the prophet Zephaniah speaks not only of imminence but immanence: “The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with gladness and renew you in his love.”

Ultimately, this is where willingness to forego greed and act in solidarity with others can come from: a sense of abundance springing from confidence in God's great love. As Zephaniah reminds, ours is a merrily caroling God who delights in us and "will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals"!

Michele Dunne, OFS
Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network

Suggested Actions:

Review your plans for the holidays. Is there a way, amidst the festivities, that you can share your resources or time more generously with those in need in your community?

Use some prayer time to ask God whether you are called to show solidarity with those who are impoverished or marginalized in new ways in the new year. Ask God to give you insight and courage to go beyond your comfort zone.

Suggested Petitions:

God of our longing, fill us with your love so that we might share that abundance.

God of universal love, give us the courage to question ourselves and our leaders to foster justice in our country and our world.

Prayer:

As we prepare for Christmas, let us remember the words of St. Francis:

"We are brothers to Christ when we do the will of our Father in heaven. We are mothers when we carry Christ in our hearts and bodies with a love that is godly and a conscience that is earnest, and when we give birth to Christ through our spiritual practice, as a shining example before all people." (First Recommendation to the Faithful, 1213)

Amen

Giving Tuesday a Success - Thank you!

To all of our members and friends who donated to our #GivingTuesday campaign, a sincere and heartfelt 'Thank you!'

We surpassed our goal raising a grand total of \$2,229.23!! Like St. Francis and his friars went out on the roadside asking for alms to fund their work, we must do the same. With your help, we can continue raising the Franciscan voice in Washington.

We humbly ask for your continued prayers in support of all our continuing advocacy efforts.



Take Action: Urge a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, & Health

On October 26, 2021, U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Mike Braun (R-IN) and U.S. Representatives James P. McGovern (D-MA) and Jackie Walorski (R-IN) introduced [S. 3064/ H.R. 5724](#) - a bipartisan, bicameral bill that would convene a second national White House conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health. The first such conference occurred just over 50 years ago, culminating in the creation and expansion of programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.



Join a diverse coalition of interfaith partners from all parts of the United States to [sign this letter](#) to Congress and help us connect with others that will sign the letter as well.

Join in the Faithful Democracy Week of Action

This week, December 6-10, a coordinated effort to amplify the urgency and need for protecting our democracy and voting rights will take place. A [Revival For Change: Faithful Democracy Week of Action](#) will focus on ensuring that the Senate passes the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.



Revival For Change: Faithful Democracy Week of Action

The goal of this week of action is to restore hope and ignite a revival of faith in our communities as we continue to push for the passage of this critical legislation to counteract voter suppression laws across the country. Each day of the week we will join together in a collective advocacy action that urges Congress to remember that our Democracy must remain a priority. Faith leaders have and continue to be at the forefront of this effort to lift our voices for change.

Monday December 6th	Calling in For Democracy Day
Tuesday December 7th	#FaithInDemocracy Twitter Town Hall
Wednesday December 8th	A Moral Revival for Voting Rights Virtual Event
Thursday December 9th	A Day of Prayer and Fasting for Democracy
Friday December 10th	Pressing on for Democracy: A Day of in-person Advocacy Action(s)



[Click here](#) to find a toolkit containing the Week of Action Schedule along with resources, registration links, sample emails and social media posts.

FAN Executive Committee Board Member Updates

Recently, we announced that Fr. Michael Lasky, who served as FAN board president, was reassigned to Rome to serve as the general delegate for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) for the Conventual Franciscan Order.



We are excited to announce our [new Executive Committee Board Members](#), elected at our recent Board Meeting:

Br. Paul Crawford, OFM Cap. as President (*pictured*)
Mr. Derek Nolan as Vice President
Sr. Marge Wissman, OSF as Secretary
Ms. Alisa O'Brien as Treasurer

We are grateful to all our [board members](#) for their continued dedication to the mission of Franciscan Action Network.

Immigration Updates, Resources, Action Opportunities

The Franciscan Action Network is an active participant of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition, whose goal is to unite our different faith voices together to call on Congress and the Administration to enact humane and equitable immigration policy reforms.

The IIC newsletter is a concise resource of education and action opportunities compiled from all the IIC member organizations. We encourage you to read through the [latest issue here](#) and [sign up](#) to receive these twice monthly updates straight to your inbox.

Additionally, the IIC Advent Devotion "[Advent 2021: A Journey with Black Migrants](#)" is now available for download by [clicking here](#).



Updates on the Franciscan Justice Circles

The initial success of our [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) (FJC) grassroots advocacy initiative continues to energize all of us at FAN! We have heard from and met hundreds of people yearning to connect with other Franciscan-hearted folks and interested in advocating for social and environmental justice rooted in Franciscan values. If you haven't already, check out our video, "[Circles of Change](#)" to find out more.

Jean and Jim Gallagher, two members of the Delaware Valley Justice Circle, were able to join us recently in Washington, D.C. at a rally for voting rights. (*Pictured, with FAN staff*)



[New meetings](#) are frequently being scheduled for multiple locations throughout the country. As we grow this effort, we will bring news of updates and action alerts to you in this newsletter. We encourage you to watch for these updates, share them within your network, and [contact FJC Director, Nora Pfeiffer with any questions](#).