

All of us are Married

Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

This Sunday is the [2nd in Ordinary Time](#) and we hear in the first reading, “Your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.” – [Isaiah 62:4](#)



The Bible is full of surprises. Although I have read all of it I clearly did not truly digest what I read because the above words from Isaiah were a surprise to me. “Your land shall be married.” To whom? To God? To God’s people?

To you? To me? I find this idea of land being married both a mystery and a treasure. It provokes me to see that our faith does not justify exploitation of Mother Nature as so many non-believers see. Truly, the wisdom of God’s words can help us heal both the land we are married to and to each other. For we too are married, all of us to each other, for we are all married by the Church to God.

Those of you who are married in the traditional sense might find this idea a “stretch”. But of course, that is always what God demands of us – a stretch. Nothing good is easy. Nothing true is obvious. Nothing beautiful can be taken for granted. When I think of my 33 years of marriage it does sort of feel like I am married to the land. My wife is the foundation to all I do and am. Without her I am adrift on the ocean without a goal and without a sense of direction. Perhaps I am finally seeing the words of Wendell Berry, my daughter’s favourite writer, in a new light. He is married to the good dirt of Kentucky. For him the land and its people are one. They nurture each other, or destroy each other – depending upon how much they take care of each other.

Now that I have read the words of Isaiah for truly the first time I see that our current destruction of the Earth is happening, at its root, because we do not recognize that we are committed to Earth as much as the Earth is committed to us. We are treating Creation like we are divorced from it, like we are “free” to do as we please. Well, God will never divorce us – God’s love is such that God, God’s creation and people are one family. We may think we are alone, we may think we are divorced – but we are always united to God – like it or not! We are always married to God and the most visible way we can see that is two fold – in a marriage to another person and in a marriage to God’s land.

I leave with these words of the great Christian lover of the land Wendell Berry as a prayer:

“If we apply our minds directly and competently to the needs of the earth, then we will have begun to make fundamental and necessary changes in our minds. We will begin to understand and to mistrust and to change our wasteful economy, which markets not just the produce of the earth, but also the earth’s ability to produce. We will see that beauty and utility are alike dependent upon the health of God’s world.”

Gordon Kubanek, P.Eng.
Third Order Franciscan & Writer

Suggested Action:

Take a walk in nature this week, respecting the earth as a spouse and reverencing the air you breathe, the trees and grass you see, the birds and creatures you hear, and the dirt you touch.

Suggested Petitions:

For all Christians, may we open our hearts to the intimate relationship we have with all God's creation. We pray...

May we all use the spiritual gifts we are gifted for the benefit of our fellow sisters and brothers. We pray...

Collect Prayer:

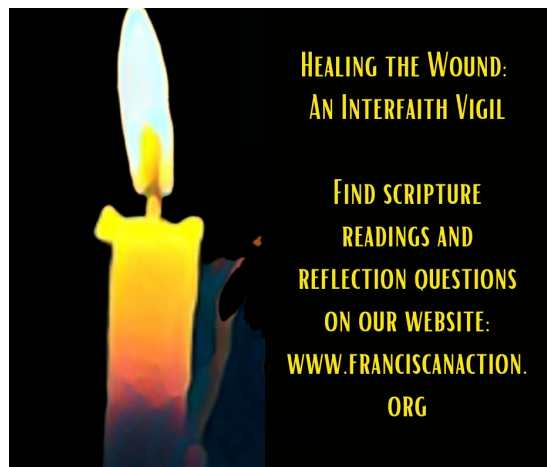
**Almighty ever-living God,
who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.**

Amen

Take Action to Heal the Wound

Historically, faith leaders and traditions have stood together to help our nation heal at times of crisis. The damaging events of January 6th, 2021 created a wound in our nation that must be healed to prevent further political violence and attacks on our democracy.

On January 5, 2022, Franciscan Action Network and our friends at Faithful Democracy hosted [Healing the Wound: An Interfaith Vigil](#) to begin the process of healing. We are all responsible for healing and creating space for peaceful dialogue. If you missed it, we invite you to watch the recording [here](#).



The threats to our democracy and environment have never been greater, but we cannot tackle them with new barriers to voting being put up all the time. We encourage you to **take action by calling your Senators** at 833-345-2551 and urging them to voice their support of the [Freedom To Vote Act](#) and the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#). After that, **make a second call with the same message to the White House** at 833-345-2554. The White House call line is open from Tuesday to Thursday from 11:00am to 3:00pm ET.

Much still needs to be done in solidarity with Migrants

Despite widespread criticism of Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP or 'Remain in Mexico'), the policy was restarted in the first days of 2022. [Tell Congress](#) and the Biden administration that you expect them to #WelcomeWithDignity in 2022.

Related to MPP, last week, the Fordham University School of Law and Feerick Center for Social Justice hosted a webinar: *Broken Promises: MPP 2.0 and Perspectives from the Ground*. They shared an overview of the legal context of the MPP as well as what asylum seekers are experiencing. Interested parties can access a [recording of the event here](#).



It's Not Too Late, Congress Must Pass Citizenship For All:

While the Senate prepares its version of the Build Back Better bill, millions of immigrants are counting on them to finally pass permanent protections. Continue lifting your voice for citizenship with your elected officials. Here is a handy [Toolkit for Citizenship](#) for your use.

Franciscan Sr. Joan Brown Addressing 'Just Transition' in GSR

The Global Sisters Report last week published a [Q&A with Franciscan Sr. Joan Brown](#), the executive director of New Mexico Interfaith Power & Light, which discusses the complexities of a "just transition." The Editor's note succinctly describes, "The phrase 'just transition' is part of the growing lexicon about moving from an economy based on fossil fuels to clean energy. But this phrase's meaning varies. The term can also mean the need for a just transition to new jobs for those employed in industries such as mining, and for protecting the rights of those whose lands are affected by extractive industries."



The article and Sr. Joan's work focuses on the need to both end environmental damage and find solutions for sustainable energy and employment. [Read more here](#).

Support FAN Staff as we Plunge Again in 2022

The Staff of the Franciscan Action Network has once again committed to join our partners at Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) in the [2022 Virtual Polar Bear Plunge](#). CCAN has been recognized as "the best regional climate organization in the world" by Bill McKibben. We consider them our good friends and delight in participating with them in this event each year.



The Plunge this year will be [hybrid](#), so everyone can join in the fun! Some FAN team members will gather at the National Harbor to take the plunge and others will be plunging in their own backyards. But, before we Plunge, **we need help reaching our fundraising goal.** Last year you helped us to raise over \$5,000 and we know we can raise that much again. [Please donate to our team page today by clicking here.](#)

Thank you for supporting us in our pursuit to make a positive change in the world. We will be gearing up to get cold on February 12th.

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

To commemorate January as National Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Month, each week in this newsletter we will bring you a new aspect of human trafficking to educate and take action when appropriate.

This week, we bring to your attention the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victim Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2021 (TVPPRA) HR 5150 bill. Programs that are currently being funded by the previous TVPA are set to expire soon. It is critical that this legislation is brought to Congress before survivors lose access to these much-needed services. Take action by [urging your Representative](#) to co-sponsor the TVPPRA (HR 5150) bill.



This time of year culminates with the [World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking](#) on February 8th, the feast day of Sr. Josephine Bakhita. In past years, we have been involved in celebrations on the feast day, participating in prayer vigils and commemorations. We will keep you updated as plans for another service this year solidify.

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr encourages us that "It's not a matter of being correct, but of being connected." Being in relationship is central to living a Gospel-inspired life, and our Franciscan Justice Circles seek to help us connect to each other and our extended communities, and together convert our values into action.



There are many FJC Meetings scheduled this month at various locations. This week, the Milwaukee and Connecticut-Rhode Island Circles have meetings today, January 10th; Northern California Circle meets on Jan. 12; New York City Area Circle on Jan. 13; and Washington, DC Circle on January 15th. Find the full list of upcoming FJC meetings on our [website](#).

For information about joining or forming a Franciscan Justice Circle, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org.

