

No Leapfrogging Over Lent

In March, 2020, we entered lockdown from COVID-19, never anticipating that in March 2022 we would still be under the cloud of virus variants. During these two years, science gave us the great gift of vaccines, but they have been politicized. During this time we experienced another unthinkable—the vicious, violent attack on our Capitol in an attempt to overturn a legitimate election. Now there are voter suppression laws in states and an increase in gun violence and hate crimes. As if these challenges are not enough, the Russian president has invaded Ukraine and we ask ourselves if we are on the brink of war.



We so need Easter resurrection and hope. But we cannot leapfrog over Lent. The season of intensified prayer, fasting and almsgiving is needed first. The Gospel for the [First Sunday in Lent](#) leads us into the desert, where after 40 days of prayer and fasting, Jesus was tempted. Homilies understandably focus on the temptation to power and privilege rejected by Jesus and our need to enter the desert. But the first two readings also offer messages to ponder during Lent.

Moses instructs the Israelites to declare “My father was a wandering Aramean” who lived in Egypt “as an alien” before being led to freedom. “Aramean,” i.e., Arab. “Alien,” i.e., migrant. In our Lenten practices, we can pray, fast, and advocate (a form of almsgiving) for immigrants in this country who desire the freedom of citizenship, and for migrants seeking asylum. In his letter to the Romans, Paul reminds us “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all. . .” Think: no distinction between Muslims and Christians, between Russians and Ukrainians, between east and west. In our Lenten journey of personal spiritual conversion, may we pray that attitudinal walls that divide us begin to crumble and take what steps we can to bridge divisions among people of different faiths, divisions in our Church, in our country, and between nations. May our prayer, fasting, and almsgiving/advocacy put us in touch with migrant sisters and brothers who seek freedom and belonging. May we ask ourselves how we can be instruments of peace as St. Francis urged us to be.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

This week, pray and fast one day for Ukrainian sisters and brothers, and for peace between Russia and Ukraine.

Suggested Petitions:

Let us pray for migrants seeking asylum in this country, and for paths to citizenship for aspiring immigrants.

Let us pray for leaders of nations that voices of reason may prevail and peace win over war.

A Franciscan Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation

We submit ourselves and our prayer to the Lord God.

**In a world often restless and violent,
may we be messengers of glad tidings to the poor,
heralds of mercy and reconciliation, instruments of
PEACE.**

**Let us not harden our hearts as our ancestors did in the desert,
but may we welcome your grace and truth,
with the courage of Abraham and Moses, Sarah and Miriam,
and of countless other witnesses of faith, symbols of your eternal offer of
SHALOM.**

**May your word enter the marrow of our bones;
may it illuminate the paths of mutual forgiveness;
may it teach us to build communities of faith open to even greater communion;
may it teach us the way of
SALAAM.**

To You, Most High, all Powerful, Good Lord.

Amen

Tonight: Join us for “RE-humanize this Lent”

Politically-motivated violence—whether against political processes, communities, or individuals perceived as enemies—has flared in recent years in the United States. Research shows that speech which dehumanizes or demonizes others is a precursor for committing or tolerating such violence. As people of faith and followers of St. Francis who reached across divides to work for peace, what role can we play in countering political violence? How should we examine our own speech about those with whom we feel at odds? How should we respond when we hear dehumanizing speech from others?



Tonight, **February 28th at 7pm ET (4pm PT)**, we invite you to join us for “[RE-humanize this Lent](#)”, where we will offer an hour of scripture, reflection, discussion, and prayer about how we can use the weeks of Lent to become “re-humanizers,” resisting the dangers of dehumanizing discourse to our fellow citizens, our country, and our souls. [Click here to register.](#)

We will benefit from the wisdom of several speakers, including **Carolyn Townes, OFS** (JPIC Animator for the Secular Franciscan Order), social psychologist and spiritual director **Robert Ferrell** (Contemplative Interbeing founder), and political violence researcher **Rachel Kleinfeld** (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace).

FAN will follow up with all registrants by email weekly throughout Lent with questions for reflection and opportunities to share thoughts and inspiration. There will be a listening session on Zoom to share reflections on the process shortly after Easter. We hope you will [join us](#).

Fast and Pray for Peace in Ukraine

We watched in horror last week as Russian military forces invaded Ukraine. FAN released a [statement](#) as did multiple faith organizations including [Pax Christi](#), the [Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns](#), and [Climate Action Network](#).

As people of faith and followers of St. Francis who reached across divides to work for peace, we stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and urge leaders to continue the energetic work of diplomacy while recognizing and supporting any humanitarian assistance that will be needed.

Pope Francis has [invited](#) everyone to dedicate Ash Wednesday, March 2nd, the start of the Christian season of Lent, as a day of Fasting for Peace for Ukraine. We urge our members and friends to join us.



Faith Climate Action Week Kit from IPL Available

Our good friends at Interfaith Power and Light (IPL) are helping us plan ahead for Earth Day with their [2022 Faith Climate Action Week organizer's kit](#). The resources in this kit will equip you to lead faith-based discussion and action at your congregation to safeguard a thriving Earth for future generations.



Faith Climate Action Week is IPL's annual program of climate-themed worship services and sermons that spans ten days of activities around Earth Day, with this year's dates being April 22 - May 1, 2022. Join the community of people of faith preaching, teaching, and acting to heal the climate in 2022. The **theme of 2022's Faith Climate Action Week is "Sacred Trust: Our children's right to a livable future."** The theme urges us to examine our responsibility to safeguard our Earth for future generations, and how our faiths call us to respond with bold and just solutions to climate change. [Click here to purchase your printed organizer's kit for \\$24.](#)

Take Action in Support of Immigrants and Asylum Seekers



The [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) (IIC), of which FAN is an active member, has compiled some of the latest actions to take in support of our brother and sister immigrants and asylum seekers. We offer them here.

Sign-on letter urging the Administration to **End Title 42 and restore asylum**: Click here to [read the letter](#). Individuals and organizations [sign here](#).

Advocate for Afghans: Today, Feb. 28th is a national day of action. We need to [urge the administration to protect at-risk Afghans](#) left behind in Afghanistan and [tell Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act](#) to support Afghan evacuees working to rebuild their lives in the U.S.

Defend Black Immigrants: [Call on Congress and the Biden administration](#) to designate TPS for African and Caribbean countries, halt deportations, and dismantle racism within the U.S. immigration system.

Church World Service will be hosting **Together We Welcome, a virtual conference** on March 4-6, 2022 as an educational opportunity to learn more about how we can advocate and accompany refugees and asylum seekers. [Find more info and register by clicking here](#).

Schiller Institute Conference "100 Seconds to Midnight on the Doomsday Clock"

The Schiller Institute recently hosted an international online conference "[100 Seconds to Midnight on the Doomsday Clock](#)" to reassert the very sane declaration, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

Considering the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this timely two-panel discussion of a "New Security Architecture" shows how close we are to the possibility of nuclear war and offers an urgent dialogue about the causes and the cures of the current crisis. [Click here to watch](#).



Save the Date: Stations of the Cross

Mark your calendar and plan to join the Mid-Atlantic Coalition Against Modern Slavery which is hosting a virtual Stations of the Cross on **March 21st at 7pm ET (4pm PT)**.

The reflection and prayer will be centered on Jesus' suffering as well as the suffering of enslaved St. Josephine Bakhita.

The link to join will be sent closer to the event. Continue to watch your FAN newsletter for more information.



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

One of the key components of a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) is its base in Franciscan

out of sight, out of mind?

spirituality. Inspired by Jesus' and Francis' intentionality of seeing those whom others would rather not see, Circle members also seek to form relationships with people on the margins in their own communities, and be open to how God is calling them to act in favor of the dignity of their sisters and brothers.

Do you yearn for a deeper knowledge of Francis? Are you called to the action and advocacy he embodied? [Contact us](#) to learn more about joining or forming a Franciscan Justice Circle.