

## Speechless in Confronting the Profound

Image by [Jose Antonio Alba](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In the Gospel reading for the [second Sunday of Lent](#), the powerful presence of God silences the confused disciples on Mount Tabor. Having seen Jesus transfigured and conversing with Moses and Elijah, Peter—who always seems to feel obligated to speak up first—makes the awkward proposal of erecting three shrines on the spot. God, however, quickly dismisses that idea, enveloping the disciples in a mysterious cloud. God's words are crystal clear: "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." Peter and the others are left speechless, alone with Jesus.



We too have moments when, confronted with profundity, we fall silent as our plans and defenses collapse. Recently a close friend who was suffering from a chronic illness contracted COVID. In the few chances we had to speak, I struggled to find the right words to tell her how I loved her, what she meant in my life, and how I looked forward to meeting her again in eternal life. I felt oddly adrift in the days before and after her passing, silently pondering the enormity of her transition. My colleagues at FAN and I have also discussed how helpless we feel in seeing the terrifying invasion of Ukraine.

The Transfiguration, according to Luke's Gospel, takes place about eight days after Jesus' famous warning to the disciples that, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Shortly thereafter, Jesus headed to Jerusalem for the final confrontation with religious and political authorities that would lead to his crucifixion and resurrection.

Whether we understand Jesus' admonition to take up our cross daily in personal terms (bearing our own trials in a Christ-like way) or in broader terms (being willing to set aside our comfort and even our lives to stand for justice and compassion, as Jesus did) it clearly will require deep sacrifice. And even sacrifice itself will not be enough, unless the sacrifice is made in the direction of following Jesus: "This is my chosen Son; listen to him." If I make sacrifices on behalf of my personal goals and preferences, I risk falling into the same trap as those described in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians, whose God is "their stomach" and whose "glory" is in their shame.

Lent is an extraordinarily good time to spend some time in silence. It's a good time to admit that I don't have all the answers and that I am constantly in danger of following my own agenda instead of God's will. It's a good time for deep prayer and contemplation as well as for action on behalf of peace and justice. It's a good time to return to basics, imbibing the precious words of Jesus in the Gospels and his presence in the sacraments, knowing that if I let down my guard and listen, God will make the meaning ever new.

Michele Dunne, OFS  
FAN Executive Director

### **Suggested Action:**

Take time in prayer to admit that our world faces challenges too enormous for me. Ask God what loving and courageous action I should take right now--and do that thing.

### **Suggested Petition:**

Let our prayer and fasting during Lent be a plea for [peace](#) in [Ukraine](#), bearing in mind that peace in the world always begins with our personal conversion, following Christ. (Pope Francis)

### **Collect Prayer:**

O God, who have commanded us  
to listen to your beloved Son,  
be pleased, we pray,  
to nourish us inwardly by your word,  
that, with spiritual sight made pure,  
we may rejoice to behold your glory.  
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

## **RE-humanize Follow Up Reflections and Responses**

We are very grateful for the engaging attendance at our RE-humanize this Lent event last week. We enjoyed a full, rich, and beautiful discussion among prayerful and mindful people interested in actively resisting the dangers of dehumanizing discourse. If you missed the event we invite you to watch the recording on our [website](#) or [YouTube](#).



As we move through the prayerful season of Lent, we will be following up via email with all registrants offering reflection questions. We encourage responses to continue this journey together towards becoming re-humanizers. **Responses will be posted periodically to [this page of our website](#) for viewing and commenting.**

## **Let the Catholic Church Hear Your Voice**

Do you have experience with domestic abuse? Do you know someone who has a story to tell?

The Catholic Church's 2023 Synod wants to know what we can do better and what we are doing well. [Catholics For Family Peace Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) provides education, resources, and research to help



Catholics promote peace within families and respond with compassion to domestic abuse. As part of the Catholic Church's Synod process, Catholics for Family Peace is collecting feedback from members of ministry organizations and anyone who has been personally impacted by domestic abuse or intimate partner violence. **All participation is confidential.** [Click here to submit your comments.](#)

## TAKE ACTION: Urge members of Congress to advance an Afghan Adjustment Act

Following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, over 130,000 Afghans were evacuated of whom 44% are children. As the urgent evacuations played out in real time, thousands of Afghans were granted humanitarian parole, which is a temporary immigration status typically granted for one or two years. An Afghan Adjustment Act allows new Afghan evacuees to apply to become lawful permanent residents one year after arrival.

Our partners at Church World Service have developed this [action alert for us to contact our members of Congress](#) and urge them to support and pass an Afghan Adjustment Act.

Right now, Congress is negotiating federal funding legislation for the rest of the fiscal year. Congress has an urgent moral obligation to attach an Afghan Adjustment Act to the funding legislation and ensure Afghan evacuees have a chance for permanent protection and to integrate and thrive in our communities. [Please take action now.](#)



## Prepare for Earth Day Using this New Resource

Our good friends at [Creation Justice Ministries](#) (CJM) have shared their new [2022 Earth Day Resource](#) focusing on the need for faithful climate resiliency. It was released on the same day as the latest IPCC report which underscores the importance of climate resiliency at all levels - from individual to congregation to state and onto federal and global.

As noted in the [IPCC report](#), *"There is a rapidly narrowing window of opportunity to enable climate resilient development. **Multiple climate resilient development pathways are still possible...**"*



As one example, about a month ago we [urged action on a call for a Global Plastics Treaty](#). It was reported last week in the [NY Times](#) that this resolution passed! This good news offers the hope we need to continue the hard work of caring for all God's creation.

We have just one planet and a closing window of time to safeguard ALL of God's beautiful creation for future generations. We invite you to explore [CJM's downloadable resource](#) and plan to participate in Earth Day.

## UN's ActNow Campaign offers ways for Individuals to Take Action on Climate

People everywhere can live sustainably and help build a better world for everyone. What is needed is the relevant information, education and awareness. This is where Act Now comes in, helping us understand our impact on the planet using [six broad categories](#): Energy, Transport, Water, Food, Fashion, and Waste and offering these [10 Impactful Actions](#) as a place to start.



# ACT NOW

We urge you to [learn more about this United Nations campaign](#) for individual action on climate change and sustainability and spread the word to others in your network.

## Urge Your Senator to Support Pregnant Workers Fairness Act

Catholic Social Teaching prioritizes the good of the family, especially the unborn, as well as the rights of workers. There has been a dramatic demographic shift in the workforce. Not only do women now make up almost half of the workforce, but there are more pregnant workers than ever before and they are working later into their pregnancies.

The [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](#) would require employers to provide reasonable, temporary accommodations to pregnant workers so that they can remain in the workforce throughout their pregnancies. The legislation has bipartisan support but is not considered a high priority in the Senate.



[Click here to tell Congress to support and pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act.](#)

## Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

Last week, Mike Gering of the DC-Area FJC (*far right*) and Kelly Moltzen, one of the founders of the NYC FJC (*far left*) joined FAN executive director Michele Dunne (*left center*) and Creation Care Advocate Sr. Louise Lears (*right center*) at a prayer vigil on Ash Wednesday at the Russian Embassy in Washington, DC, urging peace in Ukraine.

The [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) are a great way to find local companions for your journey to live as an instrument of peace and advocate for



upholding human dignity. [Contact us](#) to be connected to a circle near you.