

Where Is Home?

On July 12 this year the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland revealed the first full color images and data collection from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). The Center, which released awesome photos of some of the earliest galaxies in the universe, is located just one mile from where I live. The proximity of my home on planet Earth so close to images of limitless vistas of the galactic universe catches my breath. The JWST senior project scientist declared he is thrilled that we can now see closer to “the beginning of everything.”

For Franciscan Christians and all people of faith, the beginning of everything is God, Creator of the universe. For me, these new breathtaking JWST images reveal Creator God’s vision of expansion, inclusion, and abundance. This is the vision I see reflected in the Scripture readings for this [21st Sunday in Ordinary \(extraordinary\) time](#). In the passage from Isaiah, the Lord speaks to inclusion: “I came to gather nations of every language,” and of expansion: “They shall bring all your brothers and sisters from all the nations as an offering to the Lord.” In the Gospel, Jesus adds that God’s vision of one of abundance: “And people will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at my table in the kingdom of God.”



Standing in the way of fulfilling God’s vision of expansion, inclusion, and abundance are the human inclinations to opposite forces of contraction, exclusion, and fear of scarcity. No wonder Jesus admonishes that we must enter through the narrow gate, to move beyond our tendencies to exclude, to contract, to cling to what we have rather than share. Many, Jesus says sadly, “will not be strong enough” to accept that “some who are last will be first and some who are first will be last.” If we readjust our telescopic lenses to welcome and embrace what the Scriptures teach and the Webb telescope confirms—a vision of inclusion, expansion, and abundance—we can find hope in Paul’s encouragement to the Hebrews: “So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be disjointed but healed.”

In June, when I joined a gathering of immigrants on the 10th anniversary of DACA, I was given a cap that reads “Home is Here.” Where is “Here”? My temporary home is a mile from the Goddard Space Flight Center. My longer but temporary home is on beautiful, damaged planet Earth in one of myriad of galaxies. My forever home is in the awesome galactic space of loving Creator God.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

Visit nasa.gov/webbfirstimages to view photos and/or reflect on where home is for you.

Suggested Petitions:

That we deepen our awareness of and gratitude for the wonders of creation, let us pray.

That our country may extend welcome to migrants and refugees from all nations, let us pray.

Prayer: Excerpts of *Praise of the Earth* by John O'Donohue

Let us bless

The Imagination of the Earth.

That knew early the patience

To harness the mind of time,

Waited for the seas to warm,

Ready to welcome the emergence

Of things dreaming of voyaging

Among the stillness of land.

Let us thank the Earth

That offers ground for home

And holds our feet firm

To walk in space open

To Infinite galaxies.

Let us ask forgiveness of the Earth,

Opening to receive

Our worn forms

Into the final stillness.

Amen

Inflation Reduction Act Passes the House

Due in part to your advocacy efforts, late last Friday the House of Representatives passed the climate, tax and healthcare bill known as the Inflation Reduction Act, just under a week after the Senate [passed](#) its own version. It now heads to the President's Desk for signing.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) includes critical provisions to improve healthcare access, address climate change, and reduce inflation—measures that vulnerable communities desperately need as the nation continues to recover from the coronavirus pandemic. We realize that the IRA is far from perfect, and includes several regrettable compromises, but it will provide needed



measures to address multiple challenges Americans are facing. Thank you to all of our members for taking action.

Take Action: Urge Congress to Swiftly Pass the Bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act

Days ahead of the one year anniversary of the Afghanistan evacuation, a bipartisan group of Republican and Democratic legislators in the House of Representatives and the Senate have introduced the [Afghan Adjustment Act](#) (AAA). This legislation would ensure Afghans who were brought to safety by the U.S. military can apply for lasting protection to stay in the U.S. long-term. FAN staff members Merwyn De Mello and Sr. Marie Lucey attended the press conference last week introducing the AAA. (Pictured)



Our friends at Church World Service have developed this [action alert](#) to urge our members of Congress to swiftly pass this bipartisan and bi-cameral legislation. The U.S. relied on our Afghan friends and allies to help keep us safe during the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan. Now we must stand shoulder to shoulder with our Afghan allies and ensure they are protected and not forgotten.

Action You Can Take Today For Farm Workers

In the United States, children as young as 12 are legally allowed to work in the fields with little to no protections. And every day around 33 children are seriously injured in an agriculture-related incident.



The [National Farm Worker Ministry](#) has partnered with [Justice for Migrant Women](#) to promote a Congressional outreach effort urging support for the [Children's Act for Responsible Employment and Farm Safety](#), H.R. 7345, or CARE Act. The bill would end the exemption for exploitative child labor, would raise the age of people allowed to do farm work from 12 to 14+ and raise the age of people allowed to do hazardous farm labor from 16 to 18+.

We urge you to [send a message to your member of Congress](#), urging them to co-sponsor the CARE Act.

Faith Communities & Climate Resilience Summit

The impact of climate change on our communities is no longer in doubt. We all feel the impacts from heat waves, wildfires, or floods. Often, our faith buoys us through these difficult times by providing hope for a better tomorrow.

Faith Communities & Climate Resilience Summit:
From Resilience to Restoration

Thursday, August 18 5:00 to 8:00 pm EST

Join us in envisioning a restorative future for communities in the face of climate impacts



Several climate care organizations are hosting a virtual evening of discussion and workshops on **Thursday, August 18 from 5:00-8:00pm Eastern (2:00-5:00pm Pacific)**. Join the [Faith Communities and Climate Resilience Summit](#) to learn about building climate resilience and restoring our communities to places of safety, justice, and prosperity. Hear how faith communities, academics, and government officials from across the U.S. are finding novel, creative solutions to climate challenges. [Click here to read more and register](#).

Plan Now to Celebrate the Season of Creation

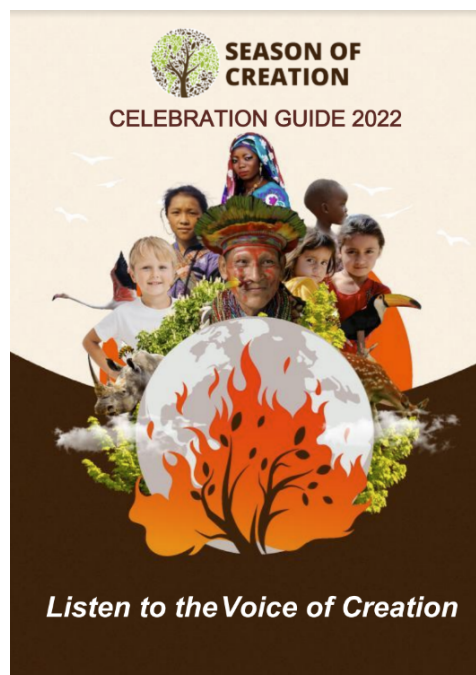
Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common call to care for creation. We invite you to consider bringing your community together to celebrate the [Season of Creation](#).

This year's Season of Creation theme is **"Listen to the Voice of Creation."** Get some ideas in the [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#) which includes a section on Advocacy. Begin small, using these [sample church bulletin messages](#).

Here are some more ideas for planning a Season of Creation activity:

- Host ecumenical prayer service (a sample prayer service is available in the Season of Creation Celebration Guide)
- Organize a Creation Walk or Pilgrimage
- Engage your local surroundings through Earth Examen
- Hold a sustainability event. For example, serve a meal, plant a community garden, organize a tree planting, start a healthy habitat
- Advocacy: Participate in campaigns that call for ecological restoration

May this season of prayer and action be a time to Listen to the Voice of Creation, so that our lives in words and deeds proclaim the good news for all the Earth!



Catholic Sisters Human Trafficking Conference

The annual [U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#) (USCSAHT) conference affords members and guests an opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues, to share ideas, to exchange information, and to learn more about human trafficking.

This year's "Weaving Community, Building Capacity, Effecting Change" conference will be held Oct. 26-28th in St. Louis, MO. Attendees will hear amazing speakers and discuss important issues such as demand, pornography, consumer's role in trafficking, the equality model, familial trafficking, and many more. Come in



person or join virtually. Discounts available for coalitions and congregations. Click here to [find more information and register to attend](#).

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

FAN Executive Director Michele Dunne, OFS and Director of Campaigns Tobias Harkleroad, OFS joined more than 600 Secular Franciscans in Phoenix, Arizona for the [20th OFS-USA Quinquennial Congress](#). Michele and Toby were thrilled to meet many Secular Franciscans who belong to Franciscan Justice Circles from all over the country. *(Pictured)*

Fr. David Couturier, OFM Cap., spoke to a packed room with the opening keynote address, “Called to Build a More Fraternal and Evangelical World: Secular Franciscans as a Community of Care and Moral Transformation.” Attendees also heard Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., speak to the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi in the age of Pope Francis. Videos featuring the keynote talks are available on [this website](#).

