

Paradox of the Promise

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

We all welcome the vision of Isaiah in the first reading for the [Second Sunday of Advent](#): “On that day . . . he will judge the poor with justice”. . . the wolf and the lamb, the calf and young lion, the cow and bear will be good neighbors, working and eating together “with a little child to guide them.” Isaiah’s images of peace, justice, harmony, and safety lift our hearts, as they should. But another verse slips in between the beautiful images: “He shall strike the ruthless . . . slay the wicked.” We can overlook the jarring prediction, but “on that day” when the promise is nearing fulfillment, it returns full force in the preaching of John the Baptist.



The last we heard of John, he had leaped for joy in utero, then was a tiny baby at his circumcision in the arms of his parents, receiving his God-given name, John. Now, as an adult emerging from the desert clothed in camel’s hair and nourished by insects and wild honey, he cries out “Repent!” (that is, change your minds and hearts, reform your lives) because God’s promise is about to be fulfilled. John doesn’t mince words with the naysayers, calling them “brood of vipers!” He prophesies that the one who is coming will be baptized “with the Holy Spirit and fire,” and with “a winnowing fan” will clear the threshing floor and burn the chaff. John offers challenge more than comfort.

The paradox of the promise, reconciliation of opposites, will be fulfilled in the life and teaching of Jesus. He will bring comfort, healing and hope to all, especially the vulnerable, the forgotten, the excluded, but following him will lead to the Cross, and every step of the way calls for “repentance,” a reformation of life. We Franciscans call this “continuous conversion.” May we embrace the paradox, the comforting hope and the challenge.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF
FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action:

Take time to reflect on what gives you comfort and hope in this Advent Season, and what disturbs and challenges you. In your life, what needs repentance?

Suggested Petitions:

That “Justice will flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever” (Ps. 72), let us pray.
That we never lose hope in God’s promise, let us pray.

Prayer: St. Anthony of Padua

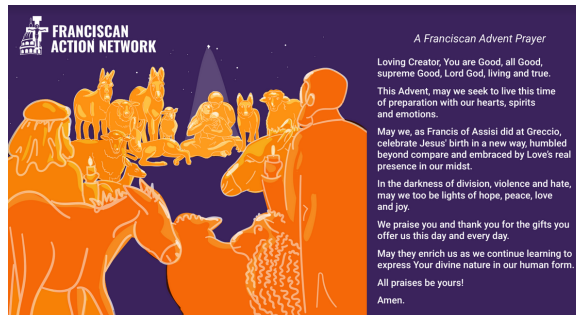
O God, send forth your Holy Spirit into my heart that I may perceive,

into my mind that I may remember, and into my soul that I may meditate.
Inspire me to speak with piety, holiness, tenderness, and mercy.
Teach, guide, and direct my thoughts and my senses.
May your grace ever help and correct me,
and may I be strengthened now with wisdom from on high,
for the sake of your mercy.

Amen.

Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday; Please Remember FAN

Tomorrow is Giving Tuesday, a day to support your favorite organizations. We are so grateful to have you in our network. To thank you for your support, we offer a **special Advent Prayer card** (pictured) to use and display on your table during the holiday season.



We have worked hard this year to serve our network in many ways, such as our [“Healing the Wound”](#) interfaith vigil in January and [“RE-Humanize this Lent”](#) process. We gathered more than 100 people in Washington for the [Poor People’s Moral March](#) and examined [“Confronting Environmental Racism”](#) through a 4-part webinar series. Our first [“Election Eve Prayers for Guidance and Harmony”](#) in preparation for midterm elections saw more than 600 views.

If you attended any of these programs and value the advocacy that FAN does, please support us with a [contribution for Giving Tuesday](#) or any time before the end of 2022. Find more ways to donate by [clicking here](#). Thank you for your partnership in our work!

National Gun Violence Prevention Events Dec. 6-7

Again, we find ourselves with barely enough time to start grieving one mass shooting before the next tragedy takes place. Deeply saddened and troubled by the over [600 mass shootings](#) in 2022 alone (recorded by the Gun Violence Archive), we renew our calling as Franciscans to be instruments of peace, healing and non-violence. The 8th Annual National Gun Violence Prevention Summit, hosted by the Center for American Progress, will be [online](#) or [in-person](#) **Dec 6-7**. The event addresses the largest challenges and opportunities facing the gun violence prevention movement. Details can be found at the links above and an RSVP is recommended.



FAN will participate in the 10th Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence, which will be held in person at St Mark’s Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 7 from 7-9pm. Please join us in D.C. or consider hosting a local event to [#EndGunViolence](#) during December, as suggested by the [Newtown Action Alliance](#).



You may [register your event HERE](#) and download the 2022 Guide for hosting a local vigil or a remembrance event [HERE](#).

If you have not done so during the last 10 years, victims' families are welcome to [submit photo\(s\)](#) of a loved one killed by gun violence for the National Vigil Tribute Video.

Sign on to Letter urging Support of Clean Car Standards

U.S. Catholics have an opportunity to [urge the EPA and Biden Administration to act](#) now by advancing clean car standards and moving our nation to our 100% zero-emission vehicles goal by 2035.

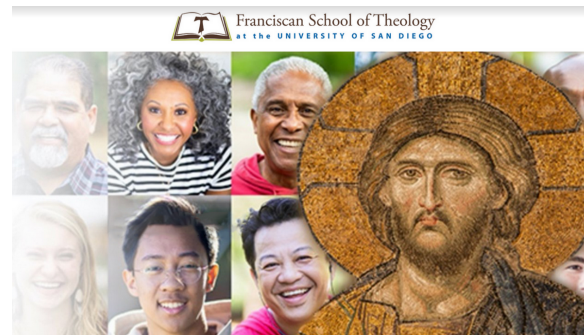


This letter was developed by the Catholic Climate Covenant, supporting “Clean Cars” regulations from the Catholic perspective of caring for our common home and recognizing especially the health impacts of air pollution on our youngest, most vulnerable, and marginalized sisters and brothers. Clean Cars [background information can be found here](#).

[Click here to add your name by December 1.](#)

Franciscan School of Theology Two-Day Conference in San Diego

The Franciscan School of Theology in San Diego will host “Re-Imagining the World,” a two-day conference on January 27 & 28 to explore how the vision of St. Francis and St. Clare opens a new way of looking at contemporary struggles and how Franciscans use technology to spread the good news. [Click here to register](#).



Attendees will hear from inspirational speakers including Cardinal Robert McElroy and Dr. Daniel Horan, OFM. There is also an opportunity to take advantage of an immersion experience with a visit to local organizations serving migrants and refugees on the border with Mexico. FAN's own Toby Harkleroad recently returned from a trip as part of a Franciscan Border Pilgrimage. [Read his personal reflection here](#).

For more information about the conference, its speakers and the immersion trip [click here](#).

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

The Boston Franciscan Justice Circle is devoted to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. They participate in the Capuchin Mobile Ministries, “a ministry of spiritual caregiving to our homeless sisters and brothers” and several members completed the Laudato Si’ animator training. Recently they accompanied young adults from a Franciscan parish (*pictured*) to see beautiful sights of Boston Harbor Islands. The



group shared and reflected on the ecological relational approach in responding to the cries of Sister Mother Earth.

If you would like to find a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) near you to consider joining, please [contact us](#)!