

Embrace the Beauty in the Broken

The Gospel readings for the [6th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) focus on the commandments and laws of Jesus' time. In the first reading, Sirach reminds us of the choice we are given, saying, "If you choose you can keep the commandments," and "if you trust in God," then you will be saved. In the Gospel, Jesus revisits the commandments with his disciples, offering another way of thinking about them. Jesus does not condemn those who don't follow the commandments. He recognizes that we as humans are not perfect beings. Instead, he gives us a lesson on humility by pointing out that we are all broken in some way. He urges us to understand the imperfection in ourselves, which allows us to reconcile with our broken brothers and sisters. If we want to follow Jesus, we must love each other despite our brokenness.



Saint Francis of Assisi realized that the more he let go of the things society deemed important, the more he could embrace the brokenness of the world. He recognized that material possessions were what prevented him from being able to love all things around him, so he gave them up. He saw beauty in the lepers, the outcasts of the world, those who were shunned by Assisi, while also embracing the beauty and brokenness of all of creation. Like Francis, we must give up the norms and visions of greatness that society has elevated and instead reach out to the outcasts as well as embrace the beauty in the broken.

"Kintsugi," also known as "kintsukuroi," is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery by mending the areas of breakage with lacquer dusted or mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. What was once weak or disjointed becomes even stronger and more beautiful through these repairs. Think of all the beauty we could create by mending ourselves and others with the "gold" of God's mercy and forgiveness.

Our world is full of outcasts and people who are broken. Let us recognize that we too are broken and together let us strive to be a lifeline for those cast out by our communities, taking action to safeguard and support a more just and equitable society for all.

Janine Walsh
FAN Communications Coordinator

Suggested Action:

Admit to yourself one thing you think is broken about you. Offer to God any shame, resentment, or embarrassment you might feel about that brokenness and thank God for loving you the way you are. Rethink your judgments about others you have considered to be broken.

Suggested Petitions:

For all who struggle with their brokenness, may they find the healing power of love and forgiveness in God, we pray.

For the humility to accept our own imperfections and the courage to reach out to the “outcasts” in our lives, we pray.

Prayer:

“Broken things are precious. We eat broken bread because we share in the depth of our Lord and His broken life. Broken flowers give perfume. Broken incense is used in adoration. A broken ship saved Paul and many other passengers on their way to Rome. Sometimes the only way the good Lord can get into some hearts is to break them.” From *“The Wisdom of Fulton Sheen”* by Bishop Fulton Sheen.

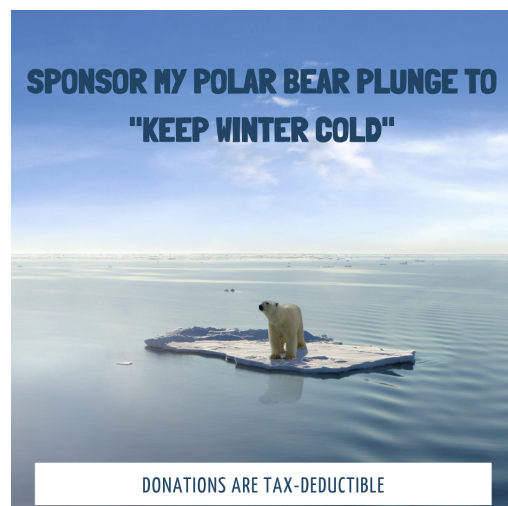
Lord of all creation, break open our hard hearts and allow us to fully embrace the imperfections in ourselves and our world so that we can mend them with the gold of Your love.

Amen.

DC Justice Circle Taking the Polar Bear Plunge

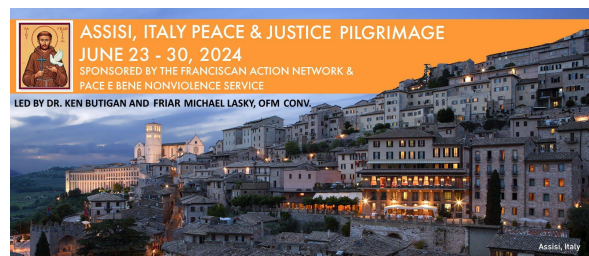
On Saturday, February 11th several members of the Washington DC Area Franciscan Justice Circle will conclude our monthly meeting by taking the [#PolarBearPlunge](#) to “Keep Winter Cold.” This annual event draws attention to the critical issue of climate change, and supports the important work of both FAN and the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN).

Would you like to support our plunge or join our team and plunge from your home? Donate or sign up to join us by [clicking here](#). If you do plunge, be sure to send your photos or videos to FAN at info@franciscanaction.org. Thank you!



Join us in 2024 for a Peace & Justice Pilgrimage

Slots are filling rapidly for **FAN’s first-ever Peace & Justice Pilgrimage to Assisi, Italy, in June 2024**, cosponsored by Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service. Led by Friar Michael Lasky, OFM Conv. and Dr. Ken Butigan, this one-week pilgrimage will be a unique opportunity to pray, study the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare, build community, and deepen our commitment to work for justice, peace, and Gospel nonviolence.



Details, tentative schedule, pricing, and application are on our [website](#). **Please apply soon if interested.**

Ask EPA to set strong soot pollution standards

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced it will update soot pollution standards. This is a critical step to protect our health and our climate from deadly air pollution, but the planned update fails to set the strong science-based soot pollution standards that would protect communities. [Tell EPA to set a strong soot pollution standard](#).

According to the American Lung Association, 63 million Americans experience unhealthy spikes in daily soot, or particle pollution, and more than 20 million Americans experience dangerous levels of soot pollution on a year-round basis. Soot pollution disproportionately affects low-wealth communities and communities of color.



As people of faith and conscience, our values call us to love our neighbors and to be good stewards of our Sacred Earth. [Submit a comment to the EPA](#) urging a strong, science-based soot standard.

Ask your Member of Congress to co-sponsor the Earth Bill

The urgent need to protect and care for God's creation has never been more evident than in recent years, as we have witnessed the devastating consequences of neglect and abuse. We must take immediate action to change our ways and recognize the inherent value of God's planet and people.



The Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution By 2030, also referred to as [The Earth Bill](#), is slated to be introduced in this Congress. The bill aims to get us on track to mitigate the impacts of climate change by focusing on three main areas of importance: Electricity, Zero-Emission Vehicles, and Regenerative Agriculture Production. [Click here and ask your representative to cosponsor this bill](#).

Webinar on Haiti

On **Feb 16, 2023 12pm Eastern/9am Pacific**, Faith in Action International will host a [conversation](#) with Haitian diaspora leaders about changing U.S. policy to support a transition to democracy and development led by local Haitian organizations and farmers.

[Click here to register to attend](#).



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

On January 12 the New York City-area Franciscan Justice Circle had a Zoom meeting with U.S. Representative Adriano Espaillat (D-NY 13), who reported on the current immigration proposals and their prospects. Fr. Julian Jagudilla, OFM, who heads The Migrant Center of New York, brought up the many asylum seekers who were on the street overnight waiting to report for their appointments at US Immigration Services and then were turned away. Rep. Espaillat indicated that he and Senator Schumer obtained funds for cities to house people, as well as more money for USIS personnel, to try and help alleviate the needs. He added that the faith-based communities have been tremendous in their help and thanked them for that work. The Congressman's staffer who focuses on immigration-related topics invited FJC members to

directly contact him at any time going forward. Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF, who represents FAN on Capitol Hill with regard to immigration issues, gave an immigration policy overview, noting that the only legislation currently on the docket would essentially close the southern border, which would go against the Catholic Church's advocacy for compassionate immigration reform. The meeting ended with a discussion of how the FJC members can help and a prayer for migrants.

For more information about joining or forming a Justice Circle near you, [contact us](#).

