

God so loved the world...

Image by [Andrea Don](#) from [Pixabay](#)

So begins a scripture passage that became a famous sign at American sports events, John 3:16 – this Sunday’s Gospel reading for the [Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity](#).

I wonder if, in seeing that sign so frequently, something hasn’t been lost. Words can be repeated so often that they become trite and lose the power and authenticity of their meaning. The message of John 3:16 should overwhelm us.



That message tells us that our world is not dross and not something corrupt and evil to be avoided or conquered. It is precious and loved by God. As John’s Gospel puts it...

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

So many worldviews in human history must be wrong if John 3:16 is right: those that see our world as false shadows of a higher reality, those that see our world as needing fiery purification. In such worldviews the starting point is suspicion, followed quickly by judgmentalism.

Such judgmentalism easily slides into a worrisome image of God. It imagines a fierce, harsh God whose unrelenting scrutiny scours our souls for any trace of sin, a juridical God of rules, laws, and punishments with only the narrowest of doorways open for salvation. Yet, Sunday’s first reading from Exodus 34 finds Moses atop Mount Sinai hearing these divine words.

The LORD, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.

God, even on Mount Sinai, opens divine arms to embrace us and all of creation with love. Moses’ response to the divine graciousness and mercy should be our constant prayer. He bows and humbly asks the Lord to “pardon our wickedness and sin and receive us as your own.”

And, just as negative and judgmental worldviews lend themselves to flawed conceptions of God, so too can they promote a destructive and malicious attitude toward our sisters and brothers. We see them, not as sisters and brothers, but as objectified others who may corrupt us with their otherness. There is no trust. We gaze upon them with suspicion and sometimes fear. We look on them for their failings so that we may judge them.

Sunday’s letter from Paul, 2 Corinthians 13, rejects that judgmentalism and, indeed, counsels us to see those around us as sisters and brothers, as sibling children of God.

*Brothers and sisters, rejoice.
Mend your ways, encourage one another,
Agree with one another, live in peace,
And the God of love and peace will be with you.
Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the holy ones greet you.*

Let us resolve to dispel our inclinations to look upon the world and each other with attitudes of suspicion, fear, and judgment. May Sunday's words of scripture never become trite. May we share God's love for the good world around us. May we greet our sisters and brothers with love as the sibling children of God that we are. And, may the God that "so loved the world," the "merciful and gracious God," "the God of love and peace," be with us all.

Stephen F. Schneck
Former FAN Executive Director

Suggested Action:

Meditate with the gospel passage from **John 3:17**, "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.*" Realizing we are God's hands and feet in this life, consider taking action to share God's love for the world.

Suggested Petitions:

For open hearts, so that we relinquish our attitudes of suspicion, fear, and judgment, we pray...
For the capacity to love as God loves and treat each person as a sister or brother, we pray...

Prayer to the Holy Trinity:

**Glory be to the Father,
Who by His almighty power and love created us,
making us in the image and likeness of God.**

**Glory be to the Son,
Who by His precious blood delivered us from sin,
and opened for us the gates of heaven.**

**Glory be to the Holy Spirit,
Who has sanctified us in the sacrament of Baptism,
and continues to sanctify us
by the graces we receive daily from God's bounty.**

**Glory be to the three persons of the Holy Trinity,
now and forever.**

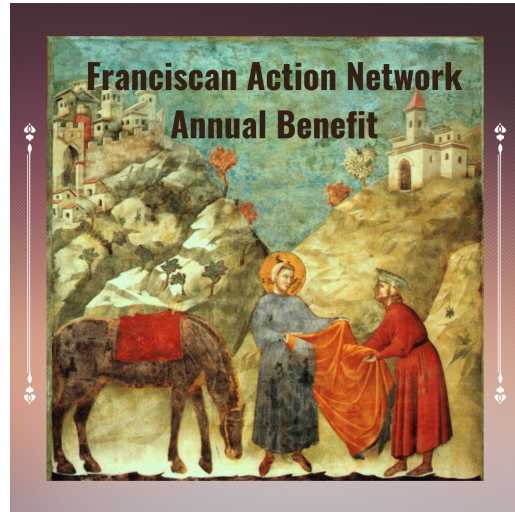
Amen.

Give your FAN benefit dinner away

This year, instead of our usual fundraising dinner, the staff and friends of Franciscan Action Network (FAN) will sponsor and serve dinner to our impoverished neighbors at the [Franciscan Center](#) in Baltimore on Tuesday, June 27, followed by an online program on **Wednesday, June 28 at 7 pm ET (4pm PT)** that will focus on Franciscan care for and solidarity with the poor. This program was inspired by Jesus' words in the Gospel of Luke:

At that time, Jesus said, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed." (Luke 14:12-14)

Your sponsorship or ticket to our June 28 online program will **subsidize the dinner for our sisters and brothers who truly need it**, while also supporting FAN's work all year long to bring a Franciscan voice to public policy issues related to poverty as well as justice, peace, and creation. [Find more information and buy your ticket here.](#)



Candlelight Vigil against Gun Violence June 2

The recently formed collaborative group of women religious, "Nuns Against Gun Violence," are coordinating candlelight vigils across the country for **National Gun Violence Awareness Day, Friday, June 2**. They have prepared [materials](#), including a prayer service adaptable for community or individual use, and invite everyone to participate in a candlelight vigil at sundown so that a wave of light spreads across the country.

Nuns Against Gun Violence

Friday, June 2nd
National Gun
Violence
Awareness Day

We encourage you to join this nationwide action:

- Place a light or a candle in your window as sign of your commitment to bringing this issue into the light
- Wear Orange to honor survivors of gun violence
- Take a picture of your candle, or yourself in orange to flood social media with light amidst the darkness of violence and a call for action to end gun violence!



The staff of FAN will be praying together via Zoom at **7pm ET (4pm PT) Friday, June 2**. We [invite you to join us](#).

Additionally, FAN will participate in a sit-in June 6-12 in Washington D.C. at the U.S. Capitol. This event is being organized by Sam Schwartz, whose cousin Alex Schachter was killed by a 19-year-old with an AR-15 in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL in 2018. Find more information and a way to contribute [here](#).

Ukraine Webinar Recording and Action Opportunity

Last week, FAN hosted a webinar, "Ukraine: Peacebuilding, Nonviolent Resistance, and Unarmed Civilian Protection." Our panel of speakers taught us about different nonviolent ways people are responding to the trauma and violence of war. Please watch the



[recording of our event on our YouTube channel](#) and find more resources on our [website](#).

We urge you to [take action by contacting your members of Congress](#) to support peacebuilding, nonviolent resistance, unarmed civilian protection, and the Pope's call for diplomacy in Ukraine.

Please **save the date** for our second webinar on Ukraine, which will focus on the role of narrative/propaganda and opportunities for diplomatic negotiations, on **Thurs June 15**. More details coming soon.

Join FAN at the Poor People's Moral Congress

FAN staff, board, and members will participate in the Poor People's Campaign Moral Poverty Action Congress in Washington D.C. June 19-21. This three-day event will include training in the aims of the Poor People's Campaign (economic, racial, and environmental justice) as well as organization and mobilization. Register [here](#) or [connect](#) with the campaign in your state, and please [let FAN know](#) if you are coming to DC!



Title 42 has ended; what now?

Faith organizations are celebrating the lifting of [Title 42](#) after years of it being misused to rapidly expel asylum seekers at the southern border.

However, there are grave concerns that the policies the Biden administration is implementing in its place will have severe, life-threatening consequences for asylum seekers and migrants. The Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) has developed [this new, one-page resource](#) highlighting five things faith communities can do to welcome asylum seekers and help change the narrative.



Related to this, [Value our Families](#) is hosting a week of action beginning next Monday. On **June 5 from 3 - 4pm ET (12 - 1pm PT)**, they will host a webinar, "Beyond the Bureaucracy: Common-sense solutions on family immigration." Join in to learn more about the family immigration system, how it fits into the broader immigrant rights movement, and common-sense changes that could ensure families can be together in the U.S. [Register here](#).

Forced Migration and the Threat of Human Trafficking

The [U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#) (USCSAHT) and the [National](#)



[Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd](#) (NAC) will host a webinar on the intersection of human trafficking and migration on **Wednesday, June 14, 2-3pm ET (11am-12pm PT)**. [Register here](#) to attend "Forced Migration and the Threat of Human Trafficking." This event is free of charge.

Related to this, the [United States Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#) recently held a video contest for High School students in the United States with the theme "What would you do?" to raise awareness, educate and empower students on how to identify and prevent human trafficking. See what human trafficking looks like in the eyes of our youth. Also, hear comments from professional filmmakers and be inspired by their work. Please [click here to view the winning 3 minute videos](#).

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

[Franciscan Justice Circles](#) are local grassroots affinity groups inspired by the Franciscan charism that unite to engage creation, peace and justice issues in their communities that are important to them through advocacy and action. Have you been looking for ways to support this type of connecting our Franciscan values with action for young people?



FAN is pleased to share a five-part [Faith In Action](#) unit that can be used as part of any class, such as social studies or religion, to introduce some key ideas about Catholic Social Teaching from a Franciscan perspective. Because of the integration of Franciscan saints and social teaching information, this unit can be especially useful at a high school, college, or university founded by Franciscan friars or sisters. Please [visit our page](#) to learn more!

Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

Connecticut-Rhode Island FJC: Wed. May 31 at 7:00pm ET

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. June 6 at 12:00pm ET

Kansas FJC: Wed. June 6 at 7:00pm CT - Come & See meeting, all are welcome!

Virtual FJC: Thurs. June 8 at 2:00pm ET / 11:00am PDT

Rochester, NY FJC: Thurs. June 8 at 3:30pm ET

Eastern Wisconsin FJC: Thurs. June 8 at 5:00pm CT

Washington, DC-area FJC: Sat. June 10 at 10:00am ET in person

Contact [FAN staff](#) to get connected!