

Transformative Power of Corpus Christi

["Jesus of the People" by Janet McKenzie](#)

The [Feast of the Corpus Christi](#) this Sunday causes me to ponder one of my ministries. I've been privileged to be blessed in my ministry at the Hampden County Women's Jail, Western Mass Regional Women's Correctional Center in Chicopee, Mass.

In Block B are women who have significant mental illness, have violated the rules of the facility, or are often assigned to solitary confinement for their own protection and for one-on-one counseling.

I bring Eucharist to the women who request my services. This is where I encounter over and over again the body of Christ, the "Jesus of the people"! The Jesus who loves me and these women, the transformative Jesus in me. In them.

I am reminded of Janet McKenzie's painting, "Jesus of the People": Jesus, as an African American whose features are depicted with large lips, heavy features, forlorn, sad, filled with dignity, grace, eerily inviting us to look intently. Jesus drawing in, the observer so caught up, you can't look away.



The artwork draws us into Jesus' compassion, His salvation. The painting beckons, "Become what I offer you. I offer you my body and my blood." The body of Christ. Corpus Christi, we become what we receive. We are no longer prisoners! Transformative love sets us free!

Pope Francis writes in relation to the body of Christ and the beloved: "Every time we receive Him, He reminds us that we are precious, that we are guests He has invited to His banquet...and not only because He is generous, but because He is truly in love with us. He sees and loves the beauty and goodness that we are."

The body and blood unite us. We are one. We have been commissioned to bring the good news, to recognize the beauty and dignity of all women, men, and humanity. To work for and demand justice. To help the poor, those in need. The real presence of Jesus Christ—His soul, body and divinity—become an integral part of us.

As I place my hands through the solid steel of the door that separates me from a woman I am ministering to, I feel a connection. I reassure my sister behind the steel that we are the body of Christ. Transformative love is present here! The unconditional, transformative love that God offers to all—God's testimony, God's gift, even in our unworthiness. God still loves us. God offers us up His sacrificial love.

In moments of encounter—one body, one blood—I am reminded: God's love, God's community, our humanity, a people who can't look away from injustice, hate, and poverty!

We, the community of God, are made in God's image and likeness. When we receive the body and blood of Christ, we are commissioned, invited into the likeness of Christ who came to give His body, His blood, His real presence in us. We can't look away.

Sr. Melinda A. Pellerin, SSJ

FAN board member and National Black Sisters Conference Vice President

Suggested Action:

Spend time looking at the "Jesus of the People" image and open your heart to what Jesus is calling you to do.

Suggested Petitions:

For all those imprisoned, may they know they are deeply loved by God. We pray...

For those who minister to the imprisoned, may they be transformed by the presence of God in their interactions. We pray..

Prayer: Excerpt from "A litany for our inability to end gun violence" by Sister Julia Walsh, FSPA. First published at [Messy Jesus Business](#) on Aug. 7, 2019. (Reprinted with permission)

For our failure to follow your nonviolent way, God, have mercy.

For our failure to trust You, God, have mercy.

For our failure to trust each other, God, have mercy.

For our failure to love one another, God, have mercy.

Heal our sorrow, help us, good God.

Mend our hearts, help us, good God.

Make us yours, help us, good God.

Amen

Support our Benefit with keynote speaker, Fr. David Couturier, OFM Cap.

The staff of Franciscan Action Network is excited to host our annual fundraising event a little differently this year. We 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 (4 pm PT)** that will focus on Franciscan care for and solidarity with those in poverty. [Learn more here.](#)

Our keynote speaker at this online program will be Fr. David Couturier, OFM Cap. Fr. David is Executive Director of the Franciscan Institute, Associate Professor of Theology and Franciscan Studies and Director of University Planning at St. Bonaventure University. He has published more than 60 articles and book chapters and has written four books on the psychology of Franciscan economics and the



dynamics of spiritual conversion. We are honored to have his perspective on the Franciscan encounter with the impoverished. [Buy your tickets here.](#)

Ukraine: Narrative/Propaganda and Opportunities for Diplomacy

FAN will host a second webinar on Ukraine **Thursday, June 15 at 1pm ET (10am PT)**. In this [webinar](#), we will consider: What common narratives are influencing this war? How have the key stakeholders generated narratives that have distorted the truth, and how do we get closer to the truth? What narrative(s) will facilitate an end to the war and generate a more just peace? We will also explore opportunities for diplomatic negotiations and how we can support such efforts.



FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli S. McCarthy, Ph.D. will moderate a panel of speakers:

- **Dr Anatol Lieven**, Director, Eurasia Program, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
- **Beliakova Nadezhda, Ph.D.** in History from Moscow State University, expert on Church-State relations in Russia, Research Fellow at the Excellence Cluster "Religion and politics" WWU Münster, Germany
- **Benjamin Abelow, M.D.** from Yale School of Medicine, writer on the political context of the Ukraine war.

We will be using Crowdcast for this webinar. To [register](#), click "Save my Spot," fill out the form with your email, name and create a password. (If you've previously created a password, you will be able to skip this step.) On the final screen click "Confirm & Join." Here are some [attendee resources](#) and [helpful tips on using Crowdcast](#). **A recording of the event will be made available to all who register.** [Click here to register on Crowdcast.](#)

Laudato Si' Conference

People of faith across the nation are invited to this summer's "[Laudato Si' and the U.S. Catholic Church: A Conference Series on Our Common Home](#)," a virtual gathering on Catholic ecological teachings and practices to be held over a series of evenings from **June 14th - July 27th, 2023**.

Get [more information and register here](#).



June 17 Faith in Peace Concert

The [Concert for the Human Family \(CFHF\)](#) of the US Episcopal Church and [Light4America](#) are delighted to announce the second "[Faith In Peace](#)" Concert on **Saturday, June 17, 2023 at 8pm ET (5pm PT)** in the historic Sixth and I



Synagogue in Washington, D.C. The concert will support the values of democracy, diversity, and decency.

If you live in the DC, Maryland, or Virginia area and would like to attend, **please watch this newsletter to get free tickets.**

Immigration Updates and Events

Value our Families is coordinating a week of action June 5-9 in support of immigrant families and the reintroduction of the Reuniting Families Act. Join the “[Beyond the Bureaucracy](#)” Webinar today, **Monday June 5 at 3pm ET (12pm PT)**. [RSVP here](#) and invite others by sharing this [Facebook post](#) and [Tweet](#).



On **Monday, June 12 at 7p ET (4p PT)**, the Immigration Working Group of LCWR will host an hour-long webinar, “[After Title 42: What's Next?](#),” which will include immigration policy updates, stories from the border, and steps toward a just, welcome, and humane immigration process. There will be time for Q&A updates on the emerging realities at the U.S.-Mexico border after the expiration of Title 42. [Register to attend here](#).

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

Can you imagine the greater impact we could all have on promoting peace, kinship and care for our common home if we came together, not only at the national level, but at the local level as well?

[Franciscan Justice Circles](#) provide a space for this to happen. They 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.



This week the following Franciscan Justice Circles will meet:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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