

## Witnessing to the Divine

Imagine standing on that mountain, on a bright sunny day, beholding an awe-inspiring sight that defies human understanding. In this week's Gospel, we read of the [Transfiguration of the Lord](#), a sight and experience that left the three disciples "very much afraid." What if you witnessed the Lord being transfigured? What if you were among the chosen few who were privileged to witness the radiant transformation of Jesus that day? How would this extraordinary encounter shape your perception of the divine and your understanding of faith, suffering, and the purpose of life itself?

Image by [Dimitris Vetsikas](#) from [Pixabay](#)



To witness the Lord being transfigured would be a profound moment, an encounter that surpasses all earthly experiences. The brilliance of Jesus' countenance, shining like the sun, and his garments radiating a dazzling white, would undoubtedly leave an indelible impression on one's soul. The sight of Jesus in His transfigured state would stir within us a mixture of emotions: awe, wonder, and a deep sense of reverence. We would witness firsthand the majesty and holiness that resides within Him, transcending our human comprehension. The experience would challenge our limited understanding of who Jesus truly is, moving us beyond viewing Him as a mere teacher or prophet and convincing us to recognize Him as the incarnate Son of God, as Peter would boldly profess.

Such an encounter would ignite a longing within our hearts for a closer relationship with the divine. We would be drawn to the light that shines forth from Jesus, craving to bask in His presence, to be transformed by His radiance. Would witnessing the Lord being transfigured awaken within us a desire to seek the face of God, an encounter with the Divine?

And yet, we are confronted with the face of God each and every day in the suffering of our brothers and sisters on the margins of society. That suffering may not be dazzling and radiant, but it speaks to the stark boldness of homelessness, the awkward shine of racism, and the radiant shards of migrants displaced and searching for safety. To commune intimately with the God who reveals Himself to us is to see the face of God in all of God's creatures – especially the poor, the lost and the forsaken.

As we gaze upon the transfigured Lord, could we gain a renewed perspective on the purpose of suffering? We would recognize that the trials and tragedies of life are not in vain but are part of a greater redemptive plan. Jesus took those three weary and wide-eyed disciples up that mountain not to show them something easy and pleasant but to show them the awesome power of God through this man called God's beloved Son. The presence of Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, further emphasized the divine connection we are all called to strengthen. As Jesus tells us, He did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.

We would find solace in the knowledge that just as Jesus, in His suffering and death, brought forth resurrection and new life, our own sufferings and the sufferings of those around us can lead to growth, strength of character and a deeper reliance on God's grace. To witness the Lord being transfigured would be a transformative encounter of extraordinary magnitude. It would redefine our understanding of the divine, shine a new light on the purpose of suffering, and deepen our faith in the face of life's challenges and hardships. Such an experience would leave an indelible mark on our hearts, shaping our sense of reality and propelling us on a lifelong journey of seeking God's glory and radiating His transformative light to the world. May we continue to be that radiating light to all those we encounter through our actions in solidarity with those on the margins.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS  
Virtual Franciscan Justice Circle Member  
Former FAN Board Member

**Suggested Actions:**

Look for the extraordinary in the ordinariness of life. Using FAN as a resource, look for opportunities where small, random acts of kindness and mercy transform and transfigure those ordinary moments.

**Suggested Petitions:**

Lord, we lift our hearts in praise and thanksgiving for the glorious transfiguration you revealed to your disciples. You allowed them a glimpse of your divine nature, shining brightly upon the mountaintop. Grant us the grace to see those transfigured moments in the ordinary moments. We pray...

As we reflect on this miraculous event, we ask for your grace to be transformed in our own lives. Help us to shine with your light, to reflect your love, and to be witnesses of your truth in this world. We pray...

**Prayer:**

**Loving God,**

**Grant us the grace to see you, not only in moments of extraordinary revelation but also in the ordinary and mundane aspects of our daily lives. Open our eyes to recognize your presence in the people we encounter, in the beauty of creation, and in the challenges we face.**

**As we are transfigured by your love, may we reflect your light and radiate your compassion to all those around us. Help us to be instruments of your peace, bringing hope to the discouraged, comfort to the sorrowful, and healing to the broken.**

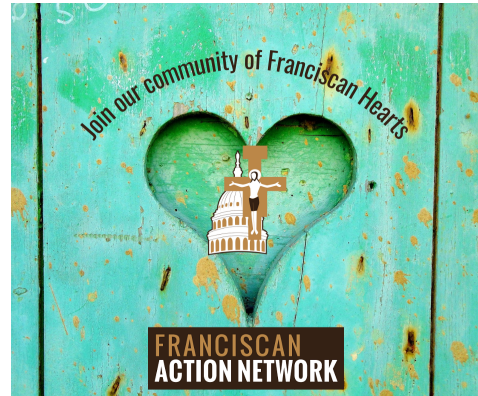
**In your mercy, grant us the grace to be transfigured in our thoughts, words, and actions. May we be evermore conformed to your image, that we may live as children of the light, spreading your love and truth to the ends of the earth.**

**Amen.**

## Heartfelt Thanks to our Sustaining Donors

**Giving monthly is one of the best ways to support FAN's work**, which channels and unites the cries of our Franciscan hearts for peace and justice.

We are so grateful for all of you who are monthly sustaining donors to FAN! You provide the consistent support that allows us to inform, inspire, and mobilize Franciscans and the Franciscan-hearted through advocacy, Justice Circles, and outreach efforts to youth. If you are not a sustaining donor, please consider [joining our community of Franciscan hearts](#) to ensure that Franciscan values are heard in our capital and across the country.



## Environmental Racism: Chaco Canyon Action Alert

As Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people, we are called to care for our common home. Recently, in a victory for Native peoples and their sacred places, the Biden Administration [prohibited](#) new federal oil and gas leasing and mining claims within 10 miles of Chaco Culture National Historical Park for the next 20 years, protecting this sacred indigenous site in northwestern New Mexico. While we celebrate that decision, a new bill, the [Energy Opportunities for All Act](#) (HR 4374), has been introduced in the House that would nullify the 10-mile buffer.



We encourage you to [take action by contacting your representative](#) and asking them to vote against HR 4374, thus protecting Native people, their sacred land and Mother Earth.

[Sign up here](#) to receive news updates and action alerts as part of our project to confront environmental racism.

## Just Peace Fellow Essay: "Re-humanization During War"

From July 3-11, FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy joined attendees from Europe, the U.S., and Africa in a summer course offered by the Ecumenical School for Dialogue at the Ukrainian Catholic University. The course focused on the "War in Ukraine and Rethinking Peacebuilding Approaches." Ukrainian scholars gave presentations and engaged in reflection with the participants. At the end of the sessions, the participants wrote





their own essays on the topic and shared them with the group.

Eli's essay on "**Re-humanization During War: Cultivating a Just Peace**," is available to read by [clicking here](#).

## Novena to Commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Each year, FAN remembers the horrific events of August 6 and August 9, 1945, when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, the only time nuclear weapons have been used against human beings.

Our friends at Pax Christi USA have prioritized the work of nuclear disarmament since their founding and are offering this [novena for nuclear disarmament](#) from August 1-9, encompassing the Hiroshima and Nagasaki anniversaries.

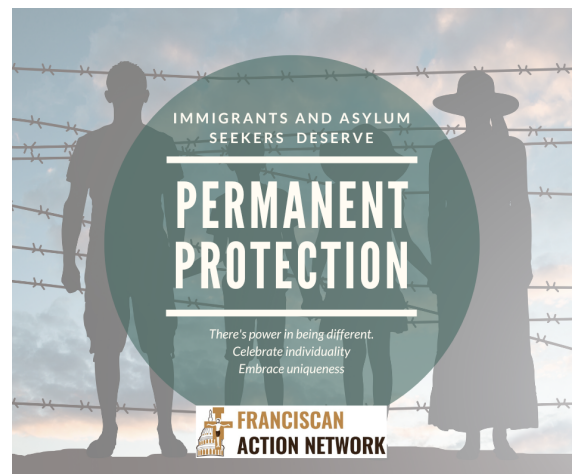


Related, FAN Institutional Members the Sisters of St. Francis in Clinton, IA have launched an engaging and educational online [nuclear weapons quiz](#) to educate individuals about the ongoing crisis surrounding nuclear weapons. The quiz was developed by the Franciscan Peace Center with a hope of inspiring informed discussions and promoting action toward a world free from the threat of nuclear warfare. [Take the quiz](#).

## Sign-on Letter on Immigration Funding

Network Lobby has a sign-on letter asking Senators and key House members to divest from programs that militarize the border and criminalize immigrants and instead invest in programs that support immigrants and the communities that are providing care for them. You may sign on by [clicking here](#).

Their goal is to get 10,000 signatures by August 31 in order to get strong press coverage when the petition is delivered to Capitol Hill on September 12. [Add your name](#) to help show lawmakers everywhere that people of faith love their neighbors and believe in justice for immigrants at our Southern Border and across the country.



## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Please join FJCs and other Franciscan-inspired justice-seekers from across the country for the first [Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference](#) **October 13-16, 2023 in Washington, DC!** FJC and non-FJC members are welcome.



[Registration is open](#) and spaces are limited!

Members of the **Washington DC-area FJC** (*pictured*) gathered for a summer lunch meeting on July 8, where they planned for their participation in the August 26 March on Washington, October Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference, and 2024 Poor People's Campaign events.