

## Renewing the Mind During Season of Creation

Image by [Jill Wellington](#) from [Pixabay](#)

*“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”* (Rom 12:2) The readings for the [22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) are fitting as we celebrate the first Sunday of the Ecumenical Season of Creation. This celebration, dedicated to praying and responding together to the cry of creation, begins each year on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, and ends on October 4, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of animals and ecology.



Pope Francis, in his [message for the Season of Creation](#), invites each of us to be transformed by the renewal of our “hearts, lifestyles, and public policies in an attempt to heal our only home,” and, in the words of this year’s theme for the celebration, to “let justice and peace flow.” As I write this, the Atlantic Ocean is reaching hot-tub temperature, and parts of the United States are experiencing record heat (again!), causing public health concerns. Floods, droughts, and wildfires are devastating many areas of the world. The CEO of a major airline recently warned that because of climate change, travelers should brace for even more of the delayed and canceled flights that have made flying so miserable lately.

“What profit would there be for one to gain the world and forfeit his life?” (MT 16:26). Often, prioritizing profits over caring for creation, including other human beings, has been a driver of environmental devastation and violence. Think of the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, the greenhouse gas emissions from big oil companies, massive global deforestation, and the violence, war, and destruction due to the extraction of minerals.

Our culture pressures us to “conform [ourselves] to this age” (Rom. 12:2) and “think not as God does, but as human beings” (MT 16:23). Pope Francis addresses our individual consumption and the misuse as well as “othering” of God’s creation as he urges us “to cooperate with God in his ongoing creation through positive choices...using resources with moderation and a joyful sobriety, disposing and recycling waste, and making greater use of available products and services that are environmentally and socially responsible” and so to renew “our relationship with creation so that we no longer see it as an object to be exploited but cherish it instead as a sacred gift from our creator.” Our Creator God has given each of us the capacity to creatively do what is ours to faithfully steward, protect, and affirm the sacredness of all life. FAN’s ongoing work on [Environmental Justice](#) is a good example.

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF  
FAN Supporter and former Board Member

### **Suggested Actions:**

Join FAN for the upcoming series of webinars “[Working for Environmental Justice](#).” The first in the series is on Wednesday, September 13. More details in the newsletter below.

### **Suggested Petitions:**

That we may use our God-given creativity to mitigate the damage we have done to God's creation, we pray...

For all those impacted by severe weather and climate change, especially the poor and most vulnerable, we pray...

### **Blessing for the products of nature (Courtesy of the [USCCB](#)):**

**Blessed are you, O God,  
Creator of the universe,  
who have made all things good  
and given the earth for us to cultivate.  
Grant that we may always use created things gratefully  
and share your gift with those in need,  
out of the love of Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.**

**Amen**

## **Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Register Now**

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!** Check out this [video invitation](#) from a group of parishioners of Immaculate Conception Parish in North Carolina (*pictured*). FAN is pleased to join with the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU) to create an exciting intergenerational gathering, where we will strengthen our ability to bring our collective Franciscan voice to bear on the challenges facing our communities and common home. **Early Bird pricing ends Sept. 4 and spaces are going fast. [Reserve your spot today.](#)**



With the urgency of climate change compounded by disproportionate effects on people of color and those in poverty, the conference will focus on embracing an advocacy response to these interconnected issues through the lens of the Franciscan tradition. FJC and non-FJC members are welcome. [Registration is open.](#)

## FAN Environmental Justice Webinar on New Mexico

Franciscan Action Network, the Franciscan Federation and the Order of Friars Minor Holy Name Province JPIC office are working together to raise awareness about- and advocacy on- [environmental justice](#), focusing on communities of color and low-wealth that are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. We invite you to participate in a series of 3 webinars in September, October and November to listen and learn about situations of ongoing environmental injustice in three distinct regions, and practice advocacy at multiple levels.



Join us on **September 13, 2023 at 4pm ET (1pm PT)** to hear New Mexico frontline advocates from Citizens Caring for the Future and NM/EI Paso Interfaith Power and Light discuss the need for stronger methane and water quality regulations, an end to new oil and gas leasing on public and ancestral lands, and how advocates outside the state can amplify local efforts.

[Register to attend here](#). This event will be recorded and all registrants will receive a link to it.

## Statement on Supporting the People of Guatemala

Last week, FAN Executive Director Michele Dunne, OFS participated in a delegation of accompaniment to the people and faith leaders of Guatemala during their presidential runoff election. The election was held on August 20 and anti-corruption candidate Bernardo Arévalo was elected with nearly 60% of the votes. See members of the delegation with Cardinal Alvaro Ramazzini, who invited the group, at right.



A [statement](#) from the delegation, which was organized by the [Root Causes Initiative](#) (a network of more than 300 civil and faith based organizations), contains observations from the trip and suggestions of how to support the Guatemalan people as they begin a hopeful but fragile new era. [Click here for more photos from the trip](#).

## Catholic Letter for Immigration Funding

Our friends at [NETWORK Lobby](#), [Kino Border Initiative](#), the [Hope Border Institute](#), and [Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns](#) are partnering to collect signatures on a [Catholic sign-on letter](#) to the Senate. The letter asks Congress to invest in programs that support immigrants and communities and divest

**10,000 CATHOLIC SIGNATURES**

Needed to tell Congress:

*Invest in programs that support immigrants and communities.*

*Divest from border militarization and criminalizing immigrants.*





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Currently, they are **halfway to their goal of 10,000 signatures** from both Catholic clergy and lay people. Please sign on if you haven't yet and forward this to your networks. **Signatures will be collected through the end of August.** [Click here to sign.](#)

## Plan to Celebrate the Season of Creation

Each year from September 1 to October 4, the Christian family unites for a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home. As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common call to care for creation. **We invite you to consider bringing your community together to celebrate the [Season of Creation](#).**



**Let Justice  
and Peace Flow**  
Season of Creation 2023

This year's Season of Creation theme is "**Let justice and peace flow.**" Get some ideas in the [Season of Creation Celebration Guide](#), which includes sections on advocacy, printable prayer cards, sample flyers and social media posts.

Laudato Si' Movement has put together brief [2023 SOC Advocacy Activity Guidelines](#), with easily accessible prayer-actions we can all take to pray for those who have power to act justly, especially with regards to international climate negotiations.

Additionally, the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative has developed this [Season of Creation Catholic Liturgical Guide](#) which includes materials for each Sunday's liturgies.

## Catholic Information Center Gallagher Talk Features Gerard Straub, OFS

The Catholic Information Center in Western Michigan will host their signature event, the [Gallagher Talk](#), where Gerard Straub, OFS will be this year's keynote speaker on **Thursday, September 28 at 7pm ET (4pm PT)**. Attendees can participate in person at the Center or online via Zoom. [Click here for more information and to register.](#)

Gerard Straub, OFS, is an award-winning author and filmmaker well known for his book, *The Sun & Moon Over Assisi*. His life is a journey of transformation that took him from the glamor of Hollywood to a slum in Port-au-Prince, Haiti where today he operates a home of hope and healing for 60 abandoned kids, the youngest of whom are still in diapers. Both *The Sunrise of the Soul* (2020) and his latest book, *Reading Thomas Merton and Longing for God in Haiti* (2022) are the fruit of an unexpected new life. [Read more.](#)

### 2023 Annual Gallagher Talk



**LONGING  
FOR GOD  
IN HAITI**

FEATURING GERARD STRAUB

THURSDAY, SEPT. 28, 7-8:30 PM ET  
CATHOLIC INFORMATION CENTER  
360 DIVISION AVE S, GRAND RAPIDS, MI

ATTEND ON SITE OR ONLINE