

Love is the Fulfillment of the Law

Although I would often like to escape from being my brother's keeper, the readings for the [Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) remind me that we are indeed responsible for one another. The Prophet Ezekiel warns that if I "do not speak out to dissuade the wicked from his way," I share in the guilt of the injustices that result from others' sins. Our gentle Jesus reminds me in Sunday's gospel passage from Matthew that when I speak up I must also be gentle—raise my concerns humbly and in private in order to "win over your brother," and share my concerns with others or in public only when private



engagement does not work. And keep praying for God's help throughout all of this! This is excellent guidance for personal relationships but also for peace and justice advocacy work: try to create and preserve relations of mutual respect as well as to keep channels of communication open, especially when there are differences on issues.

Continuing communication across differences often reminds me of my favorite aspect of music: harmony. Singing in harmony is almost always, in my opinion, more beautiful and emotionally resonant than singing in unison. Our human differences of opinion, temperament, expression, and taste are *not* just an unfortunate reality; those differences bring beauty and richness to our lives, if we can only experience them within a context of mutual respect and trust.

As we begin the Season of Creation 2023, there is also the matter of whether we are living lives in harmony with the magnificent created world in which God has placed us. In a fascinating passage from Pope Francis' [message](#) for the Season, the Holy Father bemoans the fact that our heartbeats, the heartbeat of creation, and that of God "do not beat in harmony; they are not harmonized in justice and peace." Too many of our sisters and brothers, the Pope says, are denied justice and peace, leading him to call on us to "heed our call to stand with the victims of environmental and climate injustice, and to put an end to the senseless war against creation."

FAN is working with the Franciscan Federation and the Order of Friars Minor to heed that call ([reiterated](#) by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops) through our new program, "[Working for Environmental Justice](#)." The series of educational webinars and related advocacy actions is designed to help Franciscans show solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are suffering disproportionate effects from environmental degradation, for example native Americans in [New Mexico](#) whose sacred lands have been targeted for oil and gas extraction or a majority Black community in [Pennsylvania](#) victimized by enormous waste disposal facilities.

In all of this work, and in everything I do, I must always ask if I am truly acting out of love—love for God's creation and for the victims of injustice as well as for those I see as the perpetrators of

injustice. Do I wish them not just well but do I wish them to flourish? Am I willing to make sacrifices so that they should be able to flourish? As St. Paul reminds in Sunday's reading, I can do right only when my actions are motivated truly by love because "love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law."

Michele Dunne, OFS
Executive Director

Suggested Action:

Consider [signing up](#) to become a FAN advocate for environmental justice during this Season of Creation

Suggested Petitions:

That we as individuals, as well as our communities, nation, and Church, might respond to Pope Francis' call to "transform our hearts, our lifestyles, and public policies to contribute to the mighty river of justice and peace in this Season of Creation," we pray.

Prayer of Commitment to Care for Creation ([USCCB](#))

We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have come to help protect God's creation.

We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty.

We have come to stand together against all threats to life.

We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God's creation: the sunrise and sunset, birds, flowers and trees, rainbows in the sky, the stars, the many forms of life in the forest.

We have come to listen to the "music of the universe"- water flowing over rocks, the wind, trees bending in the wind, raindrops pattering the roof.

We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of His creation, and we will try our best to answer God's call to reverence all that He has created.

Amen

Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Register Now

Early Bird discount ends TODAY! We invite you to 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.** FAN is pleased to join with

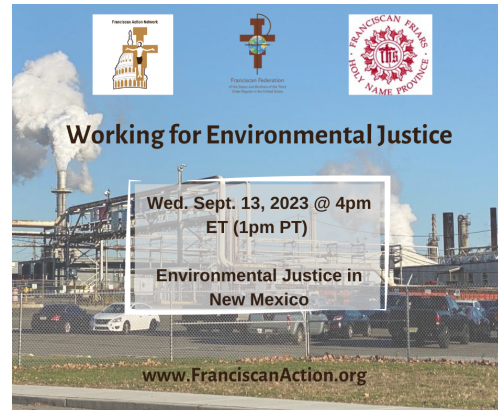


the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU) to create an exciting intergenerational gathering, where we will strengthen our ability to bring our authentic voices to bear on the challenges facing our communities and common home.

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 all others are welcome. Please [register here](#); spaces are limited.

Working for Environmental Justice: New Mexico Webinar

Please join FAN on **Wednesday September 13, 2023 from 4-5:15 pm ET (1-2:15 pm PT)** to learn about advocacy for environmental justice in the Permian Basin and Chaco Canyon regions of New Mexico. We will hear local advocates discuss the need for stronger methane and water quality regulations, and an end to new oil and gas leasing on public and ancestral lands. Attendees will learn 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.



Speakers will include **Sr. Joan Brown, OSF** from NM/EI Paso Interfaith Power and Light, and local advocates **Kayley Shoup, Terry Sloan, Jozee Dominguez Zuniga and Arcelia Isais-Gastelum**. FAN Creation Care Advocate Sr. Louise Lears, SC, will moderate the conversation and welcome your questions.

This webinar is the first in a new series, "[Working for Environmental Justice](#)," following our "[Confronting Environmental Racism](#)" series in 2022 and is cosponsored by the Franciscan Federation and the Order of Friars Minor/Holy Name Province/JPIC office. [Sign up here for updates and advocacy opportunities](#) related to Environmental Justice.

Ukraine: Peacebuilding Initiatives & Listening Session

FAN invites you to a [deep listening session](#) regarding the war in Ukraine on **Thursday Sept. 21**, the International Day of Peace, from **1-2pm ET (10-11am PT)** via Zoom. Using a synodal circle process, we will offer space for people to connect deeply with one another, share stories, and hear about the thoughts and feelings participants have regarding the war. Through this practice, we hope to deepen empathy and connection so we may move forward together in the ways of a just peace. FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy will lead the session. **Register to attend by** [clicking here](#).



As U.S. majority [public opinion](#) is shifting toward alternative approaches and ending the war, FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy has been meeting with the **U.S. State Department and**

USAID to educate officials and their colleagues on various peacebuilding and nonviolent resistance stories and reports. Additionally, Eli works with the **U.S. Institute of Peace and Orthodox Peace Fellowship** to support the dialogue between the different Orthodox communities in Ukraine.

The [Religious Leader letter](#) sent to Congress and the White House supporting Pope Francis and diplomatic initiatives is still being circulated. A committee has been created to mobilize the religious community for diplomacy and peacebuilding on behalf of a just peace. If you would like to join the committee, [let us know](#).

Finally, **save the date** and consider planning some local actions for the **Global Week of Action for Peace in Ukraine**: Sept. 30th-Oct. 8th. More details forthcoming.

March to End Fossil Fuels in New York City

On September 17, tens of thousands of people will gather outside the United Nations in New York City to demand that nations stop fossil fuel expansion, in anticipation of the first-of-its-kind [Climate Ambition Summit](#), hosted by the Secretary-General later that week..



According to the United Nations, fossil fuels are the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, which disproportionately affects those communities with the fewest resources. Our faith and Franciscan desire for justice compel us to act.

Join us on **Sunday, September 17 in New York City for the [March to End Fossil Fuels](#)**. FAN staff, along with a large Catholic contingent, will march in solidarity for a future where the spiritual connection between humanity and creation can flourish. After participating in a brief Interfaith Blessing with Greenfaith, we will march with other people of faith and goodwill to the United Nations, just three days before the [UN Climate Ambitions Summit](#), to ask nations to commit to a fossil-free future. Click [here to let us know you'll be there](#).

FAN Shows Up - March on Washington

An important part of advocacy for justice, peace, and creation is showing up for in-person actions, such as rallies, marches, and prayer vigils. Along with many other forms of advocacy, FAN staff and FAN members often participate in actions that align with our gospel and Franciscan values; at times FAN plans or cosponsors such events.



On August 26, FAN staff joined DC-area Franciscan Justice Circle members and hundreds of faith and civil rights advocates for the 60th Anniversary of the civil rights [March on Washington](#). We have updated our [FAN Shows Up webpage](#) and invite you to find more photos from this event and others we have participated in recently.

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The Southern California Franciscan Justice Circle has been meeting, praying and discerning over several months, all in a process inspired by [Laudato Si' Spirit](#), to create a [Laudato Si' Action Plan](#). The plan they made is not only for them to use but designed as a template for others, especially other Franciscan Justice Circles considering how God may be calling them to take actions in response to the cries of the earth and our neighbors who are suffering. If you've ever thought, "I want to participate in the spirit of Laudato Si but I don't know where to begin," this action plan can be a resource for you!

If you would like more information on starting or joining a Franciscan Justice Circle, [contact us](#).

