

Publication Date: October 24, 2023

Reflection Date: October 29, 2023 - [30th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Seeking a Christ-like Response to the Ugliness of War

Photo courtesy of [REUTERS](#)/Jonathan Ernst

What a heavy few weeks this has been for the world, since the October 7 attack in Israel and ensuing events. Although the readings for the [30th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) were chosen long before this conflict began, the selections are providential and speak powerfully to the conflict in Israel and Palestine. Before you begin reading, I invite you to take a deep breath, reflect on your innermost thoughts and heartaches, and come to this reflective reading with the full breadth of your heart's peace.



The first reading (Ex. 22:20-26) calls us to remember the divine humanity in each of us and our call, especially as Franciscans, to an empathetic response to suffering. God has uniquely created, shaped, and molded each of our souls; each one of infinitely more value than we can fathom. Nationality and religious tradition cannot take away from this value, especially to our Creator, but rather adds richness to our human dialogue and expands our minds to our anthropogenic global reality.

The second reading (1 Thes 1:5c-10) from Paul reminds us of this globalized reality and how, in the present age, it is not just the people with whom we share walls or property lines, but people of every nation who are our neighbors. Here we speak of God as our “rock of refuge” and “deliverer from the coming wrath.” We must confide in God to guide us to empathy for our neighbors, and act in advance of these trials of “coming wrath,” seeing the humanity in each person to prevent further violence. As He delivered us to peace, let us be deliverers of that same peace to all our neighbors.

St Francis was called to rebuild the church, and for those who follow his example this means preserving the church's foundation. The foundation, our community of global neighbors, is a diverse aggregate and sacred in its creation by our Father. We must preserve one another's lives, no matter the soil on which our feet land, and mourn over the soil of the graves where those who have died to violence rest.

The gospel reading from Matthew (22:34-40) calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves with empathy and a commitment to a Christ-like response. Christ meets us where we are, even in the ugliness of war; He sees hope in us and our actions. May we imitate His overflowing love and undying humility in our work to seek peace in the world, wherever it may be needed, and to approach these situations with hearts full of His Word.

Gabriela Martinez
Associate of Campaigns

Suggested Action:

Contact the White House and your representative, asking them to pursue a policy of peace-building and ceasefire in Israel and Palestine. [Click here](#) for more information.

Suggested Petitions:

For the war in Israel and Palestine, that the dead may be mourned in the peace of a ceasefire. We pray...

That we may see people of every land and soil as our brothers and sisters, as our neighbors who we must love with all our hearts, souls, and minds. We pray...

Prayer from Xavier University's Center for Faith & Justice:

**Give peace in our time, O good and gracious God,
that peace which, as your son Jesus Christ told us
and as we have experienced in these days,
is a peace which the world cannot give.**

**To world leaders grant the wisdom
to see beyond the boundaries of race, religion, and nation
to that common humanity that makes us all your children
and brothers and sisters to one another.**

Amen.

Take Action for Peace in Israel-Gaza

Please join other Catholics **TODAY, Tues Oct 24, in contacting the White House** in support of a ceasefire in Gaza. Please call between 11am and 3pm ET (8am and 6pm PT), using the [linked talking points](#) or your own points.

In addition, please consider joining in a day of fasting, penance, and prayer for peace on Friday Oct 27, as [called for](#) by Pope Francis.

FAN joined more than two dozen national Catholic organizations that sent a [letter](#) to President Biden, urging him to take the necessary steps to de-escalate the conflict in Israel-Palestine, including calling for a humanitarian ceasefire. Michele Dunne offered this comment: "Franciscan Action Network offers its heartfelt condolences and solidarity to Israelis and Palestinians in their tremendous suffering, and calls on the US government to take steps to foster peace and a rapid end to the violence. We pray for the immediate release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas as well as immediate cessation of Israeli bombing campaigns, which are taking a terrifying human toll in Gaza. We call on all parties to remember that further escalation, such as a ground invasion of Gaza, will only take them further away from the

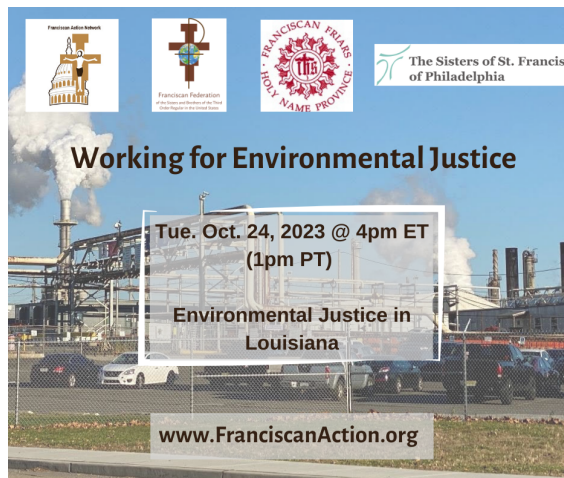


peace and reconciliation that Palestinians and Israelis ultimately need to reach.”

FAN staff also participated in several rallies for peace held in Washington DC in recent days. Watch our FAN Shows Up

Webinar: Working for Environmental Justice in Louisiana

Please join us **TODAY, October 24 at 4pm ET (1pm PT)** to learn how environmental activists in Louisiana are challenging the petrochemical industries in the area named “Cancer Alley,” an 85-mile stretch of land along the Mississippi River that has more than 150 petrochemical plants and refineries in areas where the majority of residents are both Black and lower income. Our speakers will be **Sharon and Shamyra Lavigne**, mother-daughter activists of RISE St. James, a faith-based, grassroots organization in Louisiana that works to defeat the proliferation of petrochemical industries in St. James Parish, Louisiana, where 32 petrochemical plants are currently located. There is still time to [register to attend by clicking here](https://www.FranciscanAction.org). **This event will be recorded and all registrants will receive a link.**



Related to this, Interfaith Power and Light is hosting a sign-on letter they will deliver to the State Department in advance of COP28, an international climate summit held this year in Dubai from November 30-December 12. The letter to President Biden calls on the U.S. government to lead by example by committing to bold and just climate action at COP28. [Click here to add your name.](#)

Results of Congressional Visits

FAN's first [Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference](#) was developed with a goal of encouraging participants, including young adults, to advocate on issues that concern them, both locally in their communities and nationally on Capitol Hill.

On Monday, October 16, more than 60 of our conference participants went to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to tell our members of Congress how much we care about our common home and environmental justice. We met with 15 offices in the House and Senate raising our concerns about two pieces of legislation: the **Justice for Black Farmers Act** of the Farm Bill (S. 96, H.R. 1167) and the **Environmental Justice for All Act** (S. 919, H.R. 1705). Each of these bills reflects our moral principle that all people have the right to good nutrition, pure air, clean water, and a healthful environment.



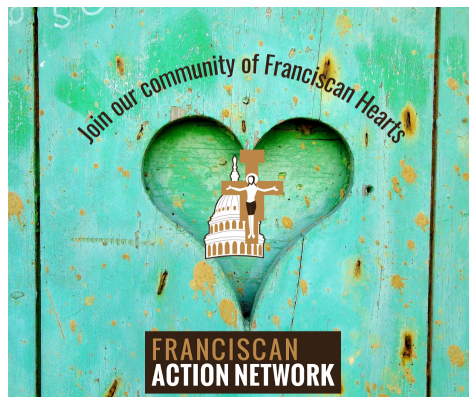
So far two Representatives' offices have informed us they **will cosponsor** at least one of these bills. This action was taken as a direct result of the visits made by our groups and is a terrific example of what can happen when we raise our concerns with our elected officials. Our voices matter!

If you haven't yet had a chance to reach out to your members of Congress through our [action alert](#), we invite you to take a few moments to [do so today](#), as you'll be echoing the same message that our conference participants brought to their Congress members last week. Together we can make a difference! Thank you for your support and advocacy.

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.



Dia de los Muertos Virtual Vigil

The Immigration Law & Justice (ILJ) Network is coordinating a virtual vigil to honor the migrants who died while crossing the border this past year.

[Click here to register for the Dia de los Muertos Virtual Vigil](#) on **Nov. 2 at 3pm ET (12p PT)**. People at four ILJ sites that receive buses of migrants from Texas will read the names of those who lost their lives trying to cross the southern border, the [world's deadliest land migration route](#).



Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

There are **new Franciscan Justice Circles** forming in several areas of the country. If you are interested in getting connected with any of the following, please contact FAN staff, [Nora Pfeiffer](#):

- Chicago Area
- Detroit Area



- Central Pennsylvania (Columbia, Montour, Northumberland Counties)
- El Paso, TX Area

Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

Connecticut - Rhode Island FJC: Wed. Oct. 25 at 7pm Eastern by zoom

Cleveland-area FJC: Wed. Oct. 25 at 7pm Eastern by zoom

E. Wisconsin FJC: Thurs. Oct. 26 at 4pm Central by zoom

Central Indiana FJC: Fri. Oct. 27 at 1pm Eastern by zoom

Virtual FJC (with limited mobility): Thurs. Nov. 2 at 2:00pm Eastern / 11:00am Pacific

Richmond, VA-area FJC: Thurs. Nov. 2 at 12:00pm Eastern In Person

To learn more or connect with any of the Circles, please [reach out to FAN staff](#).