

Publication Date: December 5, 2023

Reflection Date: December 10, 2023 - Second Sunday of Advent

Prepare the way of the Lord

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Our readings on the [Second Sunday of Advent](#) call each of us to reflect on how we are called to “herald the good news” (Is. 40:9) and encourage hope amidst the pervasive violence in our world.



How is God calling you to “comfort, give comfort” to the thousands of people in Ukraine, Russia, the Middle East, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan and on the streets of our own nation who need to hear that our nonviolent Prince of Peace “proclaims peace to his people” (Ps 85:9)?

How does God call you to transform the cultural traditions and the structural policies that strip the dignity from so many people throughout our nation and world? In [Laudate Deum](#), Pope Francis states, “there are no lasting changes without cultural changes, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and there are no cultural changes without personal changes.” (para 70). Pope Francis says that even though small individual changes “may not produce a notable effect from the quantitative standpoint, we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society” (para 71). What you do matters to society at large, to our nation, and to the world.

Every kind word in response to unkindness, every prayer for those who act with violence, and every action we take out of respect for people and the Earth helps create the path of hope and peace. Every text, e-mail, or letter to a legislator, every petition we sign, or every call or visit we make to our legislators helps create the path to the just, nonviolent, and peaceful world that, as Christians, we call the “Kingdom of God.”

God is calling each of us to “prepare the way of the Lord” this Advent. What is your unique way to be the John the Baptist of today, to “make straight his paths” (Mk: 1:3) for others? What actions will you take today to create the path?

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF
Supporter and Former Board Member

Suggested Action:

Join other Franciscan hearted people in prayer, action, and advocacy by joining a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) in your area. To find out more information, please click [here](#).

Suggested Petitions:

God, please show me what is mine to do in helping to create the path to peace in my neighborhood and give me the courage to follow through, knowing that you are with me each step of the way.

Loving God, we ask for your comfort and sense of hope to all children, women and men living in war torn areas of the world.

Prayer – St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)

**Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.**

Amen

Give Generously to our Year-End Appeal

The Franciscan Action Network staff have worked hard this year with dedicated members of our network to educate and advocate for economic and racial justice as well as gun violence prevention. Through dedicated partnerships we plan on expanding this work in 2024 and we need your help to do it!

Click here to [watch a brief video](#) from Sr. Maria Orlandini explaining our work on gun violence prevention this year.



Please [give generously to our Year End appeal](#) and partner with us in this important work.

Advent Meditation with FAN each Monday

Yesterday, FAN hosted the first in a three week virtual meditation. Sr. Maria Orlandini led participants in some time of reflection on the scripture and quiet meditation for the first week of Advent.



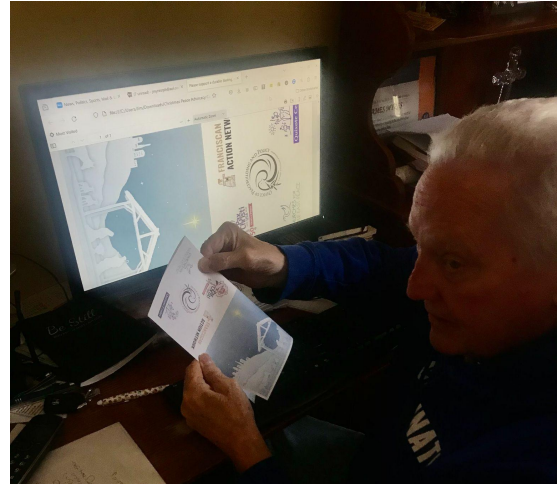
Advent can be a busy time of the year and fortunately, there are many prayer resources we can draw upon. We invite you to join us for the next two weeks on **Monday, December 11 and 18 from 12:30-1:00pm ET (9:30-10:00am PT)**. [Register to attend by clicking here](#).

Send a Christmas Peace Advocacy Card

Cincinnati FJC Member Jim Myers, OFS

FAN and other faith based organizations seek ways to build peace through nonviolent advocacy. This Advent, we encourage you to join us in **sending a [Christmas Peace Advocacy card](#) to our senior elected officials, urging U.S. support for a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and a just peace for the Holy Land.**

Find the instructions for folding and mailing the card by [clicking here](#). We encourage you to print and **send these as soon as possible** because physical mail to government offices takes extra days to be processed.



Gun Violence Prevention Advocacy Week

This week begins a week of advocacy focused on gun violence prevention. Franciscan Action Network is a sponsor of the 11th Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence in Washington, D.C. Search [here](#) for a #EndGunViolence vigil near you and be sure to register your local event if you haven't.

Every year near the “tragiversary” of the Sandy Hook massacre, national gun violence prevention organizations are urged to sign a coalition letter developed by [Newtown Action Alliance](#). The letter will be hand delivered to ALL Members of Congress by gun violence survivors who are in DC for the National Vigil and the Gun Violence Prevention Conference.



FAN has signed onto the [2023 letter](#) which urges Congress to pass:

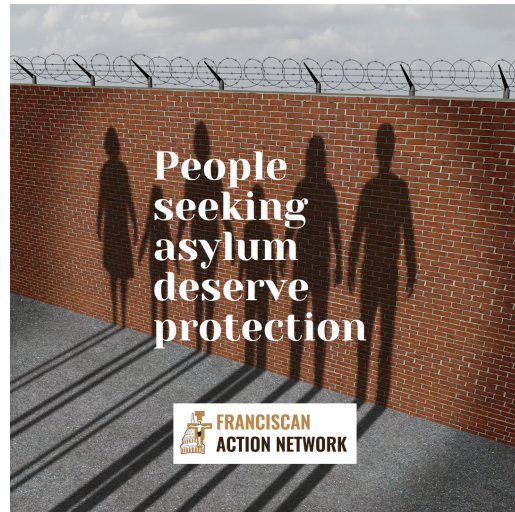
1. [S.25](#) and [H.R.698](#) — Assault Weapons Ban of 2023 (Feinstein/Cicilline-McBath)
2. [S.173](#) and [H.R.660](#) — Ethan's Law (Blumenthal/DeLauro)
3. [S.2048](#) and [H.R.4184](#) — Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act (Blumenthal/Schiff)
4. [S.494](#) — Background Check Expansion Act (Murphy), [H.R.715](#) — Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2023 (Fitzpatrick), and [H.R.2403](#) — Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2023 (Clyburn)
5. [S.2638](#) and [H.R.5003](#) — Break the Cycle of Violence Act (Booker/Horsford)
6. [S.1026](#) and [H.R.2390](#) — Gun Violence Prevention Research Act of 2023 (Markey/Slotkin)

Additionally, the [Nuns Against Gun Violence](#) have developed a prayer card in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Click the links to download and print.

Urge your Senators to Safeguard Asylum

FAN joins other immigrant advocates concerned that asylum is under imminent threat. A bipartisan group of Senators is considering a deal to pass foreign aid assistance in exchange for extreme, permanent changes to U.S. immigration and asylum law. This tradeoff would destroy asylum protections for people seeking safety and would increase chaos at the US-Mexico border. Calls to Senators are strongly needed, urging them NOT to trade asylum for emergency funding. **Calls to Democrats are especially important.**

Welcome With Dignity offers this script. If you don't know your Senator's phone number, call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be transferred to your Senator's office.



Sample Script: Hello, my name is (NAME) and I am alarmed by efforts to gut asylum protections in exchange for funding for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. I urge Senator (NAME) to reject any proposal that would take away the right to seek asylum or make it harder to seek protection. It is unacceptable to agree to anti-immigrant proposals that undermine our values as a country. (Can add: As a person of faith I urge you to protect the right to seek asylum.)

Feel free to make the wording your own as long as the ask is clear: protect the right to seek asylum.

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

[Franciscan Justice Circles](#) (FJC) are local affinity groups for people interested in living with Franciscan values and acting together with others in the areas of social and environmental needs around us. At their upcoming meeting, the **Rochester, NY Circle** members will welcome a local gun violence survivor and advocate who is getting involved in policy-making, as they continue connecting with, listening and acting with others in their community.



Upcoming FJC meetings:

St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Tues. Dec. 5 at 11:30am EST In Person

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. Dec. 5 at 12:00pm EST on zoom

Kansas FJC: Tues. Dec. 5 at 7:00pm CST on zoom

Metro DC-Area FJC: Sat. Dec. 9 at 10:00am EST In Person

Richmond, VA-Area FJC: Mon. Dec. 11 at 7:00pm EST on zoom

Cleveland-Area FJC: Tues. Dec. 12 at 7:00pm EST on zoom

DE Valley FJC: Tues. Dec. 12 at 7:00pm EST on zoom

Monthly National FJC Call: Wed. Dec. 13 at 1:00pm PST / 4:00pm EST on zoom

Northern CA FJC: Wed. Dec. 13 at 7:00pm PST on zoom

Virtual FJC (for those w/ limited accessibility): Thurs. Dec. 14 at 11:00am PST / 2:00pm EST on zoom

Rochester, NY FJC: Thurs. Dec. 14 at 3:30pm EST on zoom

SoCal FJC: Thurs. Dec. 14 at 6:00pm PST on zoom

Please [contact us](#) to get connected to any of these Franciscan Justice Circles, or to find out more.