

## Lean Toward Light

Image by [Gerd Altmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Days are growing longer. Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday with longer evening light and darker mornings. In the [gospel for the fourth Sunday of Lent](#), John says “the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light . . . But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.”



There is good darkness and evil darkness, good light and destructive light. Nights are dark so that our bodies can rest and sleep; there is darkness of the womb where human life grows and darkness of soil where seed plants take root. There is deliberate darkness of mind, heart, and spirit which covets power, wealth, and hate erupting into violence. There is light of dawn, sunshine to nurture growing things, light of candles, fireworks, and lightbulbs. There is the frightening light of exploding bombs in Ukraine and the Middle East, searing destructive light of atomic and hydrogen bombs dropped on Japan, light of forest fires devouring forests and homes. May we be grateful for good darkness and light, and engage in works grounded in Truth.

John reminds us (3:16) that “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son . . . to be the Light of the world.” How do we come to Jesus, THE Light of the world? By living the truth, by being motivated by love. It sounds clear and simple, but in a world, in a country, where lies and misinformation often obscure truth, where hatred and fear can poison the atmosphere, the way is challenging. As we continue our Lenten journey, may we lean toward the Light, discern and live truth, and ask for grace to love even those who would have us dwell in darkness.

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF  
FAN Associate Director

### **Suggested petition:**

That we identify false narratives and articulate true narratives, let us pray . . .

### **Suggested action:**

Bread for the World's Offering of Letters this weekend will again focus on aspects of the Farm Bill, including equity for Puerto Ricans, who do not have access to SNAP benefits although they are US citizens. Instead, Puerto Rico has the Nutrition Assistance Program, a block grant that has lower, capped levels. Congress should give authority to the government of Puerto Rico to operate SNAP. Ask your senators and representatives to support the Puerto Rico Nutrition Fairness Act (HR 253/S949) and the Closing the Meal Gap Act (HR 3037/S 1336). Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121.

**Prayer/Poem: Leaning Toward Light by Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF**

Like the plant in a winter window,  
lean toward the light.  
In the gloom of school massacres,  
lean toward the Light.  
In the dark of racist rants,  
lean toward the Light.  
In the shadows of democracy demeaned,  
lean toward the Light.  
In our fears, frustrations, and pains  
feel the Light  
rising slowly on the horizon of spring dawn.

## Dialogue with Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace

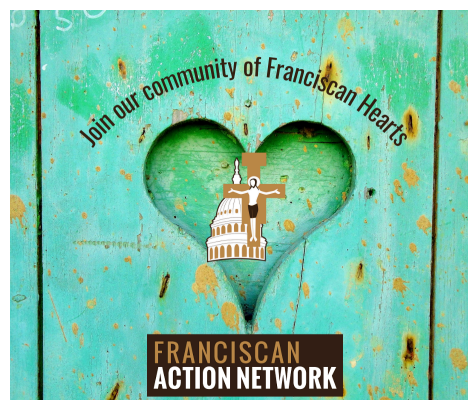
On **Thursday, March 14 at 3pm ET (12pm PT)** Franciscan Action Network will host a [Dialogue with Palestinian and Israeli Bereaved Families for Peace](#) via Zoom. The event will feature two speakers from the Holy Land, one Israeli and one Palestinian, who are members of the [Parents Circle – Families Forum](#). They will share their personal stories of loss and discuss how they continue to work together for peace and reconciliation even under current challenging circumstances. The 35-minute presentation will be followed by another 30 minutes of Q&A. Read more about our speakers by [clicking here](#). The event will be recorded and sent to everyone who [registers to attend](#).



## Heartfelt Thanks to our Sustaining Donors

**Giving monthly is the best way 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 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 our collective Franciscan voice is heard in our capital and across the country.



## Awakening to Environmental Justice Workshops

FAN is excited to bring our network a 2-part workshop series dedicated to building environmental justice research skills. This 2-part Virtual Workshop series, "[Awakening to](#)



[Environmental Justice](#),” will be held on April 2 & 9 at 4p-5:15p ET (1p-2:15p PT). Join us to learn how to research cases of environmental injustice in your state and how to respectfully engage with local activists.

[Click here to register.](#)

## Anti-Trafficking Prayer Service and Lenten Action

The USCCB's next monthly Anti-Trafficking prayer service is **March 8 at 2pm ET (11am PT) on Zoom** and will focus on the **dangerous conditions under which trafficking at sea can flourish**. Join the monthly prayer services at this recurring [St. Josephine Bakhita Prayer Service Zoom Link](#).



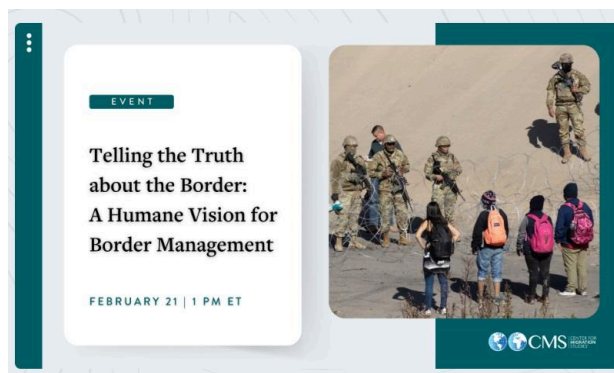
The virtually unregulated fishing industry in many countries, coupled with the global demand for cheap seafood, creates lawless conditions at sea under which maritime trafficking is allowed to flourish. The committee on Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB developed a video reflection focused on the Labeling for Lent campaign: [Watch on YouTube](#).

During Lent, there are two easy ways that you can help:

- **Educate yourself:** Take an opportunity to study the [Solidarity with Seafarers toolkit](#), which has prayer resources and background information on this problem. Share it with friends!
- **Join the Postcard Campaign:** Please join in the Labeling for Lent Campaign where advocates are sending postcards to The Kroger Co. and Whole Foods Market to ask that policies, procedures and products are not tainted with slave labor. [Postcards are available for download](#). All you need to do is fill out your information, post a stamp, and drop them in the mail.

## Recording: Telling the Truth about the Border

On February 21, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) hosted a webinar and discussion, [Telling the Truth about the Border: A Humane Vision for Border Management](#). Experts from the US-Mexico border spoke about the realities along the border and the human consequences of US border enforcement policy. They also reacted to a recent failed border agreement in Congress, and offered more humane and effective ways to manage migration at the US-Mexico border moving forward.



Speakers included the Most Reverend Mark J. Seitz, Bishop of El Paso; Joanna Williams, Executive Director, Kino Border Initiative; Guerline M. Jozef, Founder and Executive Director,

Haitian Bridge Alliance; and Dylan Corbett, Executive Director, Hope Border Institute. [Watch the recording by clicking here.](#)

Take action and [urge your elected officials](#) to robustly fund key refugee support efforts and reject any attempts to dismantle the U.S. asylum system.

## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF (*pictured*) is a Felician Sister of St. Francis in Connecticut and a member of the CT-RI [Franciscan Justice Circle](#). Recently she testified before the Connecticut Members of the Appropriations Committee in support of protecting the funds in the Governor's budget adjustments allocated to fund gun violence prevention grants and personnel in FY2025.



With a limit of three minutes to speak, she was able to report on the success rate of intervention programs in directly reducing gun violence in hard hit neighborhoods and advocate for a local violence prevention center. This type of advocacy can be intimidating but Sr. Maryann got help with preparation and on what to expect on the day of testifying from a state-level group, CT Against Gun Violence. She would do it again and encourages others to advocate in this way. Thank you for your courage and peace-building advocacy, Sr. Maryann!

Please contact [FAN staff](#) to connect to one of our 20+ [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) or find out more about forming one near you.