

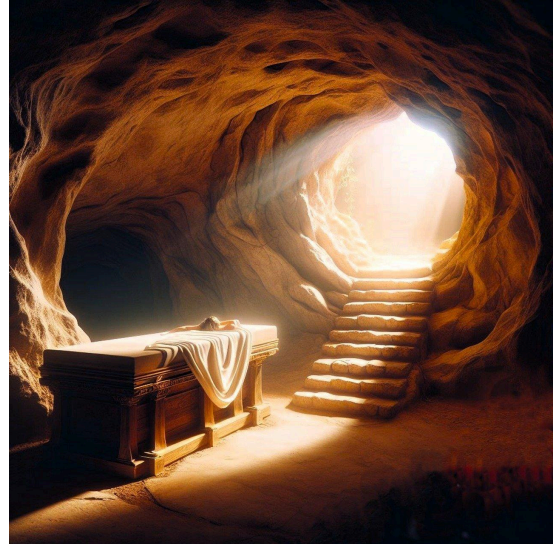
Publication Date: March 26, 2024

Reflection Date: March 31, 2024 - Easter Sunday

Continuing conversion into the vision of God

Image by [Arnie Bragg](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In the first reading for [Easter Sunday](#), Peter preaches on the life, work, and death of Jesus. He says, “he commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). While every person is not given the gift of evangelization as Peter was, each of us are called to testify to how Jesus is present in our own lives. In my own life, my husband and I committed to bringing up our three girls in the church, teaching them the goodness and mercy God has shown us. I continue my personal testimony through my work at Franciscan Action Network, incorporating the gospel and teachings of St. Francis in all of the communications, connecting them to the advocacy work we do.



The Easter gospel reading is the familiar story of the apostles finding the tomb of Jesus empty. As I read through it, the mentions of Jesus’ burial clothes stood out to me. What is so important about them, I wondered? In doing some research, I read a [commentary](#) that compared the grave clothes to a cocoon that transformed Jesus’ body. This resonated with me deeply as I truly believe that to follow Jesus, we must be transformed. While that sounds daunting, I take peace from St. Francis’ teaching about continuous conversion. To transform can seem daunting, as transformation suggests a big change. However, St. Francis saw his entire life as a continuing conversion into the vision of God, which is much easier for me to accept.

Francis saw his life as a continuous conversion from sin to a life lived in gratitude for God’s love. Many described the conversion of Clare from “the good to the better.” The Franciscan life today remains one of on-going conversion in which Christ continues to invite us to be more like him and we continue to open our hearts to this invitation. There is always an unfinished quality to this conversion. In this Easter season, may we go forth striving for continuous conversion of ourselves into the vision of God, as Francis did.

Janine Walsh
Communications Coordinator

Suggested Action:

Learn about [the conversion of St. Francis](#) and consider how you can open your heart to conversion this Easter season.

Suggested Petitions:

For a willingness to experience continuous conversion in our lives, we pray...

For the strength and courage to bring this conversion of ourselves into our external lives through advocacy, we pray...

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, you call us all to live virtuously and to follow the teachings of your son, Jesus. Help us to look into the broken areas of our lives and ask for your healing. Help us take steps that will guide us toward your plan for our life. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen

Next Week: Awakening to Environmental Justice Workshops

NEXT WEEK on **April 2 & 9 at 4pm ET (1pm PT)** Franciscan Action Network is hosting our new training workshops, "[Awakening to Environmental Justice](#)." If environmental justice is one of your passions but you're not sure how to go about researching and getting involved with local organizers, we urge you to register for this unique workshop opportunity. [Click here to register](#). We encourage you to send this information and graphic to advertise in your community!

On **April 2**, FAN staff will demonstrate how to research cases of environmental injustice with online census data, EPA databases, and other publicly-available sources to narrow the focus of your search to your broader community. All the websites and demonstration tools will be made into a guide available for you to practice on your own.

On **April 9**, Secular Franciscan and FAN supporter Carolyn Townes will join us to offer best practices when reaching out to activist groups and communities in your area, providing the skills needed to make respectful, non-tokenizing connections. We will also offer a short, voluntary help session for 30 minutes immediately following this second workshop to troubleshoot any questions you may have encountered in your research.



US Allows Ceasefire Resolution Following Protests

As FAN and many other faith groups continue to call for an end to US support for the Gaza war, the United States for the first time allowed a [ceasefire resolution to pass in the UN Security Council](#) on March 25, abstaining after having vetoed previous resolutions. While the resolution may not be respected by the warring parties, it is the most important



signal to date of differences between the US and Israeli governments about the Gaza war and particularly about the possibility of an assault on Rafah, where more than 1 million Palestinian refugees are sheltering.

In our most recent action, FAN co-hosted a prayer vigil on March 21, the final action of the [Lenten Ceasefire Campaign](#). National faith leaders made appeals for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and led prayers and lamentations with approximately 75 in attendance on Capitol Hill. After the planned remarks at the outdoor vigil, the group made its way to the Russell Senate Office Building to carry out a nonviolent witness. Standing in the formation of a cross in the center of the building's rotunda, activists sang out phrases such as "Food not war," "Children are dying in Gaza," and "No more bombing hospitals," and 12 were arrested by U.S. Capitol Police for nonviolent civil disobedience. Please watch a news clip showing how the nonviolent action accidentally disrupted a [Fox News interview](#) with a US Senator.

Christians for Ceasefire are now planning to continue the campaign after Easter with calls for a permanent ceasefire, release of all hostages, cessation of offensive weapons deliveries, immediate humanitarian relief, accountability for harms, ending occupation, and a just peace for the Holy Land.

Good Friday Virtual Way of the Cross

This Friday, March 29, Franciscan Action Network is involved in the [Virtual Good Friday Way of the Cross for Peace & Justice](#) Presented by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns. Join us online via Zoom at 12pm ET (9am PT) for an opportunity to reflect on the ways we have broken our covenant with God at the expense of other persons and creation. Each station will focus on a different economic and ecological challenge or sign of hope for our times. People of all faiths are welcome. Register to attend on [Zoom here](#). Watch the live stream on [YouTube here](#).



Thank You Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Franciscan Action Network is extremely grateful for the ongoing support of its institutional members, the Franciscan communities who founded FAN to be a collective Franciscan voice for justice, peace, and creation.



This week, we honor the work of the [Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia](#). FAN staff members Sr. Marie Lucey and Sr. Maria Orlandini are both members of this community, as is FAN board member Sr. Kathy Dougherty. Their dedication to FAN's work is evident in the passion they show. The community of sisters and their companions "strive to live in loving relationship and service with all people and creation." We at FAN are grateful to be the beneficiaries of this mission.

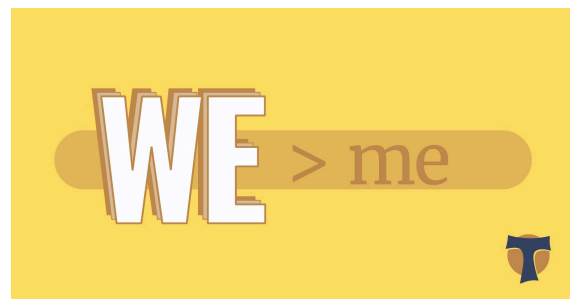
Global Climate Action: the UN and Pope Francis at COP28

The Laudato Si' Center for Integral Ecology at Siena College hosted a [webinar](#) on March 22 to discuss the most recent U.N. Climate Change conference meeting in Dubai, known as COP28. Presentations included an overview of COP meetings, some of the specific achievements and challenges, and prospects for making serious progress for the sake of future generations. Additionally, Br. Ed Tverdek, OFM discussed the direct link between Laudato Si' and Laudate Deum, two letters of Pope Francis addressed to the world community and the ethical and spiritual dimensions as they relate to justice on behalf of the poor and the planet. [Watch the recording here.](#)



Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

The **Rochester, NY Franciscan Justice Circle** hosted two guest speakers at their March meeting in order to learn more about the experiences of people immigrating to the U.S., both at the border and once they are living in the interior. FAN immigration advocacy associate Merwyn De Mello and a policy analyst at Hope Border Institute shared stories and perspectives on the support offered at the southern border, what happens once people cross the border, accompaniment within the country, challenges, and policies impacting each part of an immigrant's journey. It was an opportunity to hear perspectives difficult to find in mainstream media and invited the FJC members to further encounter and consider how to be in solidarity with families in transit and seeking stability.



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