

Publication Date: April 9, 2024

Reflection Date: April 14, 2024 - Third Sunday of Easter

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## Repent to Receive God's Joy

The [Third Sunday in Easter](#) is a time of great rejoicing for Christ has risen from the dead. Hallelujah! It is spring and there is new life all around us. Hallelujah! And yet this week's readings have a focus on sin and repentance, suffering and righteousness. For example, we read this from the book of Acts 3:17/19:



"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers...Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out."

Now clearly repentance is a gift from God and I appreciate it as the best and probably only way I can move forward when I am stuck in maladaptive behaviors. But why does the focus on the death of Christ and his rising from the dead in Peter's words, and later the story from Luke's Gospel, mean that we should repent? Perhaps God knows that we will be blind to his gift of joy without repentance? Luke 24:41 says that in his way: "While in their joy they were disbelieving." Joy is a gift for believers. We cannot truly believe and have a strong faith without repentance. So, what do we moderns have to repent?

An awful lot. In Jesus' day there was injustice and suffering. Today there is much more, of a particular kind. While we have made some progress addressing slavery and the abuse of those who are different than we are, I think we have only transferred that slavery and abuse to the non-human world. Our destruction of God's creation is a blight which is certainly worthy of repentance.

Thus my prayer for today is that we can live in the joy made possible by Jesus rising from death. This requires repentance and then action to bring the promised joy from Jesus to ALL living beings. That means that we too must be healers like Jesus, like the Apostles, but in the way that our age demands: to heal the earth and to stop the extinction of any life that God created and loves. This is one way we can glorify God during the Easter season.

Gordon Kubaneck, P. Eng.  
Third Order Society of St. Francis and Writer

### **Suggested Actions:**

This week, consider healing a small portion of God's earth around your home or in your community. Perhaps weed a garden or plant a new native sapling, using that action to cultivate your awareness of broader environment issues that need addressing.

Join FAN's second webinar on "[Awakening to Environmental Justice](#)" (first one is available on [YouTube](#) to catch up) or join our list of environmental justice advocates to get ideas about how you can take action in your own community.

**Suggested Petitions:**

May we care for all God's creatures with repentance for our sins against creation, we pray...  
May our hearts be open to the joy made possible by the gift of Jesus rising from the dead, we pray...

**Prayer (Adapted from [An Easter Prayer](#))**

**As we greet the signs in nature around us: of spring once again regaling us in bloom, in the songs of returning birds and fields soon to be planted, we give you praise for an even greater sign of new life: the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that we especially celebrate at this time. As we celebrate, we also dare to ask for your grace that we may live the promise given to us, by imitating the life of Jesus in reaching out to the poor, the marginalized, the least among us, as we strive to be neighbor to all those we meet. Change our lives, change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever.**

**Amen.**

## **Today: Awakening to Environmental Justice Part 2**

Today, **April 9 at 4pm ET / 1pm PT**, Franciscan Action Network will present **part two of our Awakening to Environmental Justice workshops.**

This afternoon, Carolyn Townes, OFS, will guide us in how to reach out to grassroots environmental advocates in a respectful manner of solidarity. You don't want to miss it! In our first workshop on April 2, FAN Associate of Campaigns Gabby Martinez demonstrated several websites useful in researching data on communities subject to environmental injustice. Both the research and people skills given in these workshops will help you to hone in on specific polluters and to support actions community members are taking.



**There is NO NEED to register again, the Zoom link is the same as last week's and a reminder email will be sent out beforehand.** Didn't see the first workshop? That's okay; there is still time to [register](#) if you would like to attend today and the [recording](#) of the first workshop is available!

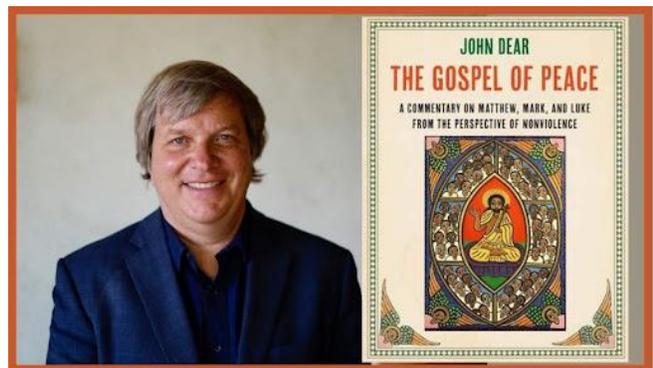
## **Peace Economy Project Webinar**

FAN Executive Director Michele Dunne will join the Peace Economy Project as a guest panelist for a transformative online webinar, "[Transitioning to a Peace Economy: Pathways and Perspectives](#) on **April 11, 2024, at 12pm ET / 9am PT**. This session will explore aspects of moving towards a global economy that cherishes peace over militarization, sustainability over exploitation, and justice over inequality. [Read more and register by clicking here](#).



## John Dear Book Launch and Signing

Please join Franciscan Action Network and the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land for a launch of [The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence](#) by Rev. John Dear on **Wednesday May 15 at 7 pm** in person at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, DC.



Don't miss this opportunity to hear John Dear's compelling teaching about the essential message of Jesus about nonviolence, as presented in his new commentary on the synoptic Gospels. There will be an opportunity for discussion with Fr. John and copies of the book will be available for purchase. [RSVP to attend in person by clicking here](#).

## Water-Wise Calendar for Earth Month from Six Franciscan Communities

The Midwest Franciscan Justice Promoters have released a special calendar for April 2024 entitled "[Flowing Forward: A Water-Wise Earth Month Calendar](#)." Developed by Franciscan sisters from six congregations (all Institutional Members of FAN) spanning Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, this calendar seeks to raise awareness about water conservation, justice, and sustainability efforts.

The title "Flowing Forward" embodies the essence of progress and movement towards a more water-conscious future. As Catholics and Franciscans, we are in relationship with our Sister water, which sustains life throughout the world. With a central focus on water protection, the calendar serves as a timely reminder of the importance of safeguarding our planet's most precious resource. Midwest Franciscan Justice Promoters invite you to [view, explore, and share the calendar](#) throughout the month of April 2024.



## Earth Day Resource from Catholic Climate Covenant

The 2024 Earth Day resource from Catholic Climate Covenant is "[Healing Our Throwaway Culture: A Focus on Plastics](#)." The program focuses on the growing problem of plastic pollution and complements the secular Earth Day theme of "Planet vs. Plastics." The one-hour program is designed to help communities learn about how plastic production, consumption, and disposal are impacting human and planetary health, and offers strategies for personal, community, and systemic actions. Fill out the form on this [website](#) to receive all the program materials.



## Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

Members of the **NYC-Area Franciscan Justice Circle** who are also part of their parish Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Committee, are actively organizing a Care for Creation Fair on April 20-21 at Holy Name of Jesus - St. Gregory the Great parish in New York City. The Fair will focus on various aspects of ways to better "care for the earth and care for the poor" as Pope Francis encouraged us all to do in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Many groups will be there, including ones that promote care for the environment, environmental justice, fair trade, food justice/hunger initiatives, homeless assistance, migrant assistance, restorative justice, nonviolence/peacekeeping, public safety and civic responsibility. At the Fair, the Circle members will also be sharing information about the Franciscan Justice Circle, inviting visitors to get involved.



Continuing with past public health advocacy at the state level, the NYC-Area Circle is considering their current advocacy strategy in relation to the Predatory Marketing Prevention Act which passed the NY State Senate but needs to get through the State Assembly. The bill concerns sugar content in soft drinks and food from major corporate chains, and the impacts they have on people's health.

To connect with any of our 20+ [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) or to find out more about starting one, please contact FAN staff, [Nora Pfeiffer](#).