

Publication Date: April 23, 2024

Reflection Date: April 28, 2024 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Jesus: Fully God, Fully Human

In the readings for the [Fifth Sunday of Easter](#), we are reminded of the mind-blowing reality that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. This great mystery of faith is one which constantly baffles me.

The apostles were evidently intimidated by this too. How is it that they, or any of us, could be worthy to meet someone who did the unthinkable and *rose from the dead*?

But in the first reading (Acts 9:26-31), Barnabas makes every effort to get the apostles to see Jesus' perfectly human side. He shows us how Christ, in his human presence, understands and intimately knows the struggles of a human being on Earth. Despite the fact that He was also God, Jesus was just another human being; another human being who walked, talked, and lived in community. Go up, shake His hand, meet Him, get to know Him; He has an epic story to tell!



So this fully human, fully divine Jesus from that little town in Galilee is also our friend, or at least we can get to know Him as such. In the second reading (1 Jn 3:18-24), we are told how to be good friends. Sure it's nice to have people in your life to bounce ideas off of and talk to, but when it comes to our human reality of having our bad days, would you show up for Jesus when He was sick, depressed, or hurt? Or would you simply be a fair weather friend?

I am alluding to seeing Jesus, our friend, in every person we know. And if you can't see Him in others, can you see Christ in yourself during your lowest moments? "Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us, is from the Spirit he gave us" (Jn 3:24).

As we make our way toward Pentecost, we are called to act, rather than to keep humanity in cyclic suffering. Within the existing structures of our society, we are called *not only* to serve our neighbors (which I call "treatment") but also the all-important work of prevention as an act of faith through peaceful advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels.

I will finish with a quote from Colin Martinez Longmore, from a presentation at the [Georgetown Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life](#): "If the God you worship is for everything you're for, and against everything you're against, you're probably worshiping yourself." Let this be a reminder to push our God-given human intellect to ask, "What is the common good of ALL God's holy people?" Let us push ourselves into the sometimes awkward and uncomfortable situations of being active, good- AND bad-weather friends of the world. We do this through joining with and talking to our community members as well as elected representatives, knowing that they are just as human as Christ Himself, and that He's right there with us along the way while we act as His hands in the world.

Gabriela Martinez

Suggested Action:

Spend a few minutes today thinking about what suffering in the world makes you uncomfortable and where you might have become complacent about it. Channel the gift of Christ’s friendly spirit of action by doing a simple internet search on this issue in your area or state to see what community advocates are working on and how you can get involved.

Suggested Petitions:

For the courage to stand up and express our views on key issues constructively, we pray...
For the humility to listen to those directly affected by injustice, we pray...

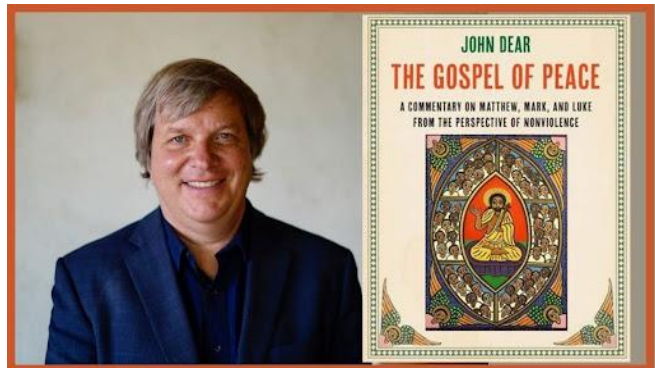
Prayer: [Adapted from Bread for the World](#)

As in the days of old, our nation is full with pride, excess food, and prosperous ease, yet not willing to aid people struggling with hunger and poverty. You know the plight of women, children, and men who struggle with hunger in our nation and around the world. As you did with the prophets of old, empower us with your Spirit to go through the halls of Congress, and call on them to act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of greed and oppression those who have been robbed of the opportunity to flourish.

Amen.

John Dear Book Launch and Signing

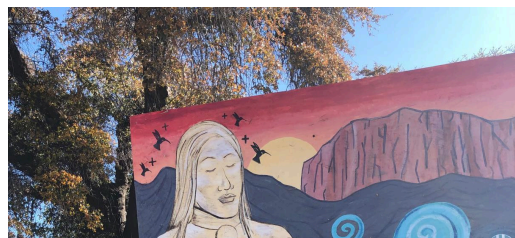
Please join Franciscan Action Network for a launch of [*The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence*](#) by Rev. John Dear on **Wednesday May 15 at 7 pm in person** at the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, DC. [Read a review of the book here.](#)



Don't miss this opportunity to hear John Dear's compelling teaching of Jesus' essential message of 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.](#)

Continued Need for Support of Oak Flat

Chí'chil Bitdagoteel, loosely translated as "Oak Flat" in English, is an ancient sacred site in Arizona for the Apache and several other tribes. The federal government is poised to give Oak Flat to a foreign mining operation so that a low-grade copper deposit



under it can be mined. Doing so would create a crater that will swallow Oak Flat; the destruction would be almost 2 miles wide and up to 1,100 feet deep. The Native people in the area have been fighting against this for years.

Apache leader Dr. Wendsler Nosie Sr. has been the target of death threats and requested an on-the-ground support team from [Community Peace Teams \(CPT\)](#). FAN Advocacy Associate, Merwyn De Mello (*pictured*) was invited to spend one month as a nonviolence presence for the Apache stronghold. During April, Merwyn has been camping at Oak Flat, praying on the land, traveling with and taking direction from Apache Stronghold leaders on the frontlines of the violence of extractive industry as Resolution Copper continues its assault on sacred Land and Water.

As we remember Earth Day (April 22), [learn more and take action](#) in support of the sacred freedom of our Indigenous neighbors.

Webinar: Humanitarian and Health Realities in Gaza & West Bank

The Churches for Middle East Peace Catholic Advisory Council will host a webinar on **April 30, 11:30am-12:45pm ET (8:30am-9:45am PT.)** "[Humanitarian and Health Realities in Gaza & West Bank: A Report from Catholic Development Agencies](#)" will feature a panel of representatives from Catholic Relief Services and Caritas Baby Hospital who are working to provide food, healthcare and other aid to the Palestinian population. [Learn more and register by clicking here.](#)

The graphic is a blue-themed poster for a webinar. At the top, a dark blue rounded rectangle contains the title "Humanitarian and Health Realities in Gaza & the West Bank" in white. Below this, the date "April 30, 2024" and time "11:30-12:45 EST" are listed. To the right, a box identifies the facilitators as Julie Schumacher Cohen and Jeffrey Abood. A prominent "VIA ZOOM" button is also present. Two circular portraits of the speakers, Shireen Khamis and Bill O'Keefe, are shown. At the bottom, their names and affiliations (Caritas Baby Hospital and Catholic Relief Services) are listed, along with the CMEP logo.

FAN Shows Up: Solidarity with Homeless & Earth Day

On April 22, FAN staff and board member Fr. Paul Lininger participated in an April 22 rally (*pictured, top*) at the US Supreme Court that brought out more than 500 people in solidarity with neighbors experiencing homelessness. Find this and other events we have attended on our [2024 FAN Shows Up](#) webpage.

On April 18, FAN Associate of Campaigns Gabriela Martinez joined a gathering of the Washington Interfaith Staff Community to celebrate Earth Day at the Capitol Visitor Center. (*pictured, bottom*) Speakers were from the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic traditions. The faith-liaison staff from the Federal Emergency



Management Agency (FEMA) attended as well. [See more photos by clicking here.](#)

Advocacy Works: Regulating Firearm Sales at Gun Shows

The Department of Justice has [announced](#) a new rule that would require gun sellers to obtain a firearms license and conduct background checks for guns sold at gun shows and online. The rule would close the so-called gun show loophole by changing the definition of firearm sellers who are “engaged in business” to include those selling guns at gun shows, flea markets and over the internet. These sellers would be required to obtain a federal firearms license.

The final rule will go into effect in 30 days, but it is likely to face challenges in the courts and in Congress.



Advocating for gun violence prevention through common sense legislation

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

As Rosemary Marusak, a member of the **Driftless Region FJC**, was putting together a college chemistry course, she found two beautiful images of [liquid water](#) that, when grouped together, formed a heart in the center (*pictured*). Having long searched for how to depict the Franciscan view of living in God's love using liquid water, she shared this image with her Circle, “This is my view of God's love being poured out freely and freely giving back to God ... my view of a Franciscan heart!” In Franciscan Justice Circles people bring their unique gifts, skills and lenses for seeing the world and in this way we support and enrich each other along the journey of continual conversion that blooms into actions.



One way of taking action is expressing one's views on key issues as informed by their values, which is what **Cincinnati FJC** member Jim Myers did when he attended a Catholic Advocacy Day in Ohio's capital. Part of his motivation to participate comes from the Catholic Baltimore Catechism, "It is necessary that all [citizens] participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person." (#1913-1915). Of his experience, Jim wrote, “We seem to lose the sense that we are all working for the same ‘common good’ despite our partisan divide. When we come together as Catholics to speak with our representatives, State or Federal, the partisan divide seems to melt away. If I come as a Democrat and you come as a Republican and we are both advocating for the same issue, we can make an impact.”

If you would like to learn more about Franciscan Justice Circles, please contact FAN staff, [Nora Pfeiffer](#).