

What are we to do?

Image by [Greg Bierer](#) from [Pixabay](#)

In the Gospel of Mark reading for the [12th Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), the disciples woke Jesus, who was asleep in the boat amidst a storm, and in desperation asked him whether he cared for them, feeling as though they were going to die in that moment. Maybe the question they might have been asking themselves before they awakened Jesus was, “What are we to do?”



That same question recently arose during a conversation with fellow Secular Franciscans regarding the need for safe and affordable housing. We were talking amongst ourselves, having spent an hour reviewing the plight of those living in a metro area that is short thousands of affordable dwellings for those in poverty, and which also remembers victims who died last year during a building collapse.

For the disciples, they woke the sleeping Jesus and he responded by quieting the storm and then asking them about their faith. Maybe in processing their experience they could have said that Christ had been with them before, during, and after the storm. Coming to that awareness would be an important lesson to remember, something that they could share with all the followers of Christ who weren't in the boat on that particular day.

As with the disciples seeking Jesus' help in the height of the storm, maybe our group discussing safe and affordable housing was wondering what any of us could do in trying to help those caught in the throes of a financial storm, not having enough for rent or a place to call home. We too, as followers of Christ, are to remember He is with us before, during and after the storms we experience and the storms others face as they seek our help. That assurance, our faith that Christ is with us, enables us to address immediate needs and ways we can add our voices to those who are experiencing injustices like a lack of affordable housing. What are we to do? Have faith and cry out to the storm of injustice, “Quiet. Be Still!”

Let me share a word of support for the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). Our very small local Secular Franciscan fraternity has formally established our apostolate as supporting FAN, distributing information and program offerings with our local members, being involved in program offerings even from our location in the heartland, and committing to give 25% of what is collected in our monthly meetings to financially supporting FAN. Soon we will pass \$1500 in what we have given since beginning a few short years ago—not bad for 8 professed fraternity members. National and global justice and peace issues can be overwhelming, but by committing to the Franciscan Action Network, we can remain faith-filled and bold in responding to the storm in these uncertain times.

Deacon Kent Ferris, OFS

Suggested Action:

Research affordable housing in your area and consider ways in which you can support those experiencing homelessness.

Suggested Petitions:

For all people experiencing homelessness and poverty, may they be blessed with caring and loving people like those at St. Francis Inn in Philadelphia, we pray...

For all those who live with anxiety, may they find respite in the peace of Christ, we pray...

Prayer - Adapted from [Closing Prayer for Franciscan Justice Circle](#)

**Most High, glorious God
we praise You and we thank You
for the many good people and blessings
You have bestowed upon us.
We ask today that Your spirit of truth and goodness
enlighten us as we embrace
the opportunities and challenges of this day
and give us true faith,
certain hope and perfect charity,
sense and knowledge, Gracious God,
as we seek to live out your gospel.**

Amen

Thank you for supporting FAN's Annual Benefit

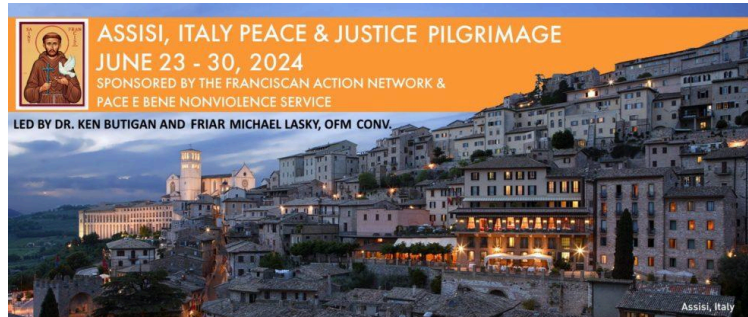
What a thrill to have so many partners of Franciscan Action Network with us for our 2024 annual benefit, "Befriending our Impoverished Neighbors & Becoming Blessed"! During the online program, attendees listened to guests and staff members at [St. Francis Inn](#) describe the circumstances by which people fall into poverty and homelessness, and what helps them overcome those circumstances. There was a stimulating live panel discussion about what is ours to do as Franciscans in solidarity with our neighbors experiencing poverty, and we celebrated the work of one of our young adult Franciscan Justice Circles at Neumann University. [Here is a snippet](#) of our program featuring the FAN staff serving dinner for guests and interviewing some SFI staff.



If you haven't had the chance to, **please consider supporting our work with a [donation](#) and we will share with you the recording of the full program.** Thank you to everyone who contributed to our benefit. May God bless you for your generosity.

Pray for our upcoming pilgrimage to Assisi

FAN is co-leading its first-ever [Peace and Justice Pilgrimage](#) to Assisi next week. Led by Franciscan Friar Michael Lasky, OFM Conv., and Dr. Ken Butigan of DePaul University, the pilgrimage is co-hosted by Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service. Five members of the Washington DC Franciscan Justice Circle will participate!



A group of 35 pilgrims will travel to Assisi, Italy June 23 – June 30, to pray, study the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare, build community, and deepen our commitment to Gospel nonviolence. Together, we will walk in the footsteps of these peacemakers whose courageous nonviolence, compassion for others, kinship with creation, and work for peace and reconciliation have inspired people everywhere.

Please pray for us as we learn how the examples of St. Francis and St. Clare can help us take another step on our own personal paths of spirituality and action.

Latest Episode of Acting Franciscan

The final episode of FAN's new podcast, "Acting Franciscan," created by OFM Postulant Jimmy Beh, will be released on [Spotify](#), [PodBean](#) and our [website](#) on Friday, June 21.

The fourth and final episode of this limited series welcomes **Sr. Andrea Koverman, SC**, who helps illuminate the creative and generative tension between direct service work and advocacy work, especially in terms of poverty and racism in the educational space.

Please [share the podcast](#) with your friends and colleagues.



FAN Shows Up to Advocate for Solutions to Human Trafficking

The Alliance to End Human Trafficking and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd organized an advocacy day in DC on June 6 during where participants advocated for an attainable bi-partisan solution to reduce human trafficking by addressing the root causes of forced migration, protecting unaccompanied children, and speeding asylum seekers access to work.

Sr. Maria Orlandini, FAN's Director of Advocacy (*pictured, second from left*), joined a group that



visited the offices of two Maryland congressmen, Raskin and Ivey as well as Maryland's two Senators, Cardin and Van Hollen.

Find this and other events we have attended on our [2024 FAN Shows Up](#) webpage. Take Action: [Ask your members of Congress to support these three bills](#)

Add Your Name: Catholic Sign-On Letter on Israel-Palestine

Over 5,000 individuals, plus many organizations have signed a Catholic Sign-on Letter on Israel-Palestine calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, release of all hostages, and a political solution to ensure justice, equality, peace, security, and freedom for the two peoples. Catholics read the letter aloud in this [video](#), which features two Franciscan friars and two Secular Franciscans. [Watch the video](#) on FAN's YouTube channel and [add your name by clicking here](#).



Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

The **New York City-Area Franciscan Justice Circle** and their partners will host a webinar, **A Franciscan Perspective on Food and Nutrition Justice** on June 19 at 7pm ET. The speakers will discuss how our Franciscan values - elevating human thriving and the integrity of creation - can inform and energize our policy responses to problems around harmful additives in our food and beverages. ALL are welcome! You may download and share this flier with a friend. [Click on this link to register](#) to attend on Zoom.



Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia and associates, including members of the **DE Valley FJC** and FAN staff members (*pictured*), joined the 2024 Wear Orange Peace Walk & Block Party organized by the Chester Community Coalition in Chester, PA on June 8. See [more photos of the day here](#).

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