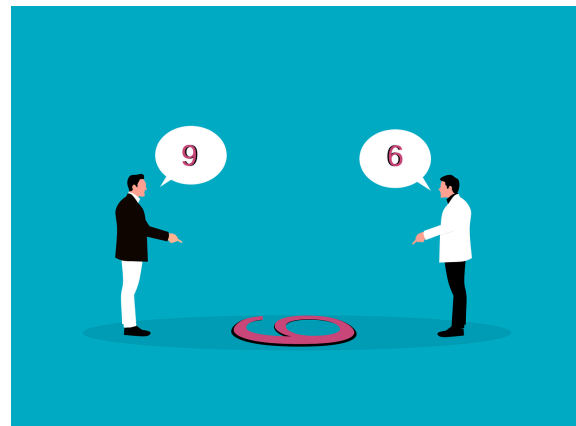


## Be Open

"My brothers and sisters, show no partiality" (Jas 2:1). The urgent message from our second reading of the [Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) resonates deeply with the pressing societal issues we face today. The urgency of these issues, even in the early church, prompted James to challenge the society of his day to treat everyone with equality and respect, regardless of their social status, country of birth, skin tone, gender, age, and all other factors that led to the othering of human beings.

Image by [Mohamed Hassan](#) from [Pixabay](#)



James calls upon the people of his time, as he does us today, to confront biases, usually rooted in feelings rather than facts. He calls us to acknowledge the implications of our discrimination based on the norms of society. The act of othering any human being always drives us to shrink our world instead of expanding it. James urges us to show reverence for all human beings as made in God's image, fostering a more just and compassionate community where all are valued and respected.

"Be open" (Mk 7:34). These words from Mark's Gospel, spoken to the deaf man with a speech impediment, could likewise be proclaimed to each of us. Be open to those we consider or treat as other.

Nationally, our political climate challenges us to embrace a stance of humility, which, combined with openness and curiosity in listening, can help heal the divisions among us and promote peace. FAN's work in [recruiting Poll Chaplains](#) is a good example of working to ensure peaceful proceedings for the national elections. (Recalling the famous words from the Peace Prayer, "Lord, help me to understand more than to be understood.")

Be open.

In his recent book, *How to Know a Person*, David Brooks shares the story of Doctor Ludwig Gutman, a person of the Jewish faith who escaped to England from Germany during World War II. While working in a hospital serving people with paraplegia, Gutman refused to accept that a spinal injury was a death sentence and started getting his patients out of bed and forcing them into some form of activity. When challenged by his colleagues at the hospital accustomed to merely managing the decline of their patients, one asked: "Who do you think they are?" Gutman replied: "They are the best of men."

Gutman's continued efforts to organize games for the injured men eventually led to the creation of the Paralympics. This is a powerful example of how seeing the potential in others and treating them with respect can lead to transformative change.

Be open.

How are we called to challenge ourselves to see others through the lens of reverence and love for all God's creatures? How is God calling you to open the eyes of the blind, clear the ears of the deaf, and give the lame courage to leap?

Sr. Maryann Mueller, CSSF  
Former FAN Board Member

**Suggested Action:**

As you go through this week, be aware of how God is asking you to “be open” and reverence the person in front of you. Consider [signing up to be a Poll Chaplain](#) for the 2024 National Election if you live in one of the states where chaplains are being organized, or a poll worker in any state.

**Suggested Petitions:**

Lord, make me an instrument of the peace so needed by our world today; help me to understand others rather than concentrating on trying to be understood by others. We pray...

God of all creation, help me to be open to truly try to see the best of the person in front of me. We pray...

**Prayer - adapted from the [Manhattan Center for Behavioral Therapy](#)**

**God, today help me set aside everything I think I know about You, everything I think I know about myself, and everything I think I know about others, so I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me see the truth.**

**Amen**

## **Webinar: Protect Oak Flat: Preserving a Sacred Site in Arizona from Mining**

Please join Franciscan Action Network (FAN) for the first webinar of our 2024 Environmental Justice series, “[Protect Oak Flat: Preserving Sacred Sites](#)” on **September 19, 2024 at 7pm ET / 4pm PT.**

FAN will welcome Vanessa Nosie of Apache Stronghold for a discussion about the religious grounding in Oak Flat (AZ), her family's experience with the sacred, and how their nonprofit, Apache Stronghold, has built a legal case with religious communities across the nation to protect Oak Flat from extractive mining, a case which they are petitioning to the US Supreme Court. There will be time for Q&A and we will provide advocacy actions for you to take.



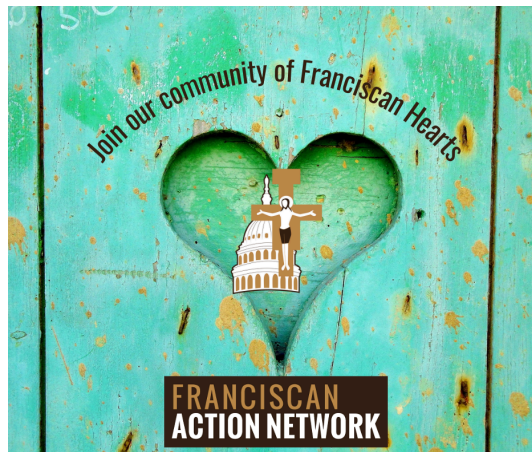
Registration for this event is free. If you are able, we ask that you please consider donating to help support the expenses of FAN's work. Thank you for your generosity! **The event will be recorded and sent to all who register.** [Click here to register.](#)

## We appreciate FAN's Recurring Donors

Did you know that a **monthly recurring donation** is the single best way to support all the work that FAN does? We are so grateful for the donors who contribute in this consistent, reliable way that helps FAN to plan our education, advocacy, and youth engagement activities for the whole year.

**Thank you!**

Whether you can afford to donate \$10, \$50, \$100 or more per month, your recurring donation makes it possible for FAN to bring a collective, distinctively Franciscan voice to the many public policy issues of our day related to justice, peace, integrity of creation, and human dignity. Thank you for your generosity.



Starting today, FAN is launching a month-long campaign to invite new members to join our circle of Franciscan Hearts, our monthly donors. [Please consider supporting FAN with a monthly recurring donation.](#)

## Sign up for the Live Stream of FAN's Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference

We are excited to share that Franciscan Action Network's [2024 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Acting for Peace, People, Planet](#) includes a **half-day hybrid interactive program on Sunday, October 13** from 12:30-5:00pm EDT (9:30am-2:00pm PDT). The limited in-person conference spots filled in no time at all and we're pleased to be able to offer a live stream option so that you too can join this gathering of people across generations, the country, and the larger Franciscan family October 12-15, 2024 in Washington, D.C.



Respectful dialogue, deep listening, peaceful action, and effective advocacy are all critical skills, but they are seldom taught or practiced in American culture. Luckily our Franciscan tradition has much to offer, and this conference will empower participants with formation, skills, and training to respond more effectively to the needs of our times through advocacy and interpersonal relationships. [Click here to learn more and register.](#)

## Would you consider being a poll worker in November?

The United States faces a historic staffing shortage in the upcoming elections. Without enough poll workers, long lines could make it harder to vote, polling locations might need to close, and longer vote-counting times could reduce trust in our elections. Poll workers are not elected or appointed positions. They are nonpartisan and do not represent parties or candidates, they are registered voters in the precinct where they are working. We encourage you to consider participating as a Franciscan-hearted peacebuilder and helping the 2024 elections to run smoothly. If you are interested in becoming a poll worker, contact FAN Associate of Campaigns [Gabby Martinez](#).



## Help FAN find a Communications and Development Coordinator

FAN's longtime Communications Coordinator Janine Walsh is leaving for a new opportunity. We will miss Janine very much! Please help us to recruit a dynamic individual to serve as Communications and Development Coordinator. This is an entry level full-time staff position, located in Washington DC, and is open immediately. This is a fast-paced position with significant room for creativity that offers an outstanding opportunity to play a pivotal role within a faith-based advocacy organization.

FAN is a nondiscriminatory, nonpartisan 501(c)3 organization and is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community among staff, board, and our broader network.

Click here to [read and download the full job description](#). To apply, send a resume and cover letter to [jobs@franciscanaction.org](mailto:jobs@franciscanaction.org).



## Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

Members of the **Connecticut-Rhode Island Franciscan Justice Circle** recently met at a beautiful state park for sharing a meal and fellowship (*pictured*). The circle is focusing on how their actions can contribute to respecting the sacredness of creation, and have invited local groups to share about their own work in order to explore areas of collaboration. In August, a representative of the Interreligious Eco-Justice Network of Connecticut joined the circle's meeting to share about their activities related to building a religious



response to global warming. As Jacques Cousteau said, "You save what you love," and the FJC members love our common home very much and are committed to action.

Upcoming Franciscan Justice Circle meetings:

**Mid-Hudson Valley FJC:** Tues. Sept. 3 at 12:00pm EDT via zoom

**Boston FJC:** Tues. Sept. 3 at 7:00pm EDT in person

**Kansas FJC:** Tues. Sept. 3 at 7:00pm CDT via zoom

**Cincinnati FJC:** Wed. Sept. 4 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

**Virtual FJC (limited mobility):** Thurs. Sept. 5 at 11:00am PDT / 2:00pm EDT via zoom

**Reading, PA - Area FJC Conversation:** Thurs. Sept. 5 at 7:00pm EDT \*in person\* and via zoom

**Delaware Valley FJC:** Tues. Sept. 10 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

**Monthly National FJC call:** Wed. Sept. 11 at 1:00pm PDT / 4:00pm EDT via zoom

**NYC-Area FJC:** Wed. Sept. 11 at 7:30pm EDT via zoom

**Rochester, NY FJC:** Thurs. Sept. 12 at 3:30pm EDT via zoom

**SoCal FJC:** Thurs. Sept. 12 at 6:00pm PDT via zoom

**Washington DC area FJC:** Sat. Sept 14 10 AM in person

If you would like to learn more about the Circles or connect with one, please contact FJC director, [Nora Pfeiffer here](#).