

“Who Do You Say that I Am?”

In the gospel for the [24th Sunday of Ordinary Time](#), Jesus poses the fundamental question of faith, “Who do people say that I am?” Why ask such a question – one so seemingly obvious. Is it worth asking? The variety of responses given – John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets – might tell us that the answer is not so clear, and those closest to Jesus aren’t totally sure either. Yet, answering the question is crucial to one’s life journey. For the way one regards Jesus establishes the way one relates to him.



If John the Baptist, then he is a definer of one’s moral compass. If Elijah, then he is a mystical figure, heralding the end of time. If a prophet, then Jesus is a spokesperson for God but surely not God himself. In the 13th century, Francis of Assisi had a revelation of Jesus Christ hanging on the cross and in that sublime moment Francis saw and grasped the meaning of the gospel passage, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mk 8:34). From that instant, Francis had his answer to Jesus’ question, “Who do you say that I am?”: Jesus is Lord and Savior.

The answer to Jesus’ question is for each individual to answer for themselves. How one answers speaks volumes about how one will live, love, and die. The answer dwells at the very core of life, mine and yours. One’s response captures a truth about the vision of faith and the invitation to journey with Jesus on the pathway of life and love.

And as Francis and Clare discovered in their response to Jesus’ inquiry, the messiahship of Jesus is one of service, of suffering, and of self-giving love. There will be no triumph apart from the Cross. Faith is not simply a set of irrefutable proofs, but it is a relationship of loving fidelity to a person. Holiness is not an achievement; it is a grace called awareness, a grace called looking, observing, understanding. This grace is achieved when we learn to see life through the lens of love. To be Christ’s disciple is to walk this same path of service, suffering, and self-giving love. Following Jesus’ example and guided by grace, the Franciscan Action Network walks this path of discipleship through education, advocacy, and actions made in solidarity with those who are suffering injustice or hardship.

Fr. Paul Lininger, OFM Conv.
FAN Board Member

Suggested Action:

Consider how gospel-based advocacy efforts on behalf of the poor, marginalized, or disenfranchised are an expression of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Take action on an issue important to you. Use FAN's newsletter for suggestions.

Suggested Petitions:

For the grace of awareness, looking, observing, and understanding that together we can do so much more than any one of us can do by ourselves, we pray...

For the courage to journey with Jesus through service, suffering and self-giving love, we pray...

Prayer: [Lord Open Our Eyes](#) by Kathryn Spink

**Lord, open our eyes,
That we may see you in our brothers and sisters.**

**Lord, open our ears,
That we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold,
the frightened, the oppressed.**

**Lord, open our hearts,
That we may love each other as you love us.**

**Renew in us your spirit
Lord, free us and make us one.**

Amen

Welcome Eileen DeGuire

FAN is pleased to welcome to our staff Eileen DeGuire, our new Advocacy Associate. Eileen is from Milwaukee, WI, and recently graduated from Loyola University Chicago with degrees in Political Science and Global Studies. She joins FAN as a part of the Franciscan Mission Service's [DC Service Corps](#), where she will spend a year living in community and service. While interested in and passionate about many issues, Eileen's primary interests are immigration/refugees, voting rights, and gun safety.

[Contact Eileen here.](#)



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 tradition 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.](#)

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.

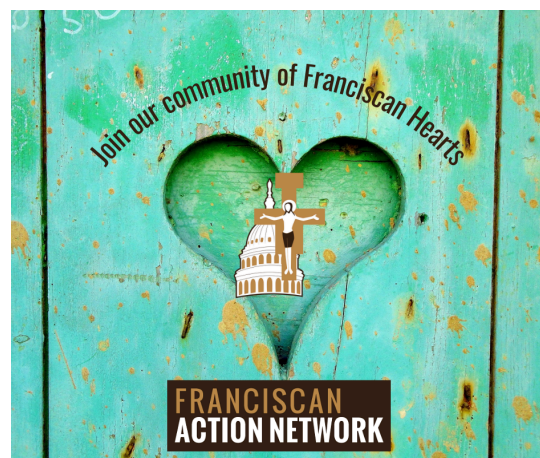


Respectful dialogue, deep listening, peaceful action, and effective advocacy are all critical skills, but they are seldom taught or practiced in American culture. Luckily our Franciscan tradition has much to offer, and this conference will empower participants with formation, skills, and training to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

Join FAN's Recurring Donors

Did you know that there are several dozen members of FAN who make a **monthly recurring donation**? 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!**

If you rely on FAN's work to help inform and motivate your Franciscan-hearted advocacy, please consider joining them. 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. [Please consider](#)



[supporting FAN with a monthly recurring donation](#). It is an easy and very helpful way to keep our work going!

Gun Violence Prevention is Critical

September is Suicide Prevention Month and according to [Giffords](#), 3 in 5 gun deaths in the US are self-inflicted. If you or a loved one are contemplating suicide, please know you are not alone. Call or text the free and confidential National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988, or visit 988lifeline.org.

Within our Franciscan family, we have experienced loss due to gun violence and we will continue to advocate for common sense federal gun safety legislation that protects the sanctity of human life. Newtown Action Alliance has been working diligently on two such bills: *Ethan's Law*, which aims to keep people safe from unsecured guns and the *Assault Weapons Ban*, which would prohibit the sale of exceptionally deadly firearms such as the AR-style weapon used at the shooting on Sept. 4 at Apalachee High School in Winder, Georgia. **Take action today** and [urge your Representatives and Senators to cosponsor these bills](#).

Brave New Films produced a short documentary, "[Save A Child. Secure Your Gun](#)" which sheds light on the life-saving importance of safe firearm storage and offers solutions that every family can adopt. Watch the [film on YouTube here](#) and share it with your network.



Advocating for gun violence prevention through common sense legislation

Franciscan Justice Circles Updates

On Wed. Sept. 11, we will have our **monthly national call for Franciscan Justice Circles** and all who are interested to know more about the circles. We will hear updates from different Circles as well as from Sr. Louise on FAN staff who will share a few updates relating to creation and nonviolence, particularly about the case of a courageous group of people, the Apache Stronghold, who are currently on a prayer journey across the country to arrive at the US Supreme Court with their cause of protecting sacred site Oak Flat from extractive mining. To join the call or any meetings below, please contact FJC director [Nora Pfeiffer here](#).



Upcoming [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) meetings:

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

Central Indiana: Fri. Sept. 13 at 1:00pm EDT via zoom

DC-Area FJC: Sat. Sept. 14 at 10:00am EDT in person

Driftless Region FJC (Wisconsin-Minnesota): Mon. Sept. 16 at 7:00pm CDT via zoom

Denver FJC Interest Meeting: Mon. Sept. 16 at 7:00pm MDT via zoom

Cleveland-Area FJC: Tues. Sept. 17 at 7:15pm EDT via zoom

Phoenix-Area FJC Interest Meeting: Wed. Sept. 18 at 7:00pm PDT via zoom