

Publication Date: October 1, 2024

Reflection Date: October 6, 2024 - [Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

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## The Power of Relationships

In the first reading for the [Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time](#), the very first line indicates the Lord's ideal situation for humans: "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gn 2:18). God wants humans to have other humans and creatures with whom to commune. In the second reading, St. Paul in his Letter to the Hebrews makes plain that Jesus and his followers "all have one origin. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them brothers" (Heb 2:11). The gospel story of the Pharisees testing Jesus by asking about the law in regards to divorce is often used to discuss marriage. Taking all these readings combined, however, I want to reflect on a theme with which Franciscans are deeply familiar: relationships.



From the beginning, Francis of Assisi emphasized relationships among his followers. They were to be friars, not monks. Friars live and work in a community of brothers, while the word monk suggests a solitary lifestyle, as the term is derived from the Greek word *monakus* meaning "alone." The reason that St. Francis preferred the title "brother" was simple; he truly saw himself as inherently related to all creatures, even nonhumans, as part of God's one family of creation.

If we truly believe we are inherently related to each other and to nature, how does that affect our actions? By building strong relationships, we are better able to understand one another. If we know the story of a person who is struggling, we can better support them through it. We are more willing to make sacrifices for "Sister Earth, our Mother" and her creatures when we are aware of how our actions impact their existence. It is through the power of our relationships with one another and nature that we strengthen the body of Christ in the world today.

For the last 12 years, I have had the honor and privilege to serve as communications coordinator for the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). As of this publication, I will be starting a new chapter in my career but I take with me all the relationships I have formed during my tenure. Through the years, I have had conversations with many people in our network and as I took time to get to know a little more about them, each person became more special to me. I consider the members of the staff and board of directors, both past and present, as my siblings. The relationships I have built through FAN are something I will cherish for years to come. I will always be a Franciscan at heart. I wish you all peace and all good.

## **Janine Walsh**

Former Communications Coordinator  
Franciscan Action Network

### **Suggested Action:**

Reach out to someone in your life that you don't know well and commit to building a relationship with them.

### **Suggested Petitions:**

For all those struggling to find healthy relationships, we pray...

In thanksgiving for the relationships we have built through respect and love, we pray...

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

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

**Amen.**



## **Join us for St. Francis Feast Events this Week**

Please join the Franciscan Action Network this week to commemorate the Feast of St. Francis with online and live events.

Join our **Franciscan Justice Circles** for an online **Transitus Service** to commemorate the “passing over” of St. Francis to the glory of heaven on **Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 7:30 PM ET / 4:30 PM PT**. This 30-minute service offers a time for reflection and gratitude before the in-person services on Oct. 3. [Click here](#) to register. All are welcome!

For those in the Washington DC area, please join FAN and the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker House on **Friday, Oct. 4 at 12:00 noon ET** in person at the White House for a **Vigil for Peace in Gaza and the Middle East** honoring the significant efforts of St. Francis to make

peace during his lifetime. Click [here](#) to register. The prayer vigil will also be live-streamed on [FAN's YouTube channel](#).

Please join the **Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America** on **Thursday, October 3, at 7:00 PM** at or an in-person Transitus service with preaching by **Fr. Patrick Mary Briscoe, O.P.** The Shrine of St. Anthony in Elliott City, MD and St. Francis of Assisi Church in Triangle, VA will also hold in-person Transitus services on Oct. 3, as will other Franciscan churches throughout the United States.

We look forward to gathering as a community to celebrate these special occasions!

## Participate in the Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference via live-stream on Sunday, Oct. 13



We invite you to join us virtually for the **2024 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Acting for Peace, People, Planet** on **Sunday, October 13, from 12:30-5:00pm EDT (9:30am-2:00pm PDT)**. This intergenerational conference will offer exciting speakers and important training in respectful dialogue, deep listening, and effective advocacy grounded in the Franciscan tradition.

The recommended registration fee is \$50 for individuals, \$75 for small groups (up to 5 log-ins), and \$100 for larger groups (up to 10 log-ins). [Click here](#) to learn more.

Button: [\[Click here to register\]](#)

## “Earth’s Cry, Humanity’s Call”: A Symposium at Siena College

Join the **Laudato Si’ Center for Integral Ecology** at Siena College **October 10-11** for an inspiring symposium focused on addressing climate change and the call to care for both the poor and creation. Featuring **U.N. General Secretary Antonio Guterres**, along with Catholic and Franciscan voices, this event will explore the spiritual dimensions of climate action. Read about the symposium [here](#) and [click here to register](#).



## Support Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center

The Texas Attorney General's unjust investigation into **Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center** threatens their essential work providing legal support to immigrant families. As Franciscans, we are called to stand with the marginalized and protect their dignity. The **Texas Civil Rights Project** has filed a lawsuit to defend Las Americas against this attack. Learn more about Las Americas Immigrant Center [here](#).



## Support for Haitian Immigrants: Advocating for Justice and Truth



The painful rhetoric surrounding our Haitian brothers and sisters has deeply affected many of us. The Felician Sisters of North America, who have worked closely with Haitians both in Haiti and in North Miami, remind us of the strength, resilience, and dignity of the Haitian people. They deserve respect, not harmful judgments. We stand in solidarity with the Haitian community and urge others to reflect on the values of justice and inclusion that define our nation, as well as our Franciscan tradition.

Button: Read [the Felician Sisters' statement here](#)

## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Members of the **Mid-Hudson Valley FJC** participated in the annual Peace Mass at St. Joseph's Church in New Paltz on Aug. 24, where immigration, climate change, poverty, gun violence, etc. were addressed. Information about how to contact governmental representatives and newspapers was made available and the main ideas on how to safely store firearms were distributed. In addition to sending letters to senators and their U.S. representative about the need to closely monitor glock switches, expand background checks, pass legislation on safe gun storage and address ghost guns, the Circle promotes peace efforts internationally. Members write letters in support of ceasefire efforts and an FJC member publicly witnesses in areas with pro-Palestinian and pro-Israel messages that there is a third way—peace, which can be a powerful message for all present who question where peace fits in.

To find out more information about the [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) or any upcoming meetings, please contact FJC director [Nora Pfeiffer](#):

**Mid-Hudson Valley FJC:** Tues. Oct. 1 at 12:00pm EDT via zoom

**Kansas FJC:** Tues. Oct. 1 at 7:00pm CDT via zoom

**Virtual FJC** (limited mobility): Tues. Oct. 3 at 11:00am PDT / 2:00pm EDT via zoom

**Boston FJC:** Sat. Oct. 5 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

**DC-Area FJC:** Sat. Oct. 5 at 10:00am EDT in person

**Denver FJC:** Mon. Oct. 7 at 7:00pm MDT via zoom

**CT-RI FJC:** Tues. Oct. 8 at 7:00pm EDT via zoom

**Nashville-Area FJC:** Tues. Oct. 8 at 7:00pm CDT via zoom