

Publication Date: January 7, 2025

Reflection Date: January 12, 2025 - [The Baptism of the Lord](#)

Baptized for this (un)Ordinary Time

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I don't remember my baptism. For many "cradle Catholics," it was a choice made by our good parents, not by us, and we were carried to church as infants. This baptismal choice was confirmed in the sacrament of confirmation, but I was 11 years old, so it was still not a fully understood choice. Later, when I witnessed the baptism of adults, I was almost envious. Theirs was an informed, deliberate choice to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ as a member of the Christian community. My clear commitment to my baptismal promises came later.



The sacrament of baptism is not as much about being washed of our sins as it is about emergence into the new life of the risen Christ by joining the Christian community. On this great feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the word "sin" is mentioned only once in the Scriptures of the Liturgy Year C. In [Isaiah 40](#), God says, "Give comfort to my people"; Jerusalem "has received from the hand of the Lord, double for all her sins." In Year A, Isaiah 42, the word "sin" is not mentioned at all.

If baptism were only about cleansing from sin, there would be no need for Jesus to be baptized. Jesus **CHOSE** to be baptized by John to fulfill John's teaching that the Christ would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire." Upon this understanding of his mission, the heavens opened, the Holy Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove, and God's voice affirmed, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Francis of Assisi was given the name "John" when he was baptized, but because he was so attracted by chivalry and French "chansons," his father called him "Frenchie," Francis. We know that Francis' commitment to fulfill his baptismal promise to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ took a journey of several years. But once made, he never wavered. Certainly, God was "well pleased" with God's beloved son, Francis.

This feast also concludes the wondrous Christmas Season, and tomorrow we enter liturgically into "Ordinary Time." Given all the challenges that face us in 2025, time does not seem "ordinary." In our personal, social, and communal lives, with deep divisions in politics—both national and global—and even in the Church, we feel that the time is "unordinary." This is a time to reflect on our own baptismal commitment to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, not only as individuals but also as members of the Christian community. Are there ways in which each of us can become more engaged with FAN, with Catholic Social teaching, in our parishes and congregations? Do you believe that you are a beloved daughter or son of God?

Sr. Marie Lucey, OSF

FAN Associate Director

Suggested Action: Identify a time when you made a clear, informed decision to fulfill your baptismal promise to follow Jesus Christ. Renew that commitment, perhaps ritualizing it with a lighted candle.

Suggested Petitions:

May we recommit ourselves to our baptismal promises, let us pray.

May we commit ourselves to the Church's Jubilee Year 2025, Pilgrims of Hope, let us pray.

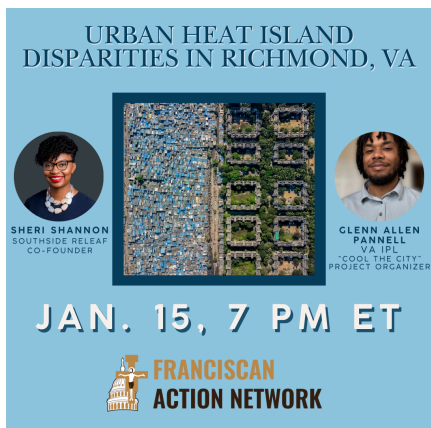
Prayer

**Father in Heaven,
may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled in in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom...
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise forever.**

Amen.

- (excerpted from Jubilee Prayer 2025)

Next Week: Register for Urban Heat Island Disparities in Richmond, VA Webinar



[Register here](#) for our next environmental justice webinar on **January 15, 2025 at 7 pm ET/4pm PT**. Our event will feature advocates from local organizations, such as Virginia Interfaith Power and Light and Southside ReLeaf, speaking on the heat island effects on communities of color and/or low wealth in the Richmond, VA area, what they are doing to mitigate this heating, and how you can help. [Register here to join us!](#)

Thank you for joining us for “Faith in Democracy”

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our fourth annual "Faith in Democracy" Interfaith Prayer Vigil on January 5, 2025. Whether you participated in person in D.C. or virtually, your presence and prayers for peace, democracy, and nonviolent resolution of our

differences made this event a meaningful moment of unity and reflection.

We are deeply grateful to the faith leaders who shared with us, as well as to the Washington Douglass Chorale for their uplifting contribution.

If you were unable to attend or would like to revisit the event, you can watch the full vigil at any time using the link below.

[Watch the Vigil Recording](#)



Join FAN for a discussion of immigration policies on February 4

Join the FAN staff and network on **February 4 at 7 pm ET / 4 pm PT** for a presentation and panel discussion on the current state of immigration policy in the United States. Sr. Marie Lucey, Associate Director of FAN, and Eileen DeGuire, Legislative Director, will provide an overview of current policies and their evolution. The session will also feature a panel of leading immigration advocates, including David Spicer from the USCCB and Giovana Oaxaca at the ELCA, followed by time for audience questions.

[Register here](#)

Read this helpful immigration information sheet

FAN staff have put together a sheet with information about mythbusting, knowing your rights, what you can do, and resources regarding immigration. It will be regularly updated as information changes.

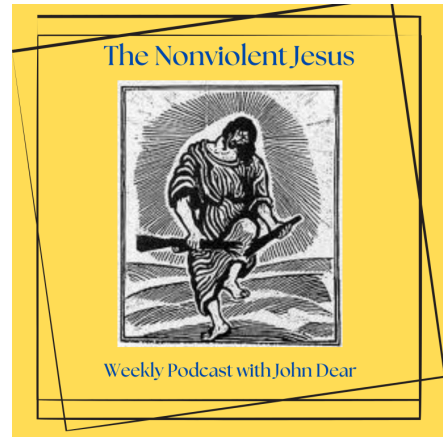
BUTTON: [See the document here](#)

Please reach out to [Eileen DeGuire](#) or [Sr. Marie Lucey](#) if you have any more questions!

The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast

The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast, hosted by Fr. John Dear, launched yesterday, Jan. 6. Tune in to hear powerful conversations with influential voices like Richard Rohr, Martin Sheen, Helen Prejean, and more. Each episode explores Gospel nonviolence and justice. New episodes will be posted every Monday on the [National Catholic Reporter homepage](#).

This podcast is produced by the *Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Jesus*. For more information, visit beatitudescenter.org.



Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The Mid-Hudson Valley [Franciscan Justice Circles](#) (FJC) recently signed a letter to President Trump urging the administration to sign the Nuclear Ban Treaty, to be delivered on Jan. 22, the fourth anniversary of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. FJCs are local affinity groups in which Franciscan-hearted people come together to deepen their spirituality and channel their values into action for justice, peace, integrity of creation, and human dignity. There are many FJC gatherings scheduled this month; please reach out to [FAN staff](#) to get connected:

Nashville FJC: Tues. Jan. 7 at 7:00 pm CST over zoom

Kansas FJC: Tues. Jan. 7 at 7:00 pm CST over zoom

New Mexico FJC: Tues. Jan. 7 at 7:00 pm MST over zoom

Monthly National FJC call: Wed. Jan. 8 at 1:00 pm PST / 4:00 pm EST over zoom

Cincinnati Area FJC: Wed. Jan. 8 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom

Rochester, NY FJC: Thurs. Jan. 9 at 3:30 pm EST over zoom

SoCal FJC: Thurs. Jan. 9 at 6:00 pm PST over zoom

Washington, DC - Area FJC: Sat. Jan. 11 at 10:00 am EST In Person

St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Mon. Jan. 13 at 12:30 pm EST In Person

Richmond, VA Area FJC: Mon. Jan. 13 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom & Wed. Jan. 15 In Person

For information about joining or forming a Franciscan Justice Circle, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org.

