

Publication Date: January 21, 2025

Reflection Date: January 26, 2025 - [Third Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

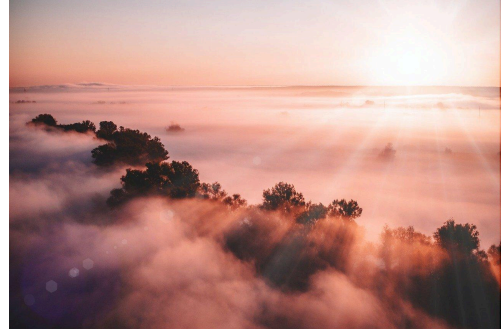
Today—Not Yesterday and Not Tomorrow—Today

Today, in your hearing, this passage is fulfilled!

Imagine, for a moment, the explosive power of the word “today.” Not yesterday or tomorrow, but *today*. Here and now... *today!*

In the shadow of an unfolding Year of Jubilee, Jesus stands to read, is handed a parchment scroll, and unrolls it to reveal the heart of Isaiah’s prophecy:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.*



After he finishes, Jesus sits down. Looking directly at you, he declares that the good news of God’s eternal love is here—*today*. It is now.

In the radiance of this moment, Jesus proclaims that God’s words are truly Spirit and life. They are fulfilled in our midst through the Incarnate Word of a loving God—God’s Word made flesh. He is the source, the message, and the manifestation of pure love made visible.

Today, through him, hear the good news of God’s unconditional and eternal love for you. Today, in him, discover true freedom. Today, let him break the chains that bind your captivity. Today, let him lift you up.

Today, Jesus says, there is nothing to fear, nothing to regret, nothing to imprison you. Know that there is nothing anyone can say that has more power than Jesus’ love for you.

“Today,” hear the Word of God and let it take root in you. Hear his invitation: to be his body; to be his blood. Let Jesus speak to your inner spirit:

“You are my beloved—yes, you! To you, I have given all the gifts necessary and so much more. And realize, you are not alone. Look and see your companions—your sisters and brothers. These, too, are my gifts to you and to them. Together, we are companions on an eternal journey.”

Now is the hour. Now is today. “*Today*.” That’s it.

Fr. Paul Lininger, OFM Conv.

Board Member, Franciscan Action Network

Suggested Action: Ask yourself how you might bring the sense of God’s eternal presence into your words, actions, and ways of perceiving all of God’s creation—*today!* Reflect on how you could support the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) in its ministry of advocacy on behalf of God’s poor, marginalized, and voiceless sisters and brothers among us—*today!*

Suggested Petitions:

For the Church, that we may boldly proclaim the good news of God’s unconditional and eternal love *today*, bringing hope and healing to all who are poor, captive, or oppressed, let us pray to the Lord.

For our Franciscan community and all who walk the path of peace and justice, that we may be Christ’s body in the world, companions on this eternal journey of love, let us pray to the Lord.

Prayer

Loving God,

Today, we hear your call to freedom, joy, and love. Break the chains that bind us, and open our hearts to your presence. May we bring your peace and compassion into the world through our words and actions.

Amen

Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.

Yesterday, the FAN staff remembered the legacy of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his invaluable perspective and contributions to American society during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and thereafter. In his memory, and as Franciscans who value nonviolence and working for the reinstatement and preservation of the human dignity of all people, we recommit to our mission of pursuing policies that work for racial equity for all of our siblings.

Prayers for Our Nation and Leaders

On the occasion of the inauguration of President Donald J. Trump and the recent seating of the 119th Congress, FAN offers the following prayers from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops:

For the people of the United States, to engage in a spirit of cooperation, tranquility, and respect for one another and for all human life as good stewards of the gifts God has given us, we pray to the Lord...

For our new President, to have before him at all times the charge to protect and defend the rights of all citizens, especially the weakest and most vulnerable among us, we pray to the Lord...

For all civic authorities, entrusted with care for the common good, to act with loving care in all they do, we pray to the Lord...

For the Church and its leaders, to serve as beacons of the light of Christ in a world in the shadows of fear, violence, poverty, and death, we pray to the Lord...

Feb. 4 Immigration Webinar



Immigration Update
What's Going On, and How Can I Help?

Moderators

- Sr. Marie Lucey
FAN Associate Director
- Eileen DeGuire
FAN Legislative Director

Panelists

- Rev. Julio Hernandez
Congregation Action Network
- Giovana Oaxaca
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
- David Spicer
USCCB
- Michelle Sardone
Catholic Legal Immigration Network

February 4, 2025
7pm ET/6pm CT/5pm MT/4pm PT

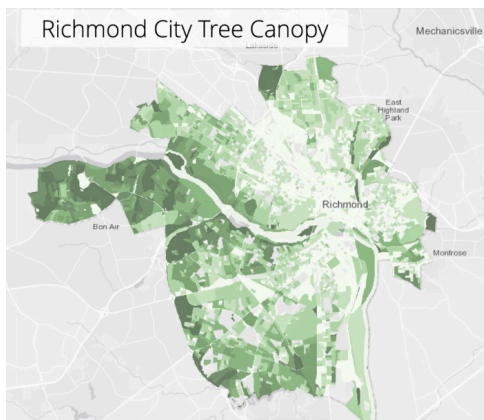
Register Here!



Join FAN staff and friends on **Tuesday, February 4, at 7 pm ET** for an evening of learning and discussion about immigration, including current developments, what is likely to happen next, and how all can support immigrants/refugees going forward. There will be a brief presentation, followed by a panel discussion with leaders in immigration advocacy and plenty of time for questions.

[Register here](#)

Webinar Recording & Action Opportunity for Heat Islands



Thank you for joining us January 15 for our Environmental Justice webinar on the *Urban Heat Island* effect in Richmond, VA. We hope the discussion gave you valuable insights into how urban heat impacts the communities in Richmond, VA, and the steps we can take to address this pressing issue.

Please take action below to support the Richmond, VA community in combating the urban heat island

effect. **Your participation is essential in helping us make a tangible impact!**

[Take Action: Letter to the VA Commonwealth Legislature!](#)

[Watch the Recording Here](#)

Catholic Elements of Immigration Reform

Earlier this month, the Justice for Immigrants Campaign (JFI) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) released a document outlining the six Catholic elements of immigration reform. They are as follows:

1. Enforcement efforts should be targeted, proportional, and humane.
2. Humanitarian protections and due process should be ensured.
3. Long-time residents should have an earned pathway to citizenship.
4. Family unity should remain a cornerstone of the US system.
5. Legal pathways should be expanded, reliable, and efficient.
6. The root causes of forced migration should be addressed.

In the document linked below, there is a fleshed out version of the reasoning behind each element.

Button: Read more here <https://www.usccb.org/resources/immigrationreform.pdf>

Please also see this additional USCCB resource: [Responding to Immigration Enforcement Efforts](#)

Hope Border Institute Urges Action on Migrant Deaths



On January 13, the Hope Border Institute (HOPE) spoke to the El Paso County Commissioners Court about the alarming number of migrant deaths in the El Paso Border Patrol Sector. The Court adopted a resolution acknowledging the crisis and recognizing the importance of humanitarian efforts like HOPE's to address these tragedies.

Learn more about HOPE's mission and advocacy at hopeborder.org.

Progress in Gun Violence Prevention

FAN advocates for gun violence prevention as part of our peacemaking efforts. At the beginning of the Biden administration, we advocated for the appointment of an ATF Director (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives). Steven M. Dettelbach was appointed in 2022, and together with his staff, the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, and the additional tools provided by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, significant progress has been made to prevent gun violence. Here are some key highlights:

- **Crime Reduction and Enforcement Gains:** Violent crime hit a 50-year low, including a 17.5% drop in murders and a 7.8% decline in robberies.
- **Cracking Down on Organized Crime:** The ATF has intensified investigations into violent criminal organizations.
- **Dismantling Firearms Trafficking Networks:** Efforts have successfully targeted the illegal distribution of firearms.
- **Combating Emerging Threats:** This includes increasing law enforcement recoveries of privately made firearms and machine gun conversion devices at crime scenes.

FAN will continue to advocate for increased investments in accountability and gun violence prevention efforts by the ATF.

[See the report of what was accomplished here.](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates



Members of the **Richmond, VA-Area Franciscan Justice Circle (FJC)** joined over 400 people of faith at the Virginia State Capitol last week to advocate before their state senators and delegates for bills that promote community health and the environment in planning projects, health equity, affordable housing, working family supports and criminal justice reform. It was a meaningful and empowering experience that energized them for continued civic engagement rooted in Franciscan values.

Upcoming meetings are listed below. For information about joining or forming a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#), please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org:

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. Jan. 21 at 12:00 pm EST over zoom

Cleveland Area FJC: Tues. Jan. 21 at 7:15 pm EST over zoom

SE Wisconsin FJC: Thurs. Jan. 23 at 4:00 pm CST over zoom

Reading, PA FJC: Sun. Jan. 26 at 3:00 pm EST in person

Denver Area FJC: Mon. Jan. 27 at 7:00 pm MST over zoom

St. Louis FJC: Sun. Feb. 2 at 5:00 pm CST in person

Kansas FJC: Tues. Feb. 4 at 7:00 pm CST over zoom

Virtual FJC (limited mobility): Thurs. Feb. 6 at 11:00 am PST / 2:00 pm EST over zoom

NYC-Area FJC: Wed. Feb. 12 at 7:30 pm EST over zoom