

Publication Date: February 4, 2025

Reflection Date: February 9, 2025 - [Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Put out into the deep

Right before the gospel reading for the [Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) is a small anecdote about Jesus entering Simon Peter's house and healing his mother-in-law's fever. Given what we read this week, it appears Peter's faith was not easily moved...and as we know, one day he will deny Jesus three times! Maybe Peter never quite got Jesus healing his mother-in-law.



In all seriousness, the story from the Gospel of Luke about Jesus engaging with the fishermen on the shores of the Sea of Galilee reminds us that discipleship is often marked by the mundanity and frustration expressed by Peter. After all the hard work we put into a day's work, God catches us momentarily off guard and reminds us that the kingdom is God's, not ours. No ministry, no advocacy program, no event perfectly expresses the reign of God, nor are they necessarily all that fruitful. Nonetheless, we are invited to persevere and cast into the deep—into the depths of creation, the depths of spirit and life.

We're reminded by the prophet Isaiah that none of us is necessarily or particularly qualified on the rating scales of sanctity but nonetheless we are touched by God in little angelic moments and made worthy of the call to missionary discipleship. Although we're not all called to work in fisheries, we're all called to the challenging everyday personal and collective work of witnessing to the kingdom of God, of catching people by the authenticity of a faith incarnate in our lives.

After the smells, bells, and songs of our worship, as African American theologian and civil rights leader [Howard Thurman](#) put it, "the [true] work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart."

We Franciscans pride ourselves on being incarnational Christians, therefore we shouldn't fear the unknowns of the years ahead of us. We will always have our work cut out for us, but how we go about our lived reality as Franciscan disciples is the difference between seeing the miraculous take shape before us in the unexpected or just groaning out another jaded comment. We are called to be faithful bearers of the Word in a world in torment. Only our Creator knows the true depths of the unknown we face. And yet, even after having trodden the same paths, like Peter and Isaiah, we too will cry out and sing God's praises when we realize what God saw deeper than we had.

Do not be afraid! Don't lose heart! The world needs the warmth and joy of Franciscan hearted disciples!

Bro. Cristofer Fernández, OFM Conv.

[Order of Friars Minor Conventual](#), [Our Lady of the Angels Province](#)
Vice Chair, OLA Justice, Peace, & Integrity of Creation Commission
[Franciscan Voice](#), Creation Section Animator/Editor

Suggested Action:

In quiet prayer, before a water feature or in a preferred place, bring before God all the unknowns of your life and ministry. Accept them as things out of your control and release them to God’s care (pray the serenity prayer). Then reflect on how your next engagement with Franciscan Action Network (FAN) or other ministry or advocacy faithfully continues Christ’s care for the poor, the vulnerable, and creation.

Suggested Petitions:

For the Church, that we continue faithfully Christ’s ministry of bringing hope to the poor, freedom to the captives, recovery to the blind/sick, justice for the oppressed, and proclaiming the Lord’s jubilee, let us pray to the Lord.

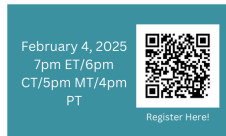
For our country, amid the communion of nations, may we labor to overcome all divisiveness, hatred, and violence by the light and love of God, let us pray to the Lord.

Prayer

**Jesus of the deep blue sea,
Who was it that taught you how to fish?
You knew the depths of spirit and life as you invited others to put out into deep waters. In life and in prayer, may we grow in acceptance of the unknown and delight when you catch us by surprise. Help us, too, to catch people with questions and answers, listening and exchange, with stories over food and drink, with love and laughter and kindness.**

Amen.

Happening Tonight: Immigration Webinar



Join FAN staff and friends tonight, **Tuesday February 4**, at 7:00 pm ET / 6:00 pm CT / 5:00 pm MT / 4:00 pm PT, for an evening of learning and discussion about immigration. We’ll explore current developments, what’s on the horizon, and ways to support immigrants and refugees moving forward.

The webinar will include a panel discussion with leaders in immigration advocacy and plenty of time for your questions.

[Register here](#)

Don't miss this important conversation!

If our Zoom reaches maximum live viewing capacity, we will be streaming it on our YouTube as well and monitoring questions in the chat.

Button: [FAN YouTube Channel](#)

Join Our Team: Director for Campaigns and Creation Care

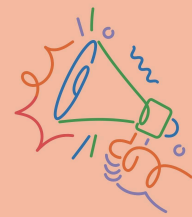
FAN thanks Gabriela Martinez for her leadership as our Director of Campaigns. She has been a vital part of our work, and we wish her the best in her next chapter!

[Send Gabriela a thank you message](#)

FAN is hiring a dedicated advocate to lead creation care advocacy and support movement building. Based in Washington, DC, this mid-level role involves organizing policy advocacy, mobilizing a nationwide network of Franciscan-hearted advocates, and supporting Franciscan Justice Circles. Please consider joining us or passing this notice along to potential candidates.

[Learn more and apply.](#)

**We are
hiring!**



Know Your Rights Materials on Immigration



FAN's partner, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC), has put together "Know Your Rights" materials in 7 languages and counting, for a variety of situations, including at the border, at work, in your car, at home, and in public spaces.

Button: [Access Them Here](#)

Young Palestinian and Israeli Leaders Share Stories of Reconciliation

On **Wednesday, February 5** at 1PM EST / 10 AM PST, join American Friends of the Parents Circle to hear from young Israeli and Palestinian leaders committed to building bridges across divides. They'll share their experiences of personal loss and their efforts to foster dialogue and reconciliation in their communities. [Click here to register.](#)



Support Continued Foreign Assistance

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) are urging Congress to engage with the Administration as it reviews U.S. foreign aid programs. Most funding has been paused during this process, disrupting efforts that provide essential support for millions of people and vulnerable communities worldwide.

While policy reviews are standard, suspending aid in the meantime creates unnecessary hardship. Congress can play a role in keeping these programs running during the review process. [Click here to take action.](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates



The recently formed **New Mexico Franciscan Justice Circle** has begun meeting monthly as well as seeking opportunities to connect outside those meetings. This month Circle members will be attending a film screening together of "Riding the Line: Compassion and Bikes at the American Border" at the Center for Action and Contemplation to benefit Voices on the Border and meet with folks from other local groups working with immigrants.

Members of the **Metro DC-Area Franciscan Justice Circle** braved cold January

temperatures to attend the People's March in Washington DC. They noted positive energy and camaraderie at the march, where they also listened to various speakers representing numerous social justice groups.

To find out more about any of the [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) (FJC) gatherings coming up or for information about joining or forming a Circle, please contact Nora Pfeiffer at FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. Feb. 4 at 12:00 pm EST over zoom
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
SoCal FJC: Thurs. Feb. 6 at 6:00 pm PST over zoom
Washington, DC Area FJC: Sat. Feb. 8 at 10:00 am EST in person
St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Mon. Feb. 10 at 12:30 pm EST in person
Richmond, VA FJC: Mon. Feb. 10 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom
CT-RI FJC: Tues. Feb. 11 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom
DE Valley FJC (PA, NJ, DE): Tues. Feb. 11 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom
New Mexico FJC: Tues. Feb. 11 at 7:00 pm MST over zoom
Monthly National FJC call: Wed. Feb. 12 at 4:00 pm EST over zoom
Cincinnati FJC: Wed. Feb. 12 at 7:00 pm EST over zoom
New York City - Area FJC: Wed. Feb. 12 at 7:30 pm EST over zoom
Rochester, NY FJC: Thurs. Feb. 13 at 3:30 pm EST over zoom
Central Indiana FJC: Fri. Feb. 14 at 1:00 pm EST over zoom
Driftless Region FJC: Mon. Feb. 17 at 6:00 pm CST over zoom