

Publication Date: April 1, 2025

Reflection Date: April 6, 2025 - [Fifth Sunday of Lent](#)

No Condemnation, No Sinning

In the Gospel according to John, Chapter 8:11, Jesus says this after saving the life of a woman caught in adultery: “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.” The message here seems so simple, but what Christ is demonstrating for us is a behavior that is very difficult to imitate.



First, let's set the stage. In this story, it is clear that Jesus is put into a trap, one from which he easily escapes. To me, this shows not only his emotional brilliance but also his intellectual brilliance—a quality that, in my opinion, is not emphasized enough. I have observed that most of us fall into one of two traps: we either overemphasize his refusal to condemn the woman and become too lenient on sin, or we focus on Jesus' command to “sin no more” while still harboring condemnation in our hearts. However, Jesus performs a miracle here: he shows that the path to not sinning necessitates not condemning.

Because I have heard so many sermons on not condemning others, I want to emphasize that Jesus also didn't come to condone sin; he calls us to a higher standard than the old Law. This is made clear in Matthew 5:27: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” And yet, simultaneously, John 3:16 tells us: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

What brings harmony to these seemingly opposite paths? Christ, of course. In fact, the very next line after the reading from John's Gospel gives us the answer: “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

In other words, when Christ's light lives within us, those of us who tend toward self-righteousness will be healed of our tendency to condemn. Likewise, those of us who tend toward self-pity will be healed of our tendency to turn a blind eye to sin. This is a tall order, one we cannot possibly fulfill under our own power. That is why we pray. That is why we give to charity. That is why we lend a helping hand to our neighbor. That is why we share the Gospel—because Christ is far wiser than we are. Christ's Way sets us free, makes us more alive, and, paradoxically, by giving our lives to him, we discover our truest selves. As we seek to live out this call, consider getting involved in an [Franciscan Justice Circle](#). Together, we can take practical steps toward creating a more just and healing world.

Gordon Kubanek

Third Order Franciscan and writer

Suggested Action: Consider joining [FAN's Advocacy Workshop on April 15](#), where you can learn how to support those most often judged and work for justice in your community.

Suggested Petitions: For hearts open to mercy and truth, that we may neither judge harshly nor ignore injustice, we pray to the Lord.

For those who feel cast aside, that they may know dignity and support, we pray to the Lord.

Prayer

**Lord Jesus,
You did not condemn, yet you called to holiness.
Help me to follow your way—merciful and true.
Heal my heart of judgment and my eyes of blindness.
Fill me with your light, that I may walk in freedom and love.**

Amen.

Join us for Guided Meditation: April 8 at 7PM ET



Join FAN staff and community members for a Lenten guided meditation and discussion, "Conversion of the Heart: Seeing Anew with Franciscan Eyes," on **Tuesday April 8 at 7pm ET/6pm CT/5pm MT/4pm PT**. Like our previous events, the first half will be a guided meditation and the second will have a small group discussion followed by a full group one. The meditation portion will be recorded for later viewing.

Button: [Register Here](#)

Advocacy Workshop - April 15 at 7PM ET



Join FAN staff and friends for an Advocacy Workshop on **April 15 at 7pm ET/6pm CT/5pm MT/4pm PT**. This training is open to all and will provide practical guidance on engaging with legislators through calls, written messages, meetings, and letters to the editor. Learn how to communicate Franciscan values effectively, build relationships with elected officials, and make your voice heard. The workshop will include a Q&A session as well.

[Click here to register](#)

Franciscan Budget Letter

Thank you to everyone who signed onto the appropriations letter asking for a Franciscan budget. We received signatures from **1,027 people** and **64 organizations** from **45 states**! We will now begin the process of sending in the requests to as many senators as we can. Please stay tuned on what happens with the requests, and there will be more actions to take with them, so stay tuned on those as well.

Just Peace in Holy Land

[Contact Congress](#): The catastrophic war in Gaza has been overwhelming and we need your help to advocate for resuming the ceasefire, an end to violence in the West Bank, a political process to ensure accountability, and an end to the occupation so a just peace can be realized. Please contact your Congressional representatives to speak out and put constructive pressure on the President for these issues.

[Read this article](#) about the detention of Mahmoud Khalil and other pro-Palestine activists, including Georgetown's Badar Khan Suri, reflecting on how such arrests and detentions separate families, chill free speech, lack due process, and why Catholics should speak up in opposition to a policy of mass deportations, and support free expression and upholding the human rights of Palestinians.

Join Us for Love in Action: Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference!

Join us in **Washington, D.C., from October 18-20, 2025**, for **Love in Action: Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference**. This is your chance to connect with faith-driven advocates and gain practical skills for justice work.

Don't wait—secure your spot today before registration fills up!

[Register here](#)



[Learn more here](#)

Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

Responding to a quick turnaround request, 11 FJCs signed onto the FAN appropriations letter asking for a Franciscan budget—thank you! FJC members advocate in many ways and one of them is writing to their local papers. Several people from different FJCs are submitting Letters to the Editor (LTE) to their local papers, a wonderful avenue for advocacy. There are LTEs published by FJC members in Indiana, New York and Connecticut on various issues such as the death penalty, democracy, suicide and gun storage, and environmental protection policy.

Upcoming [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) (FJC) gatherings:

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tues. April 1 at 12:00 pm ET over Zoom

Kansas FJC: Tues. April 1 at 7:00 pm CT over Zoom

Ohio FJC: Wed. April 2 at 7:00 pm ET over Zoom

Virtual FJC (limited mobility): Thurs. April 3 at 11:00 am PT / 2:00 pm ET over Zoom

Chicagoland FJC: Sat. April 5 at 10:00 am CT over Zoom

New Mexico FJC: Tues. April 8 at 6:30 pm MT over Zoom

Monthly national FJC call: Wed. April 9 at 4:00 pm ET/ 1:00 pm PT over Zoom

Rochester, NY-Area FJC: Thurs. April 10 at 3:30 pm ET over Zoom

Central Indiana FJC: Fri. April 11 at 1:00 pm ET over Zoom

DC-Area FJC: Sat. April 12 at 10:00 am ET in person

St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Mon. April 14 at 12:30 pm ET in person

Richmond, VA-Area FJC: Mon. April 14 at 7:00 pm ET over Zoom

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