

Publication Date: April 8, 2025

Reflection Date: April 13, 2025 - [Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion](#)

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## Following our Humble King

The [Palm Sunday](#) liturgy begins with a reading—done outside the sanctuary—of the story of Jesus' procession into Jerusalem, after which the celebrant and congregation proceed into the church carrying palm branches and singing "Hosanna." In the account from the [Gospel of Luke Ch 19](#), Jesus instructs his disciples to borrow a colt, on which he rides into the city while his disciples acclaim, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." When the Pharisees object to this talk, Jesus responds, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"



While this scene was familiar to me from childhood, I understood it in a new way after reading an explanation of the context in John Dear's *The Gospel of Peace*. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem takes place as a conscious fulfillment of the prophecy from [Zechariah 9](#), "See, your king shall come to you, a just savior is he, meek and riding on an ass, on a colt." His humble procession into the city is also in direct and most likely deliberate juxtaposition to the entry of Pontius Pilate, according to Fr John: "While the Roman procurator would have marched into Jerusalem for Passover Week accompanied by his full cohort of six hundred soldiers and hundreds of warhorses and swords, the nonviolent Prince of Peace rides in on a donkey in a posture of humility and gentleness—the opposite of the imperial show of force..."

No wonder the Pharisees are disturbed by this stunning display by Jesus and his followers. Not only are Jesus' disciples claiming that he is fulfilling a Jewish prophecy that shows him to be a king, but they are also directly contradicting and even mocking the Roman rulers. And in the following days Jesus says and does many more things that challenge the cozy relationship the Jewish religious authorities have with the Roman military and political rulers—at the expense of ordinary Jewish worshippers who are not part of the elite—ultimately leading to his death on a cross.

Jesus tells the Pharisees, however, that it is impossible to muzzle the message of peace that he is bringing. The story continues with a passage about Jesus I find particularly touching: "As he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes.'"

Hearing the story again this Palm Sunday makes me wonder how I, as a follower of Jesus, am called to imitate his brave, creative, nonviolent action in opposition to the military, political, and religious oppression of his time. What can and should I do here and now to show my solidarity with sisters and brothers facing hardship, injustice, and structural violence from the powerful? How can I do as my Lord did, and set an opposite example by courageously calling for and practicing care, fairness, and gentleness towards the most vulnerable?

One thing that seems clear is that I must pray for understanding of “what makes for peace,” which is at least partly “hidden from my eyes.” I suspect that Jesus continues to weep over humankind, whether in the United States or elsewhere, as we pursue supposed solutions that only end up creating more suffering, mostly for the poor and marginalized.

If you, like me, feel the need to learn more about what makes for peace and what is yours to do at this time, please join us tonight, Tuesday Apr 8, for a time of [quiet reflection and conversation](#) about opening our eyes and changing our hearts as we complete Lent. And please consider joining or forming a [Franciscan Justice Circle](#) in your area; my Circle has been a place of tremendous learning for me about what makes for peace and I hope yours will do the same for you!

(Source: John Dear, [The Gospel of Peace: A Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke from the Perspective of Nonviolence](#), Orbis Books, 2024, p. 103)

## **Michele Dunne, OFS**

*FAN Executive Director*

**Suggested Action:** Participate in a Palm Sunday procession in your church or community and ask God to show you how you can process in solidarity with those who need your loving action now.

**Suggested Petitions:** That we might open our hearts and minds to God daily to learn the ways of peace that are hidden from our eyes, we pray

That we might be active, creative, nonviolent messengers of peace and justice in our families, churches, communities, and country, we pray

## **Prayer**

**O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others  
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;  
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;  
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,  
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.  
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,  
And use me to bring them to those places.**

And so open my eyes and my ears  
That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.

Amen.

– Alan Paton (1903-1988)

## Upcoming Events with FAN - Tonight and April 15



Spend an evening in reflection and community with Franciscan Action Network staff and members during “Conversion of the Heart: Seeing Anew with Franciscan Eyes,” **tonight at 7 PM ET / 6 CT / 5 MT / 4 PT**. Join us for a peaceful guided meditation and small group sharing. The meditation will be recorded.

[Register Here](#)

Join FAN staff and friends on **April 15 at 7 PM ET / 6 CT / 5 MT / 4 PT** for an *Advocacy Workshop*

Learn practical tools for contacting legislators, writing letters to the editor, and sharing Franciscan values in public life. Includes Q&A.

[Click here to register](#)



## Join Us for FAN’s Annual Benefit: “I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me”

The staff of FAN invites you to our annual benefit program, *I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me: A Century of Franciscan Solidarity with Migrants*, on **Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 7 PM ET on Zoom**. The FAN staff will sponsor and serve a meal to neighbors in



need at St. Francis of Assisi Church in New York City in lieu of an in-person gala dinner.

Continuing a tradition started in 2023, we encourage you to **sponsor or purchase a ticket, donate your meal** (through our service and contribution to St. Francis Church), **and join us** for an inspiring evening exploring the Franciscan commitment to welcoming and supporting migrants. Together, we will reflect on a century of Franciscan solidarity and the ways we can continue this vital work today. [Click here for more details.](#)

[Click here to register](#)

## FAN Shows Up

On April 3, FAN staff joined Christians for Ceasefire and Just Peace at a vigil in front of the White House with Rev. Munther Isaac from Bethlehem, Palestine. After the vigil in Lafayette Park, participants processed to New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for Rev. Isaac's talk on his new book, *Christ in the Rubble*. [See more photos from the vigil and procession here.](#)



FAN staff and FJC members joined hundreds of thousands at rallies in Washington DC and many other locations on April 5 to express concern about recent government cuts eliminating the U.S.

Department of Education, Agency for International Development, Institute of Peace, and many other policies affecting the welfare of vulnerable people in

the United States and around the world. [Click here to see photos.](#)

[Click here to see other recent actions on the FAN Shows Up page.](#)

## Holy & Easter Week Actions

[Join or host a Stations of the Cross for Justice](#) (with FAN partner: Network Lobby).

Prayerfully call on Congress to act for *We the People*— not the few. Confirmed Stations of the Cross for Justice events will appear [here](#) and you can sign up to [get the materials you need to host your own here.](#)

If you are in **North Carolina, Maine, Michigan, Kentucky, Indiana, or Utah**, FAN is coordinating with our partner Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) on **in-district or Zoom meetings with your Members of Congress** and other faith-based constituents from your state during the April Congressional recess (April 11-27) during Holy Week and Easter Week. The focus of the meetings will be economic justice, climate, and/or migration. All materials, including talking points, will be provided to you. Contact Eileen DeGuire at FAN

([edequire@franciscanaction.org](mailto:edequire@franciscanaction.org)) to indicate your interest to join a meeting, and she will connect you.

## Join us in October for Love in Action: FJLC 2025



Spots are filling up! Join us in **Washington, D.C., from October 18-20, 2025**, for the third annual **Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Love in Action**. This conference is a powerful opportunity to meet Franciscan-hearted people of all ages from across the country and engage with our congressional representatives about justice, peace, and care for creation.

[Register here](#)

[Learn more here](#)

## Franciscan Justice Circle Updates

The **Reading, PA FJC** reflected on family immigration at their last meeting and committed to writing to their members of Congress to support the action steps recommended by [Justice For Immigrants](#) on protecting the prosecuted, Dreamers and mixed-status families as well as humane immigration policies.

Members of the **Richmond, VA Area FJC** attended a local faith-based gathering of 2,000+ with Richmond's mayor and city council members asking for strong commitments to address three problem areas identified by the faith community: gun violence; affordable housing; safe and healthy housing.

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

**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. Louis, MO Area FJC:** Sun. April 13 at 5:00 pm CT 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

**Boston Area FJC:** Wed. April 16 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](mailto:FJCinfo@franciscanaction.org)