

Publication Date: January 6, 2026

Reflection Date: January 11, 2026 - [The Baptism of the Lord](#)

Baptized for Mission

As we gather on January 11 to celebrate the feast of the [Baptism of the Lord](#), our readings focus on the Messianic role of Jesus as the promise of our salvation. Isaiah's prophetic words speak of the character and the persona of the Anointed One. Phrases such as servant, my chosen one, bringing forth justice, a covenant of the people, and a light to the nations, resonate with the longing of the Israelites as they awaited the coming of the Messiah.

In Acts (10:34-38), Peter speaks in the house of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, proclaiming the breadth and boundlessness of God's salvation. His ministry, like that of Jesus, has moved beyond the Jewish community. Imagine the diversity of those gathered. Imagine the power of Peter's words, "I see that God shows no partiality." God's salvific reign, through Jesus Christ, transcends all cultural and ethnic boundaries.



Andrea del Verrocchio and Leonardo da Vinci: The Baptism of Christ (1470-1475)

This raises the question, what was the purpose of Jesus' baptism? Jesus intentionally came to the Jordan to be baptized. John's baptism was a ritual spiritual cleansing, acknowledging one's desire for repentance in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. This ritual bath, "mikveh," a custom of the Jewish people, is still practiced in Orthodox Judaism today. Understanding John's ritual baptism clarifies his resistance as Jesus approached. "I need to be baptized by you, yet

you are coming to me?" Jesus responded, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

In the presence of John, the religious leaders and many people gathered at the Jordan, Jesus humbled himself, fulfilling his call as an obedient son of God. By his action, Jesus, the sinless one, publicly committed himself to fulfill God's will. He is anointed by the Spirit for mission: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." It is a call to discipleship.

The baptism of Jesus marks a major transition, shaping our fundamental understanding of sacramental baptism. In baptism, we die to our old self and are raised as a new creation in Christ Jesus. In baptism, we enter a new way of life, as disciples, entrusted with the mission to carry out and witness to God's saving love and compassion for all people. As Franciscans, living our baptismal discipleship is our call to see all life as sacred and work to uphold a consistent ethic of life.

Margaret Magee OSF

Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, FAN Board Member

Suggested Action: The 2026 March for Life is scheduled for January 23, 2026, in Washington, D.C., with the theme "Life is a Gift." For those who are able, consider participating in the March for Life, bearing witness to the consistent ethic of life.

Suggested Petitions:

For the unity of all Christians. May we recognize the dignity of our common baptism and be awakened in faith by the Holy Spirit. We pray to the Lord.

For all who wait for full initiation into the Church at Easter. May we all deepen our commitments in faith and love. May we voice with full hearts the joy of our salvation and our unity to serve others. We pray to the Lord.

For the grace and wisdom to cherish all life. May we protect the rights of all children, the unborn, and those most vulnerable. We pray to the Lord.

Prayer

God our Creator, on this feast of the Baptism of Jesus, we recall the waters of the Jordan. Your beloved Son humbled Himself to be baptized, revealing Your glory and opening the way for our salvation. As the Spirit descended upon Him, let Your Spirit rest upon us—renewing our hearts, cleansing our souls, and strengthening our faith.

May we, like Christ, rise from the waters ready to serve, to love, and to walk in Your light.

Help us to hear Your voice calling all people “beloved” and to live each day witnessing to Your love and goodness. We ask this through Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

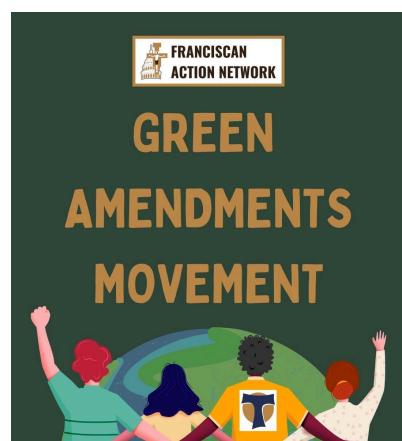
Amen.

Faith in Democracy: Facing the Challenges of 2026

Tonight, **Tuesday, January 6, 2026**, please join us for the next event in our annual ‘Faith in Democracy’ series, an *online* panel discussion: **Faith in Democracy: Facing the Challenges of 2026**. The digital panel will be moderated by **Chris Crawford**, the Senior Director of Civic Strategies at Interfaith America, and feature **Jim Wallis**, the founding Director of the Georgetown University Center on Faith and Justice; **Gloria Purvis**, senior fellow at Georgetown University’s Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life; and **Sharon Brous**, senior and founding rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community based in Los Angeles. The panel will explore the connection between faith and democracy, the challenges to US democracy at this moment in history, and ways people of faith and faith communities can work together to strengthen democracy moving forward. [You can register here.](#)



Webinar Workshop: The Green Amendments Movement, Case Studies & Success at the State Level



Join FAN for a webinar workshop on **Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026 at 7pm ET** (6pm CT / 5pm MT / 4pm PT) to learn more about joining the Green Amendments Movement in your state. Participants will be invited to join breakout rooms to learn more about opportunities to join the movement and make real change in their state.

What if your right to breathe clean air or drink safe water were as sacred as your right to speak freely? Green Amendments make this vision real, embedding environmental rights directly into state constitutions. Green

Amendments ensure that no one, especially our most vulnerable, is left unprotected. As federal protections grow more fragile and communities face the escalating impacts of pollution, climate change, and environmental injustice, these state-level constitutional rights provide a lasting safeguard for ourselves and future generations. You can register [here](#).

Pray for the Venezuelan People

As Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people, we lift our hearts in prayer for the people of Venezuela and their future. We affirm their right to live peacefully in a sovereign nation where their dignity, including the fundamental right to choose their own government, is fully respected and realized. St. Francis and St. Clare were creative nonviolent peacemakers in the midst of crusades and armed attacks. They followed Jesus, who called us to the nonviolent love of friends and enemies. Following in their footsteps, we see the ongoing use of violence by the United States and efforts to extract resources from Venezuela as morally indefensible.



We pray that all will heed the [words of Pope Leo XIV](#):

"The good of the beloved Venezuelan people must prevail over every other consideration and lead us to overcome violence and to undertake paths of justice and peace, safeguarding the country's sovereignty, ensuring the rule of law enshrined in the Constitution, respecting the human and civil rights of each person and of all, and working to build together a serene future of collaboration, stability, and concord, with special attention to the poorest who suffer because of the difficult economic situation." The Holy Father has invited everyone to pray for the Venezuelan people.

With Gratitude for Your Support of FAN in 2025



On this Epiphany, as we begin the new year, we pause with deep gratitude for all who walked with the Franciscan Action Network throughout 2025. Just as the Magi brought gifts to honor the Christ child, we are deeply grateful for the gifts you have brought to FAN—through your financial support, faithful prayer, advocacy, and the gift of your time and presence. Your generosity has sustained and strengthened this community of hope in countless ways.

Your support throughout the year, especially during our end-of-year campaign, made it possible for FAN to accompany communities impacted by injustice, form and expand Franciscan Justice Circles, nurture emerging leaders, and lift a Franciscan voice for peace, human dignity, and care for creation. Together, you helped turn faith into action in meaningful and lasting ways.

Franciscan Justice Circles

If one of your New Year's resolutions is to become more involved in promoting justice and building community, now is the perfect time to join a Franciscan Justice Circle. Click [here](#) to get involved in 2026!

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

Kansas FJC: Tue. Jan. 6 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

Ohio FJC: Wed. Jan. 7 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Rochester, NY FJC: Thur. Jan. 8 at 3:30 pm ET via Zoom

SoCal FJC: Thur. Jan. 8 at 6:00 pm PT via Zoom

Central Indiana FJC: Fri. Jan. 9 at 1:00 pm ET via Zoom

New Mexico FJC: Sat. Jan. 10 at 2:00 pm MT In Person

DC-area FJC: Sat. Jan. 10 at 10:00 am ET In Person

To find out more about any of the [FJC](#) gatherings coming up or for information about joining or forming a Circle, please sign up [HERE](#).