

Publication Date: December 23, 2025

Reflection Date: December 28, 2025 - [Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph](#)

## May All Families Follow Their Dreams

The gospel [reading for the Feast of the Holy Family](#) (Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23) offers one of the few images of St. Joseph in the Scriptures. Matthew shows us a father who is attentive and faithful to his dreams and who is practical in doing what's best for his family. Joseph trusted in a dream that told him to take his wife and their newborn to find safety in a foreign country. Scripture doesn't go into details, but I have known enough immigrants and refugees to imagine how challenging life would have been for the Holy Family seeking survival and safety in Egypt. When the time was right, Joseph also followed his dream and uprooted his little family again to return to Israel. Each time, Joseph had to follow his dream within the political realities of Judea and Galilee.

My prayer, as we enter 2026, is that all parents will be able to explore and respond to their dreams and that our political choices will make it possible for all people to do what is best for their families. May our Franciscan heritage be a resource for discerning our own dreams and choices while also being committed to co-creating a society where all people can do the same.

May you all have a Wonderful Christmas!

***Toby Harkleroad, OFS***

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The Nativity by Federico Barocci (1597)

## Faith in Democracy: Facing the Challenges of 2026

On **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 opening prayer will be offered by **Bishop John Stowe** with the closing prayer by **Imam Talib Shareef**. 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](#).**

## Walk with FAN in 2026



As we celebrate the joy of Christmas, we are reminded that hope enters the world through simple acts of love, generosity, and presence. This holy season, we invite you to support the Franciscan Action Network as we continue nurturing communities committed to peace, justice, and care for all creation. Your year-end gift helps sustain the faithful work of the Franciscan Justice Circles—where prayer becomes action and compassion takes root in local communities. As we prepare to step into a new year, your generosity ensures that the light of Christmas continues to shine through acts of justice and solidarity. **You can donate [here](#).** Thank you for your generous engagement!

## Franciscan Justice Circles

Members of the **Chicagoland FJC** have signed on to the [Cabrini Pledge](#) and discussed personal experiences with the increased detention actions by ICE. The Circle came up with three ways to live out the pledge: create talking points to use when dialoguing with others about immigration; patronize restaurants hit by economic hardship due to the crackdown; attend mass at parishes that face closings.

The **Connecticut-Rhode Island FJC** is delving into Pope Leo's encyclical *Dilexi Te*, [On Love For The Poor](#), with a study guide from Network, while continuing to engage authorities on issues relating the environment, peace, and justice.

Members of the **W. Pennsylvania FJC** participate in local peaceful prayer vigils and regularly write to their Members of Congress about various issues of concern including protecting the

Allegany National Forest, supporting immigrants and refugees, and protecting elements of democracy.

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

**Texas FJC:** Tue. Dec. 23 at 7:15 pm CT / 6:15 pm MT via Zoom

**SE Wisconsin FJC:** Mon. Dec. 29 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

**Twin Cities FJC:** Mon. Dec. 29 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

**Chicagoland FJC:** Mon. Jan. 3 at 10:00 am CT via Zoom

**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](#).