

Publication Date: December 30, 2025

Reflection Date: January 4, 2026 - [The Epiphany of the Lord](#)

## Overjoyed at Seeing the Star

No matter how many times I hear the stories of the Nativity and the [Epiphany](#), I am thrilled anew. As I ponder the idea of wisdom figures coming a long distance, pursuing they knew not what—a king?—and ending up in front of a humble dwelling in a backwater town of Judea, I am amazed that they were not disappointed or even disconcerted. No, according to the Gospel of Matthew they were “overjoyed” to find at long last where the star rested. And they went in immediately to meet Jesus and his mother, laying out their rich and seemingly inappropriate (but, as it turns out, strangely appropriate) gifts.

More than the gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the gift of the Magi that most touches me is that of their presence. They gave weeks if not months of uncomfortable travel, among foreigners whose language and religion they did not understand, and they risked looking naive and even foolish so that they could be present to God-with-us.

What am I willing to give this Epiphany? Am I willing to practice the ministry of presence in the new year? To go to uncomfortable places, to do things that seem naive and even foolish, as I seek God’s presence and will among us? And if I finally find that God is present in unexpected people and places, will I be overjoyed?

I wish you a blessed Epiphany as we journey into 2026 together.

***Michele Dunne, OFS***

*Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network*



## 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 stand on the eve of a new year, we pause with deep gratitude for all who have supported the Franciscan Action Network throughout 2025. Your generosity, faithful actions, and continued prayers sustain our work and make it possible for us to respond to injustice with courage, compassion, and hope. While much has been accomplished, there is still more work ahead as we prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the coming year. It is not too late to make a year-end gift to FAN—your support today helps ensure that our shared Franciscan voice remains strong in the year to come. **You can donate [here](#).** Thank you for walking with us.