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Reflection Date: January 25, 2026 - [Third Sunday in Ordinary Time](#)

Resisting the Temptation of Self-Righteousness

The readings for the [Third Sunday in Ordinary Time](#) are a rich harvest but, given the current state of the world, the words that resonated the most with me were these in the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1:10):

I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.



Photo by Siavash Ghanbari on Unsplash

The divisions described by Paul and the dangers of such divisions to the building of God's kingdom on Earth sound so very similar to our world today. Even at the family level, I know many families in which brothers, sisters, and parents refuse to talk with each other and in which members are self-righteous and convinced that "the other" is in error and must "change their ways." This is the painful reality of what happens when we don't follow the word of God.

All this "us" and "them" is not just ungodly, it ensures poor physical, mental, and social health—and it is *the* destroyer of Love.

Why is that? Well, according to a book given to me by a friend in the military entitled “Why we Hate” by Rush Dozier, it’s quite simple: love is destroyed when we create “us” and “them” categories. When we create such divisions, *hate*, at a deep biological level, thrives.

So what can you do? Love your neighbor—especially those whose opinions and actions you find repulsive. Find a bridge of something you have in common; there is always something!

I have worked hard at doing that, and slowly, I admit *very* slowly, it has worked. In the prayer section is a prayer that has helped me stop my “us” and “them” thinking in those times when I really want to demonize the other and feel self-righteous because I feel that “they are wrong” and “I am right”(see ‘Prayer’ below).

When we are grounded in this humility and see the good in others, we are better able to connect with others, break down barriers, and open one another up to the persuasion that is at the heart of democratic dialogue. As we work to build a movement for creation, peace, justice, and human dignity, this dialogue can change hearts and minds, while repairing the fractures in our society. This is the power of [Franciscan Justice Circles](#), where real dialogue takes place. This is integral to FAN’s ongoing [efforts](#) to strengthen democracy in 2026. But it all begins with us resisting the temptation to self-righteousness.

Gordon Kubanek

Third Order Franciscan and Writer

Suggested Action: Think about any fractured relationships you may have and any instances where your self-righteousness may have played a role. Search for the good in the other person. Can you find any shared values? Try to open up a dialogue, listen to the other person, and seek common ground in those areas.

Suggested Petitions:

For all who strive for justice, may we resist the temptation to self-righteousness, we pray to the Lord.

For an end to the hatred that divides us, so that we may unite together in love, we pray to the Lord.

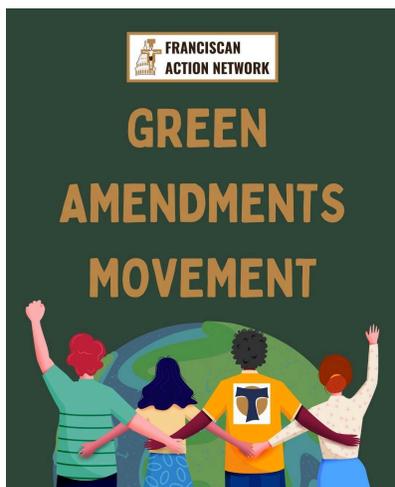
Prayer

**Lord, be with me when I feel so right that the other must be wrong,
because that is exactly when I am so wrong, and
so far from you, because only when I am filled with your Spirit do
I feel and know in my bones that because you love all, all of us are united,**

and that Love conquers all, unites all in you.

Amen.

Environmental Justice Webinar Workshop and Action



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 to get the right to a clean and healthy environment put into your state constitution. Participants will be invited to join breakout rooms to learn more about opportunities to join the movement and make real change in their state. **You can register [here](#).**

The U.S. administration is accepting public comments for a new proposal to expand offshore drilling into the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic, and Eastern Gulf of America. FAN is collecting **electronic signatures** on a joint comment ([here](#)), which will be added to the [Federal Register](#) for the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Together, let's urge the U.S. administration to protect these waters. [CLICK HERE by January 20th](#) to learn more and add your electronic signature to the joint comment.

Update on FY26 Federal Appropriations

Three months into Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, Congress is nearly halfway done funding the government for FY26. A lot more work is ahead of Congress to get all 12 appropriations bills into law before government funding runs out on January 30. To learn more about where things stand on government funding, [click here](#).

ICE funding. Following the fatal shooting of Renee Nicole Good by an ICE officer in Minneapolis, Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), Ranking Member, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations subcommittee, and Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), on the House Appropriations Committee, are seeking [ICE reforms](#) as part of a DHS spending bill. This past summer, Congress already gave DHS an unprecedented \$170 billion for ICE raids, family detention, and mass deportations. You can contact Congress to oppose additional funding for such action [here](#).



SNAP. The One Big Beautiful Bill (HR 1) enacted in July 2025, [cut SNAP](#) by almost \$187 billion through 2034, representing a roughly 20 percent cut, the deepest in the program's history. The next FY26 appropriation bill must take steps to undo the harmful cuts made to SNAP and delay, if not eliminate, the requirement that most states pay a share of SNAP food benefit costs. Some states may be forced to take away food assistance from people with low incomes or even end SNAP entirely. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that states would respond to this cost shift by collectively reducing or eliminating SNAP benefits for about 300,000 people in a typical month.

FAN will follow these developments closely and issue calls to action in the coming weeks.

To learn more, read FAN's *Understanding the Federal Budget Process* ([click here](#)), which was created for Catholic educators.

Prayer Vigil Outside ICE Headquarters

On January 15, Franciscan Action Network staff members joined other faith leaders outside ICE headquarters in Washington DC for a prayer vigil. Sixteen years after the devastating earthquake that took the lives of over 300,000 Haitians, those gathered encouraged the Trump administration to reconsider its decision to end Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for immigrants from Haiti. FAN Associate Director Sister Marie Lucey, OSF and Advocacy Strategist Rosie Davila spoke during the vigil. You can watch the full livestream [on Instagram](#) and Rosie's closing prayer on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



National Human Trafficking Awareness Month



An estimated 50 million people have been impacted by human trafficking—everywhere from crisis locations across the globe to our own local communities and neighborhoods, where it is often hidden away. While migrants are acutely threatened, child online sexual exploitation is also rampant. Human trafficking comes in various forms—and progress has been slow in reducing this grave threat to human dignity. The Alliance to End Human Trafficking has created its 2026 toolkit on ending human trafficking. FAN's Director of Advocacy Sr. Maria Orlandini, who is on the Alliance's advocacy

committee, says this toolkit is an excellent resource to learn more and take action.

Franciscan Justice Circles



Members of the **DC-area FJC** joined the Poor People's Campaign on Martin Luther King Jr Day (above), Jan. 19. They also joined the Society of Christian Ethics for a litany and Beloved Community feast in front of the White House on Jan. 8. The public witness included prayer, song, and a litany promoting justice, truth, active nonviolence, and love.

Members of the **Reading, PA FJC** are actively tracking approximately 10 bills (8 federal, 2 state) related to immigration and the environment and plan to take action once bills advance out of committee. One member participated in a spontaneous ICE demonstration, an example of ongoing engagement in direct action.

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

St. Bonaventure U. FJC: Wed. Jan. 21 at 12:30 pm ET In Person

Michigan FJC: Wed. Jan. 21 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

W. Pennsylvania FJC: Thur. Jan. 22 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom

SE Wisconsin FJC: Mon. Jan. 26 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

Twin Cities FJC: Mon. Jan. 26 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

Colorado FJC: Mon. Jan. 26 at 7:00 pm MT via Zoom

Texas FJC: Tue. Jan. 27 at 7:15 pm CT / 6:15 MT via Zoom

San Francisco Bay Area FJC: Wed. Jan. 28 at 7:00 pm PT via Zoom

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](#).

