

Publication Date: April 21, 2026

Reflection Date: April 26, 2026 - [Fourth Sunday of Easter](#)

## The Gate to True Peace

In the gospel reading for the [Fourth Sunday of Easter](#), Jesus reminds us that there is only one way to true peace: through Him. Jesus is widely known as the Good Shepherd. In this reading, Jesus talks about himself as the gate through which a good shepherd leads their sheep.

This is in contrast to the corrupt leaders and religious authorities who came before Jesus and misused their authority, those whom he classifies as “thieves” and “robbers.” In our world today, it feels as though there are many who offer distractions and false paths to rob us of this peace. Political leaders try to divide us against one another—even using faith as a wedge to do so. Social media algorithms operate in a way that pulls us toward a variety of vices, anxiety, hatred, materialism, and sinfulness. Thieves and robbers abound!



Photo by Ani Adigyozyan on Unsplash

Yet we have a Good Shepherd whose loving voice we know. We have a narrow gate through which we can begin the path toward peace—within ourselves and with one other. We just need to put our trust in the One who can guide us to this true peace.

Pope Leo XIV pointed to this path recently as he spoke to war victims in Cameroon: “Consolation for broken hearts and hope for change in society are possible if we entrust ourselves to God and God’s word.” He explained that God sets us free, His Word opens paths to freedom, and His Spirit makes us new people capable of effecting real change.

In the reading from Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:14a, 36-41), Peter calls people forward to be baptized and tells them to “save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Once again, Pope Leo offered a similar message in his recent travels. In place of hatred, division, and war, Leo suggested a better path forward, the way of Christ: “you who hunger and thirst for justice, who are poor, merciful, meek, and pure of heart, who have wept — you are the light of the world!”

We are not abandoned during this time of trial. We do not need to wander alone, searching for our own path forward in this darkness. Our shepherd does indeed walk before us, and He calls us by name. On what path does he tread?

*When he was insulted, he returned no insult;  
when he suffered, he did not threaten;  
instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly. (1 Peter 2:23)*

Let us avoid pridefulness and resist calls toward division—and even calls to arms—by going through the gate and following this good shepherd. Let us use this opportunity to serve each other through acts of mutual aid and by advocating for a just democracy in which everyone can thrive. FAN’s work on behalf of free and fair elections is one way we can choose this path of peace.

In doing this, we can turn toward Jesus, Our Shepherd, and avoid the temptations offered by the latest “corrupt generation” in our world today.

***Chris Crawford***  
*Interfaith America*

**Suggested Action:** Take a break from the noise and busyness of the world and create something beautiful this week: plant flowers or vegetables, create a work of art, write something beautiful such as a poem or prayer for peace.

**Suggested Petitions:**

*That we can seek and find the voice of our Good Shepherd and hear the ways that he is calling us to promote peace in our communities.*

*For peace in Cameroon, Lebanon, Iran, Ukraine, and all other places where conflict reigns, we pray to the Lord.*

**Prayer**

**Almighty God, you are the Good Shepherd. You are the gate. You are the one whose voice shows us the way to live a life of peace and love. Help us to hear your voice and**

not be distracted by the *robbers* and *thieves* who would corrupt us. Help us to trust your way. Be our guide as we strive to do your will this week—and always.

Amen.

## Join our Annual Benefit on June 16



At the heart of everything we do at the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) is a simple but powerful belief: every person has inherent dignity. Please join us for FAN's most important fundraiser of the year, our annual online Benefit, **Dignity First: Nourishing Lives, Transforming Communities**, on **Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 7 pm Eastern Time on Zoom**. As we have done since 2023, guests are invited to sponsor or purchase a ticket, with the option to "give away" their meal to someone in need, while joining a live online program rooted in Franciscan values. This year's program will take us to the **Capuchin Soup Kitchen in Detroit**, which has served the community for nearly a century through meals, clothing, and supportive

services. Join us and together, we can put dignity first. [Join us](#).

## Watch 'Advocating for a Just Farm Bill' Webinar

On April 14, FAN hosted the webinar '**Advocating for a Just Farm Bill**', the second event in our anti-hunger campaign, *Fishes & Loaves*. The subject of the webinar was how we can support adequate government spending on programs to feed the hungry in the U.S., including the Farm Bill and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You can watch the full webinar [here](#).



## On Earth Day: Act to Protect Endangered Species

Because of us, thousands of species will no longer

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) protects biodiversity and prevents the extinction of our most vulnerable animals, fish, and plants.

The ESA Amendments Act (H.R. 1897), currently under consideration by the House of Representatives, would gut the ESA and put species with rapidly declining populations at even greater risk. Nearly all species listed under the ESA have been saved from extinction and hundreds are on the path to recovery today.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

[Act Today to Protect Endangered Species!](#)

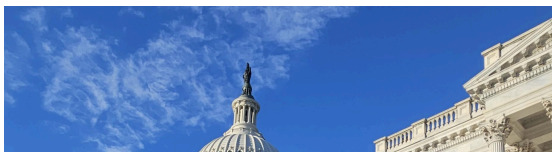
## Pope Leo: Reject War, Lay Down Our Weapons, Be Nonviolent Peacemakers

In recent weeks, Pope Leo XIV has released a [series](#) of [prophetic](#) statements regarding war, including: “This is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war”; “(Jesus) does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: 'Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood'...”; and “(Jesus) did not arm himself, or defend himself, or fight any war.” Reflecting upon Easter, the pope said, “The power with which Christ rose is entirely nonviolent.” On social media, he wrote, “Anyone who is a disciple of Christ, the Prince of Peace, is never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs.”



**Congress:** In the Senate last week, *Joint Resolutions of Disapproval* to block bulldozers being used for annexation of the West Bank and 1000-pound weapons to Israel received 40 and 36 Democratic votes, respectively. This is a significant increase from the 27 votes they received on the last similar vote and now constitutes about 80% of the Democratic caucus. Thank you for your advocacy on this issue! The recent *War Powers* vote in the House was 213-214. With this close margin and other actions, there is growing pressure on the Administration to end the war.

## Don't miss out! Register today for the Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference 2026



Register now for the **2026 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: *Ours to do*** on **November 7-9, 2026.**

This is the moment to gather with like-minded advocates in **Washington, D.C.** for justice, peace, and care for creation. Through Franciscan formation, inspiring speakers, hands-on training, and civic engagement on Capitol Hill, we'll explore how to live out our Franciscan values and advocate for a more just and peaceful world.

See highlights and hear from people who attended last year's conference [here](#). We hope you will join us.

Ready to attend? [Click here to register](#). Do you want to build the conference and make it accessible to more people? Sponsorship information is available [here](#).

## Franciscan Justice Circles

Inspired by other FJCs writing letters to church leaders, the **Central Indiana FJC** wrote a letter of gratitude to their archbishop for a public statement made in January appealing for civility rooted in humility and empathy. FJC members also participated in multiple public witness gatherings including a silent walk and prayer vigil from the cathedral to the statehouse. Members submitted comments on a proposed new rule from the administration that would impose major changes that would greatly reduce immigrants' right to appeal decisions in their cases.

The **OH Franciscan Justice Circle** members have been active in various activities. Some include participating in the Way of the Cross for Justice along the Ohio River on Good Friday connecting Jesus' passion with injustices in the current realm, an interfaith action that brought people together in community, and writing letters to members of Congress to address local and international hunger issues.

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

**Kansas FJC:** Tue. Apr. 21 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

**Winston-Salem NC FJC:** Wed. Apr. 22 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

**SoCal FJC and Bay Area FJC:** Thur. Apr. 23 at 7:00 pm PT via Zoom

**Twin Cities FJC:** Mon. Apr. 27 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

**Colorado FJC:** Mon. Apr. 27 at 7:00 pm MT via Zoom

**CT-RI FJC:** Tue. Apr. 28 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

**Texas FJC:** Tue. Apr. 28 at 7:15 pm CT via Zoom

**Massachusetts FJC:** Thur. Apr. 30 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

**W. Pennsylvania FJC:** Thur. Apr. 30 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom

**Chicagoland FJC:** Sat. May 2 at 10:00 am CT 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](#).