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Reflection Date: May 3, 2026 - [Fifth Sunday of Easter](#)

The Homes That Shape Us

“What do you think about when you think of your childhood home?” my mom asked my aunt at the dinner table. My aunt described the granite floors and limestone walls of a house in San Antonio, a modern structure that my dad once joked “would make a great public library.” While they were talking, I looked around and saw my own childhood home, which is also my mom’s childhood home. I ended up here a few weeks earlier after the somewhat unexpected passing of my beloved Grandfather. Since then, I’ve spent a lot of time outside on the farm where I grew up—planting flowers, planting trees, and working with the farm machinery he used for decades. In so many ways, this farm is my spiritual home. It’s where I learned about love, work, and prayer. I love this place.



The readings for the [Fifth Sunday of Easter](#) talk a lot about spiritual houses. The image of us as “living stones” (in 1 Peter 2:4-9) invites us to take part in something larger, a community built on justice and mercy. In the gospel reading, Jesus talks about a “house with many rooms” and a place that is prepared for us. My Grandpa spent his whole life showing me what it means to be connected to your community and to the land. I'm so glad that he's in that “house with many rooms.” He worked hard, gave back, and taught me how to be a follower of God. I miss him, but I’m reminded of how thin the veil is. He’s here, walking alongside me, every day. He’s as vibrant as ever.

I'm also reminded that we build spiritual homes beyond where we grew up. For nearly two years, FAN has been one of mine, along with the amazing community where I lived in DC. This is my last week at FAN before moving on to grad school, and it has been one of the homes that formed me. I've learned what nonviolence looks like in public life and how a community can work together for justice. Thank you for being part of my spiritual home. Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled," and invites us to trust. I'm holding onto that as I step into what's next.

Most of us end up far from our childhood homes. Some of us may never return to them. Surely the homes that shape us stay with us. I invite you to think about the houses that have formed you along the way. Where were you seen and known? Where did you learn and grow? What is your house today? Like living stones, we carry those homes forward and help build something new and beautiful wherever we go.

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Suggested Action: Take some time to think about the homes that have shaped you and the values you have formed in these places. Then think about where you live now and the values you hope you impart to others, as we work together to build a world of peace and justice.

Suggested Petitions:

For all immigrants and refugees seeking safety and a place to call home, may they find welcome. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the homes that formed us, spiritual and physical places that held us in love. Lord, hear our prayer.

For those we have lost, may we always feel them guiding us forward. Lord, hear our prayer.

Prayer

Loving God,

We praise you in gratitude for the land beneath our feet,

For soil that holds roots,

Mulch that protects new life,

And flowers that remind us that beauty is all around.

We thank you for the homes that have shaped us

And places that have held our hearts throughout the seasons.

We pray for all those who journey, seeking safety and welcome.

May we make room for them.

May your Spirit open clear paths before us.

As we go, grant blue skies above us
and tailwinds behind us,
reminders of those who loved us into being
and are with us now.

Amen.

Protect 'Sensitive Locations'



During Ecumenical Advocacy Days in Washington DC, April 20-22, FAN staff members Sisters Maria Orlandini and Marie Lucey participated in visits to members of Congress urging passage of **Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061/S.455)**, which would permanently codify limitations on federal agents' immigration enforcement actions in and around "sensitive locations."

Many faith organizations, including FAN, are concerned about immigration enforcement actions by federal agents in and near "sensitive locations," such as houses of worship, schools, hospitals, and other places where people receive essential services and resources, including courthouses. On his first day in office in 2025, President Trump's administration rescinded a 30-year guidance directing DHS personnel to avoid enforcement actions at sensitive locations.

Please [contact your members of Congress](#) to support this legislation.

Take Action to Reduce Economic Inequality

On April 22, FAN Director of Communications Robert Christian appeared on '[The Crisis of Connection](#),' a Georgetown University panel on the epidemic of loneliness, isolation, and disconnection that many young people are experiencing. In addition to [describing](#) the efforts of Franciscan Justice Circles to foster community and connection while building justice, he explained the need to build a more just economy to address the underlying conditions that have made this epidemic hit working class people harder than others.



May Day Strong: On May 1, organizations are calling for a day of **no work, no shopping, and no school** to express support for greater economic justice and concern about existing threats to democracy in the US. This [broad-based coalition](#) includes organizations from labor, education, climate, peace, healthcare, immigration, faith, etc. Large-scale strikes are among the most effective forms of nonviolent action, as shown in Minneapolis where 1 in 4 people participated in a one-day strike that helped to end the massive ICE campaign there. [Click here for more information and to find an action near you.](#)

Act for Passage of Critical Human Trafficking Legislation



On April 23, FAN Director of Advocacy Sr. Maria Orlandini, OSF attended a press conference to help build momentum for the **Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1144)**. The press conference included lead co-sponsors Rep. Christopher Smith (R-NJ-4) and Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD-7), along with survivors and advocates for this critical piece of legislation on human trafficking. You

can [contact your representatives in Congress](#) to urge the House to take up and swiftly pass a clean version of this bill.

Joint Christian Advocacy Summit for the Middle East

Please join FAN and a broad coalition of Christian organizations May 5-7, 2026 as we converge in Washington, DC for a **Joint Christian Advocacy Summit for the Middle East**. Centered on the theme “Do Right; Seek Justice (Is. 1:17): Christians Uniting Against Oppression in Palestine/Israel,” this gathering will equip and mobilize Christian advocates from across the country in support of US policies that uphold dignity, human rights, and lasting security for all who call the region home. Attendees will learn from experts, gain advocacy skills, and have the opportunity to meet with their congressional offices to call for just peace in the Holy Land.

[More Information and Registration](#)



Key Upcoming Events: Register Today



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](#).

Registration is also open for the **2026 Franciscan Justice Leadership Conference: Ours to do** on **November 7-9, 2026**. 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. [Click here to register](#). Sponsorship information is available [here](#).

Franciscan Justice Circles

Members of the **New York City-Area FJC** met with Sen. Gillibrand's office to discuss the Dream Act as part of FAN's immigration advocacy days. Additionally, they wrote a collective letter to regional bishops encouraging a call to clergy to preach about immigration through the frame of Catholic Social Teaching. They are also preparing for annual efforts to advocate on state level policies: in favor of the New York Food Safety and Chemical Disclosure Act and to reduce plastic packaging.

Along with praying and reflecting on the current signs of the times, the **Chicagoland FJC** invited someone from a local court watch observation group that seeks to both accompany people in immigration detention as well as bear witness at hearings to observe when due process isn't being followed.

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

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

Chicagoland FJC: Sat. May 2 at 10:00 am CT via Zoom

Virtual NY state/St. Kateri Tekawitha FJC: Mon. May 4 at 3:00 pm ET via Zoom

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tue. May 5 at 12:00 pm ET via Zoom

Kansas FJC: Tue. May 5 at 7:00 pm CT via Zoom

Central Maryland FJC: Wed. May 6 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Ohio FJC: Wed. May 6 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Virtual FJC (ltd. mobility): Thur. May 7 at 11:00 am PT / 2:00 pm ET via Zoom

Metro DC-area FJC: Sat. May 9 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](#).