

Publication Date: April 7, 2026

Reflection Date: April 12, 2026 - [Sunday of Divine Mercy](#)

A New Birth to a Living Hope

On [Divine Mercy Sunday](#), in a reading from the First Letter of St Peter (1 Peter 1:3-9), we read that Jesus “in his great mercy gave us a new birth to a living hope.” Peter challenges us not to be swayed by societal norms or hostility, but to trust in God's living hope to empower us to stand for justice. The ‘great mercy’ calls us to act on behalf of the vulnerable in our society and urges us to embody God's compassion through advocacy.



Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash

Reflecting on the passage from the Gospel According to John (Ch 20), I was struck by the words “the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear.” How often do I, out of fear, hesitate to speak out against what the author Margaret Wheatley defines as “evil”—those speaking and taking pleasure in harming other human beings or God's creation? Faith in the resurrected Jesus helps me to unlock those doors of fear. Faith inspires me to bring hope to those harmed by lies and disinformation. Faith also compels me to speak out against the pervasive racism in our country.

Jesus states in this gospel passage, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When Jesus walked our earth, he did what he was called to do by the Father. We are called to do the same today. The Father has sent us to make a difference in our neighborhood and world. Together, our actions can challenge evil and bring about healing and justice in our community.

When I read the passage from the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-47), "All who believed had all things in common and divided possessions according to each one's needs," I could not help but think of all those who have died since being denied food and medicine once provided by USAID, as well as those in the United States no longer able to afford healthcare. It challenges all of us to consider how our own communities can be structured to provide for the vulnerable and marginalized in our world today, with our resources fairly distributed so that all might flourish.

It took St. Francis time to realize that the message he heard from the San Damiano crucifix, "Repair my house," referred not to a physical church, but to the society in which he lived. Franciscan-hearted people are still called to speak out for the dignity of difference in our society. We are compelled to unlock the doors of fear and act in support of those othered today because of the color of their skin, nation of birth, or economic circumstances. Together, through Franciscan Action Network, we can build a culture of inclusion and justice for all.

Maryann Mueller, CSSF
Felician Sisters of North America

Suggested Action: Take action today by clicking on one of the action alerts or upcoming events sponsored by FAN below.

Suggested Petitions:

God of Peace, please unlock the doors of fear that prevent me from doing what is mine to do.

Creator God, help me see how best to use my resources to provide for the vulnerable and marginalized in my community.

Prayer

Most High, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me true faith, certain hope and perfect charity, sense and knowledge, Lord, that I may carry out your holy and true command.

Amen.

(St. Francis's Prayer before the Crucifix)

Blessings for the Easter Season



We wish you and your loved ones hope and renewal this Easter season. On Easter Sunday, Pope Leo XIV said, “Christ’s resurrection is the beginning of a new humanity; it is the entrance into the true promised land, where justice, freedom, and peace reign, where all recognize one another as brothers and sisters, children of the same Father who is Love, Life, and Light.” May the light of the Risen Christ guide each of us as we walk together in the way of Francis and Clare—rooted in joy, grounded in love, and courageous in action.

Join our Webinar on Addressing Hunger in the U.S.

FAN invites you to participate in our upcoming webinar '**Advocating for a Just Farm Bill**', the second event in our anti-hunger campaign, *Fishes & Loaves*. On **Tuesday, April 14** at 4 pm PDT & MST / 5 pm MDT / 6 pm CDT / 7 pm EDT, we will learn about government spending on programs to feed the hungry in the U.S., including the Farm Bill and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This one-hour webinar will offer prayer, updates, and clear actions that we as Franciscan-hearted people can take to protect food and nutrition programs in challenging times. Register [here](#).



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](#).

Form An Earth Day Solutions Circle

On Earth Day (April 22) or during Earth Week (April 18-26), you are invited to gather with your Franciscan Justice Circle or a group of friends to host a [Solutions Circle](#) to explore environmental solutions like green corridors, renewable micro-grids, reuse centers, forest restoration, rewilding, and more. Hopeful, inspiring, and achievable, nonviolent solutions are everywhere—and they work! To learn more about Solutions Circles, check out [this toolkit](#).



Seeking Peace in a Time of War



As President Trump repeatedly threatens to escalate the war against Iran and target civilian infrastructure, Pope Leo has delivered a string of anti-war messages challenging those who initiate wars and [warning](#) that God does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war. Against those claiming to wage a 'holy war,' the Holy Father states, "This is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war."

Purge Palantir from politics: Palantir is integrated into the government agencies of several countries' domestic surveillance operations. Palantir's artificial intelligence has been critical to the Israel military's genocide against Palestinians and utilized by US federal agencies and police departments to target people for immigration actions and

“predictive policing” of those who have not committed crimes. The company also consumes and stores personal data in data centers on a massive scale to feed its AI tools. [Contact your Congress members here.](#)

The Joint Christian Advocacy Summit will be held May 5-7 in Washington DC, focused on Palestine and Israel. [Register here.](#)

Franciscan Justice Circles

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

Mid-Hudson Valley FJC: Tue. April 7 at 12:00 pm ET via Zoom

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

Monthly national FJCs call: Wed. April 8 at 4:00 pm ET / 1:00 pm PT via Zoom

Bay Area & Northern CA FJC: Wed. April 8 at 7:00 pm PT via Zoom

Rochester, NY FJC: Thur. April 9 at 3:30 pm ET via Zoom

SoCal FJC: Thur. April 9 at 6:00 pm PT via Zoom

Central Indiana FJC: Fri. April 10 at 1:00 pm ET via Zoom

Metro DC-area FJC: Sat. April 11 at 10:00 am ET In Person

New Mexico FJC: Sat. April 11 at 2:00 pm MT In Person

Richmond, VA-area FJC: Mon. April 13 at 7:00 pm ET 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](#).