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Reflection Date: May 24, 2026 - [Pentecost Sunday](#)

A Fire for Justice in a Divided World

Pentecost is often remembered as the dramatic birth of the early Church—wind rushing, tongues of fire, voices rising in languages understood across cultures. But beyond its vivid imagery, Pentecost carries a profound social vision that speaks urgently to our fractured world. It is not only a spiritual event; it is a call to justice, inclusion, and transformation.

The [Pentecost](#) gospel reading tells the story of a diverse crowd gathered in Jerusalem, people from many regions and backgrounds. What astonishes them is not simply hearing the disciples speak, but that each person hears the message in their own language. This detail matters. In a world where power often demands assimilation: “Speak like us, think like us, be like us,” Pentecost honors difference. It does not erase diversity; it embraces it. From a social justice perspective, this moment challenges systems that marginalize voices based on ethnicity, culture, language, or class.



Photo by Chirag Nayak on Unsplash

Pentecost suggests that true community is not built by forcing uniformity but by creating space where every voice is heard and valued. The miracle is not just speech, it is understanding. The imagery of fire is equally significant. Fire in scripture often represents both presence and purification. At Pentecost, it rests on each person, not just leaders or the elite. This demonstration of the Spirit disrupts hierarchies. Authority is no longer concentrated; it is shared. Everyone becomes a bearer of divine presence, a participant in the work of transformation in the kingdom of God.

This has powerful implications for justice. If every person carries sacred worth and voice, then systems that exploit, silence, or dehumanize are fundamentally at odds with the Spirit of Pentecost. Economic inequality, racial injustice, and exclusionary practices are not just social issues, they contradict the Spirit of God.

Pentecost also moves people outward. The disciples do not remain locked in fear; they step into the public square. Their experience compels action. In this way, Pentecost resists a privatized spirituality that stays safely within walls, especially walls of temples. Instead, it pushes believers into encounter with the world's pain and the world's possibility. This is the true holy space.

In today's society, where polarization often defines public life, Pentecost offers a different vision. It suggests that unity is possible without erasing identity. It calls us to the hard work of dialogue, empathy, and mutual respect. It challenges us to move beyond echo chambers and toward genuine encounters. For those committed to social justice, this outward movement is essential. It reminds us that faith is not passive. It calls for advocacy, solidarity, and courage. It invites us to listen deeply to marginalized communities and to stand with them, even when it is uncomfortable or costly.

To embrace Pentecost today is to ask difficult questions. Whose voices are we not hearing? Where are we resisting the discomfort of difference? How are we using, or misusing, power? And perhaps most importantly, where is the Spirit urging us to act?

Pentecost does not offer easy answers, but it does offer a clear direction. It points toward a world where diversity is honored, power is shared, and justice is pursued with passion and persistence. It calls us to become people who not only speak but also listen, who not only believe but also act.

Carolyn D. Townes, OFS

Franciscan Justice Circle Animator

Suggested Action: Consider joining or forming a **Franciscan Justice Circle** and exercise your spirit of Pentecost – where you have shared language, vision, and mission for God's poor and marginalized. Become a voice for the voiceless and allow that spirit of fire to help heal our fractured and wounded world.

Suggested Petitions:

We lift up the marginalized, the excluded, migrants and refugees, the oppressed, and those who oppress them. We pray for those who have been cast aside by society, who live on the fringes and struggle to find acceptance and security. May the fire of Pentecost comfort them in their pain, and grant them hope and resilience, and may they find refuge in the Spirit of Pentecost.

Prayer

**Come, Holy Spirit,
Breath of God, give rest to the weary. Fill our tired hearts with your peace.
Renew our strength, kindle our hope, and remind us we are never alone.**

Amen.

Webinar: The Long Story of Creation and the Work of Ecological Healing



Stories of extraction, community, and kinship from the Permian Basin to the Arctic

Sr. Joan Brown, OSF

Thursday, May 28

7pm ET/6pm CT/4pm PT

[Click here](#) to register.

The Long Story of Creation and the Work of Ecological Healing, with Sr. Joan Brown, OSF, is the opening webinar in a four-part series in 2026: Franciscan Eco-Spirituality: Renewing Our Vision in a Jubilee Year.

The webinar will explore extractivism, integral ecology, and the spiritual worldview needed for this moment. Drawing from her work in the Permian Basin, insights from the recent Santa

Marta gathering, and her upcoming journey to the Arctic, she will weave these stories into the 800th anniversary of St. Francis and the call to care for our common home.

Sister Joan Brown, OSF, Co-Founder and former Executive Director of [New Mexico-Interfaith Power and Light](#), is a Catholic Franciscan sister whose farm roots, justice work, and integral ecology studies ground her lifelong commitment to Earth care and community organizing.

FAN is collecting signatures on a joint comment to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in response to proposed amendments to the Coal Combustion Residuals Regulations that would loosen regulations on coal ash. You can [click here to sign this joint comment](#).

May 20 is a National Day of Action! Urge Congress to Vote NO on a Deportation-focused Reconciliation Bill

On May 20, please call and email your Members of Congress and urge them to vote NO on a deportation-focused budget and reconciliation package. Communities and families affected by the cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, and ACA are coming together to say enough!

The [\\$72 billion dollar reconciliation bill](#) focuses on ICE, CBP, and a billion dollar White House ballroom. This week, both chambers of Congress are rushing to finalize the bill before lawmakers leave for a scheduled Memorial Day recess. Republicans are pushing the package through a special partisan process known as reconciliation, which would allow them to bypass the Senate filibuster.



[Click here to send emails to Congress](#) (button).

Please call your Members of Congress on Wednesday, May 20. [Click here](#) to look up your representatives' phone numbers.

FAN Shows Up: FAN Associate Director Sister Marie Lucey, OSF and Director Advocacy Sister Maria Orlandini, OSF speak with Senator Dick Durbin after attending a hearing and panel on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Dream Act.

Christian Rally for Restoring Aid to Palestinians and Peace



FAN Just Peace Fellow Eli McCarthy [spoke](#) to *America* about a three-day Joint Christian Advocacy Summit on May 5, focused on restoring funding to the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees: “It’s a death sentence for a number of Gazans who need things like dialysis and cancer treatment. In the past, the U.S. has not only insured access but funded the network.” Highlighting Pope Leo XIV’s call for a “disarmed peace and a disarming peace,” he invited Christians to lean into that approach, “particularly with Palestine, but also with Lebanon right now, so that we can be the peacemakers—the nonviolent peacemakers—that Jesus modeled and called us to be.”

Serve with Franciscan Mission Service

Are you called to serve? For 35 years, FMS has supported lay Catholics working for peace and justice in the Franciscan charism, all over the world and in Washington D.C. Our International Lay Missioners are on the ground in Bolivia, Jamaica, and on the U.S.-Mexico border for two to six years at a time, accompanying our poorest brothers and sisters amid our biggest global challenges. We also work with FAN to sponsor an Advocacy Associate in our DC Service Corps program, a young adult intentional community that foregrounds social justice, discernment, and Franciscan spirituality. For more information, visit our website: www.franciscanmissionservice.org!



Join Our Upcoming Events



FAN is excited to welcome Sister Norma Pimentel as our featured speaker for our 2026 online benefit. Sr. Norma is a Missionary of Jesus and the executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. 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 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 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](#).



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Franciscan Justice Circles

Members of the **NYC metro area FJC** went to the New York State Capitol with a coalition and met various state lawmakers in support of several bills that would ban certain chemical additives and food dyes in food products and require disclosure of chemical additives, require warning labels on high-sodium and high-sugar foods in chain restaurants, and prevent the predatory marketing of unhealthy food products to youth, especially in communities of color. Capuchin friar Brother Anthony Zuba was one of the faith advocates to speak at a press conference in the Capitol building. The Circle also received a letter in response to their letter to the local bishops asking them to encourage clergy to preach about immigration through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.



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

Michigan FJC: Wed. May 20 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Virtual FJC (ltd. mobility): Thur. May 21 at 11:00 am PT / 2:00 pm ET via Zoom

Pacific Northwest FJC: Thur. May 21 at 1:00 pm PT via Zoom

NYC metro area FJC: Thur. May 21 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom

Arizona FJC: Thur. May 21 at 6:00 pm MST via Zoom

Colorado FJC: Mon. May 25 at 7:00 pm MT via Zoom

CT-RI FJC: Tue. May 26 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Texas FJC: Tue. May 26 at 7:15 pm CT via Zoom

Winston-Salem FJC: Wed. May 27 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom

Massachusetts FJC: Thur. May 28 at 7:00 pm ET via Zoom
W. Pennsylvania FJC: Thur. May 28 at 7:30 pm ET via Zoom
SE Wisconsin FJC: Fri. May 29 at 4:00 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](#).