

Resource Bulletin: Election Year, 2024, Courage for Peacemakers:

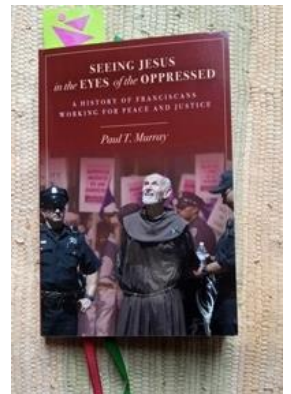
During January we celebrated the feast of St Sebastian, the Roman Martyr depicted pierced with many arrows, and Vincent of Saragossa, who, like Sebastian, died terribly under the emperor Diocletian. These stories challenge us. Could we face a violent death and still feel an authentic love for our attackers? Still accept the cup as the Father's will? "Be not afraid" is the advice we live by as Christians. If we hold to it, then fear cannot be used to manipulate us in an election year, when even the relatively peaceful bubble of the United States seems vulnerable to instability, which feeds on fear. Our life, our commitment as Franciscans is to show an alternative way. In his Rule of 1223, St. Francis said:

"And this is my advice, my counsel, and my earnest plea to my friars in our Lord Jesus Christ that, when they travel about the world, they should not be quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words (cf. 2 Tim. 2:14) or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them.¹"

As peacemakers, we are to step back from violence, but this does not mean from conflict. Mature disagreements, in which we practice paragraph 19 of our Rule with fidelity, can be an armature for growth. If we work diligently and sincerely and courageously for justice, which is necessary for peace, and for the common good, which is the purpose of politics², we will encounter disagreement or worse. That's when we remember the mystery of the cross. To embrace with a sincere love those who oppose us, even those who may wish to harm us.

Franciscan Social Justice:

- At our recent gathering of JPIC animators, Brother David Buer, OFM, Spiritual Assistant for the commission, spoke on the history and meaning of JPIC, and the importance of serving people on the margins, those who are oppressed, and working for justice. He put forward this book: [*Seeing Jesus in the Eyes of the Oppressed: A History of Franciscans Working for Peace and Justice*](#), by Paul T. Murray. In the lives of the Franciscans portrayed, who labored in the US in the post WWII era, (some still in business,) we can see the challenges of working for the poor and marginalized. For instance, when one group of friars set up a charity to meet basic needs in the black community in Mississippi, all the white Catholics supported them. When they took a stand for equal treatment and respect for the same people, they upset the status quo and many white Catholics turned against them. There are chapters on Thea Bowman and Louis Vitale, OFM, and others whose work may be less known to us. This would be an ideal title to include in a book study on *social justice*.
- The Holy See Mission at the UN has a [new statement on the Middle East](#). On January 24, 2024, Archbishop Gabriele Caccia, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, addressed a statement to the quarterly Security Council Open Debate on "The Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question." [Full statement here.](#)






¹ St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources, Writing and Early Biographies. 1973, P.60

² Pastoral Constitution on The Church in The Modern World *Gaudium Et Spes* Pope Paul VI. 1965, P.74

Care for Creation:

The global gathering on the climate crisis, known as *COP 28*, concluded in December. The Holy See had a formative role, and despite the well-publicized disappointments on fossil fuel language, there were advances in financing, and better reporting protocols to hold nations accountable for their progress. Pope Francis' [statement](#), delivered by the Vatican Secretary of State, expressed his urgent concerns from *Laudate Deum*: "Peace and Care for Creation are closely linked..." We need (and should not fear) a new multi-lateralism, because it will be required to agree on measures that are: "efficient, obligatory and readily monitored." This statement concludes by patiently retelling, in the Pope's words, the familiar story St. Francis' writing of the *Canticle of the Creatures*. [Read Pope Francis' statement here.](#)

Laudato Si - Laudate Deum Resources:

- *[Online Course on Integral Ecology \(In English\)](#) by the Pontifical Universities and Atheneums of Rome: "The Certificate Course in Integral Ecology is led by a renowned faculty of academics, leaders and activists from around the world, representing some of the major institutions and groups involved in the area of creation care. The Course consists of six modules of 90 minutes each to be held from January to June 2024 (on every third Thursday of the month from [7:30 – 9:00 AM EST] along with a Workshop in March and an international on-line conference on Laudate Deum in May." **It's a bargain at €30.** The course Flyer is attached for more info. Registration is open thru March. [More information here.](#)
- In a recent webinar, Fr. Joe Rozansky, OFM, provided an [examination of conscience](#) during his introduction to *Laudate Deum*: "Have I made every effort to understand our current situation? ... Does my lifestyle reflect a concern for the fact that resources are limited, and that all people deserve a chance to share in these resources? Am I willing to change my lifestyle radically to confront the current crisis?" Fr. Joe's talk is [at this link.](#) <https://youtu.be/vSRHpwAQabs?si=4t-TM-N6m0VPmuvq&t=1928>. He worked formerly at the friar's JPIC office in Rome, and on the board of Franciscans International. 
- There is a new introductory webinar: [Laudato Si' Action Platform: How to Get Involved and What to Expect.](#) The platform is sponsored by the Holy See's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development <https://youtu.be/4DWvwIjmi1k?si=QuZqx9XwDiaDaeR9> 
- A Catholic Climate Covenant [Webinar](#): "Faith Voice of COP 28." <https://youtu.be/Lr4k9HZkP8A>. 
- *Catholic Climate Covenant* has a [new video series](#): These are short 4-5 minute segments showing actions Catholics can take to Care for Creation. No. 3 features do-able [parish-based action.](#) <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources/gods-creation-needs-you-a/> No. 6 talks about the [Church imperative for Action.](#)
- Father Casey Cole, OFM, has a [solid, accessible 9-minute explanation of Laudato Si.](#) https://youtu.be/DNU8fn_ap_U?si=V-MTYdVYOr4NExMW This has been useful as an introduction in fraternities and parishes, to explain why and how Care for Creation is *Catholic.* 