



NewsNotes

February 2024

On Tuesday mornings I am part of a group of 6-10 who gather for two hours of Lectio Divina to do some deep listening to the words of the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday. Yesterday, we listened to the second half of the story of Jesus' first day of mission in Capernaum...When, after synagogue (last week's Gospel), Jesus goes to Peter and Andrews' home to find Peter's mother-in-law sick and heals her. Later that Sabbath day when the sun goes down, townsfolk bring others who are sick for Jesus to cast out demons and heal them.

The next morning Jesus goes off very early to pray and when the disciples find him, he suggests it is time to move on. His mission is to preach to all the towns of Galilee, "for that is what I came to do." Jesus knew his mission, no doubt confirmed during prayer. It was time to leave the comfort of that place.

Almost all of us gathered for Lectio are retired and many expressed confusion about what is their "mission" at this time of life. The beauty of the sharing for me was that no one felt God was done with them yet. They knew they had work to do for the Reign of God and took home the idea that in prayer, they would seek out 'what they are called to do.'

CSJPs should never be confused about what to do. We are called to seek peace through justice. NewsNotes started over ten years ago conceived as a way of letting readers know of important things that are happening in our world and what they can do to make our world a better place.

This month there is a victory to celebrate and many needs to be met, like passing the Child Care Tax Credit in the US, or to continue resistance to the wars that victimize children most of all, but also steal resources that could be used to heal those kept on the margins. Those making profits from war are

among the powerful demons that need to be cast out.

Below you will read about letters you can write, a Lenten fast to end gun violence, several opportunities to deepen our understanding and practice of nonviolence in our very violent world and several opportunities for Lenten reflections. There is something we can each do. For disciples of Jesus, indifference to our current problems is not an acceptable response. As you look through this month's edition, if you find something that calls you to act, do not feel you have to read any more. Just do it.

Peace and all good,

Frank

Frank McCann
Peace through Justice Facilitator
Congregation's NGO Representative to the UN
Laudato Si' Action Platform Coordinator



World Wetlands Day, 2 February



From UN Environmental Program (UNEP)

Wetlands are ecosystems, in which water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. A broad definition of wetlands includes both freshwater and marine and coastal ecosystems, such as all lakes and rivers, underground aquifers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands, peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, mangroves and other coastal areas, coral reefs, and all human-made sites such as fishponds, rice paddies, reservoirs and saltpans.

These lands are critical to people and nature, given the intrinsic value of these ecosystems, and their benefits and services, including their environmental, climate, ecological, social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic contributions to sustainable development and human wellbeing.

Although they cover only around 6 per cent of the Earth's land surface, 40 per cent of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands. Wetland biodiversity matters for our health, our food supply, for tourism and for jobs. Wetlands are vital for humans, for other ecosystems and for our climate, providing essential ecosystem services, such as water regulation, including flood control and water purification. More than a billion people across the world depend on wetlands for their livelihoods – that's about one in eight people on Earth.

Wetlands are among the ecosystems with the highest rates of decline, loss and degradation. Indicators of current negative trends in global biodiversity and ecosystem functions are projected to continue in response to direct and indirect drivers, such as rapid human population growth, unsustainable production and consumption and associated technological development, as well as the adverse impacts of climate change.

Wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests and are Earth's most threatened ecosystem. In just 50 years — since 1970 — 35% of the world's wetlands have been lost. Human activities that lead to loss of wetlands include drainage and infilling for agriculture and construction, pollution, overfishing and overexploitation of resources, invasive species and climate change.

This vicious cycle of wetland loss, threatened livelihoods, and deepening poverty is the result of mistakenly seeing wetlands as wastelands rather than lifegiving sources of jobs, incomes, and essential ecosystem services. A key challenge is to change mindsets to encourage governments and communities to value and prioritize wetlands.

Do you know where the nearest wetland is to you? What condition is it in? Is anyone caring for it? Can anyone be motivated to do so?

A Win for Planet and People



Photo by Julio Cortez, AP

We did it!

NorthJersey.com reports "NJ Transit's controversial Transitgrid project is cancelled" and News 12 shares: "NJ Transit pulls the plug on troubled power plant but gets to keep the \$503 million in federal money."

Waterspirit's entire team extends their heartfelt gratitude to the incredible people power that have tirelessly fought over half a decade to prevent the construction of a dirty gas plant by New Jersey Transit. We knew there were other ways to get energy than by perpetual dirty gas. The unwavering dedication and relentless efforts we have put forth have paid off. Waterspirit's Public Policy & Justice Organizer was present at every board meeting virtually and specifically was recognized for amplifying the fact that the majority of non-English speaking residents were unaware this potentially deadly project was on

the table. This is a tremendous win for the social justice advocacy extension of WaterSpirit's ongoing presence as a witness bearer and voice of moral reason.

Thanks to consistent determination, residents in Kearny can know for now that we have successfully prevented the harmful effects of a dirty methane gas plant.

We must keep going because there are still bad projects with potential to harm communities, such as the Passaic Valley Sewer Commission's pending, out of touch dirty gas plant. As environmental justice leader Maria Lopex-Nunez of the Ironbound Community Corporation shared to the Associated Press, "if New Jersey Transit will acknowledge that their backup power system is no longer necessary, then we call on Governor Murphy to direct PVSC to do the same."

Let us celebrate this victory together, knowing that our collective efforts have made a lasting difference! Check [Waterspirit's advocacy](#) and [events calendar](#) for more opportunities to get involved in protecting sacred water and life.

[SEE CALLS TO ACTION.](#)



Child Tax Credit just got passed, it is DONE!

Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 (H.R.7024). A bill passed by the House Ways and Means committee came up for a vote in the full House Wednesday evening and passed by a vote of 357-70 but not without some challenges. This bill had bipartisan support, continuing three of the expiring Trump tax cuts (net interest deduction, R&D expensing and bonus depreciation) while expanding the Child Tax Credit (CTC). It is paid for by elimination of a pandemic era deduction that encouraged business owners to keep employees on the payroll.

Though the tax legislation passed Wednesday would not rise to the level of the [boosted pandemic-era child tax credit](#), the bill would raise it to \$1,800 per child in 2023, \$1,900 per child in 2024 and \$2,000 per child in 2025. It would also adjust the value for inflation in 2024 and 2025. There are objections (it is the House of Representatives, after all) on the far right there are some who do not want the CTC expanded, on the left those who will vote against the measure unless the CTC is funded to the 2021 levels. There were also objections from those representatives who wanted to see the SALT tax deductions included in the package.

NETWORK, the Catholic Social Justice Lobby founded by sisters, a key lobby partner of ours, believes the Child Tax Credit is a major benefit to low-income families and has been a priority for their lobby efforts in building a more just society as presented in several webinars.

The next step will be for all who are able to contact your Senators and urge them to pass this bill. It will meet some resistance in the Senate as well. To find your Senator and the office phone number, go to <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>

Resistance to the Arms Trade



Sr. Maureen Boggins, CSJP & friend

By Sr. Katrina, CSJP

As wars rage around the world the international arms trade is raking in bigger profits, celebrating increased sales, and giving themselves bumper bonuses!

Here in the UK resistant to the arms trade and its immoral and obscene profiteering from war is not going unnoticed. Opposition and resistance to the economy of war is increasing. Sr Maureen Boggins and I have been part of the

ongoing "No Faith In War" campaign.

On the 22nd January Sr Maureen joined Pax Christi EW, and hundreds of peace protestors, to say "No to The Twickenham Arms Fair". The UK government subsidized the Twickenham Arms Fair, and it was attended by political and military representatives from across the world. Pax Christi EW has criticised the UK government over its licencing of UK arms sales to the Israeli Government.

Pope Francis, a vocal critic of the arms trade, said in his Christmas 2023 message: "How can we even speak of peace when arms production, sale and trade are on the rise?"

To add insult to injury, 'Aerospace Defence and Security' hosted a champagne dinner costing between £250-£500 per head at the Grosvenor Hotel in Mayfair, London, on the 30th January. While the people of Yemen and Gaza don't have access to clean water, and millions are suffering from acute hunger and malnutrition, arms dealers, military personnel, and UK MPs gathered to dine out on the profits of war!

I joined friends from Put Down The Sword, and the London Catholic Worker, as well as over one hundred protestors, including many from Palestine Solidarity and Campaign Against The Arms Trade.

Peace and security are not gained by an escalation in weaponry or military personnel. True peace comes from a just sharing of resources so that everyone has food and shelter, access to education and healthcare, and the dignity and freedom to be fully themselves.

Does standing outside a plush hotel in London on a cold January evening achieve that? I don't know. Some would say such acts are futile and hopeless. But I trust that our small act of solidarity with all victims of war is a sign of hope - and hope is contagious. As Dorothy Day said: "No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do."

Find more information and resources on how you can help Stop The Arms Trade: <https://caat.org.uk> <https://paxchristi.org.uk>



Nuns Against Gun Violence

NUNS
AGAINST GUN
VIOLENCE

As Catholics, our faith calls us to protect life, and yet our country continues to be plagued with an epidemic of gun violence. In response, we invite you to participate in a fast against gun violence during Lent. Our fast will be a prayer to God and an opportunity to publicly appeal to our civic communities for action to reduce gun violence.

The toll gun violence takes on our communities is staggering with 120 firearm deaths and 200 firearm casualties a day.

1) Death by suicide, homicide, and mass shootings ravage our communities at rates 26 times higher than other high-income nations.

2) Troublingly, the leading cause of death of children and teens in the United States is now firearms.

3) Despite public support, gun violence prevention legislation stagnates in Congress, and many state and local representatives enact extreme laws that ignore the public call for gun violence prevention legislation.

As we prepare for the Lenten season, we reflect on this reality and the devastating effect of gun violence on our nation. The loss of life and continuous toll of grief and trauma on individuals, families, and communities compel us to take action to change our society to protect life.

It is our hope that members of our coalition congregations as well as like-minded individuals will join in this fast against gun violence. Please share this invitation with your community members and networks. To demonstrate your commitment to undertake this fast, [please complete this form](#).

To support you in this fast, Nuns Against Gun Violence will gather virtually for prayer and provide resources to assist you in publicly acknowledging your fast, focusing on relevant legislation, and contacting your national and local representatives. More information about the following resources will be available on our website: www.nunsagainstgunviolence.org.

- Zoom community service on Ash Wednesday, February 14 at 1:00 p.m. ET.
- List of relevant legislation in Congress that addresses gun violence prevention
- A sample press release and letters to Congress
- Action alerts
- How to contact national, state, and local representatives

For more information about our Lenten fast, please contact nunsagainstgunviolence@gmail.com.

Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented

by [Tony Magliano](#)

In his 1986 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, the late Elie Wiesel, reflecting on the Holocaust, and his personal experience of it – being in the same World War II Nazi concentration camps where his mother, father, and sister were murdered, and coming very close to being executed himself – voiced these profound words:

“I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the

tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the centre of the universe” (see: <https://mediaplayer.nobelprize.org/mediaplayer/?id=2028>).

Several years ago, I interviewed Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, retired auxiliary bishop of Detroit. Bishop Gumbleton, 94, was one of the principal authors of the U.S. bishops’ prophetic 1983 pastoral letter “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response.”

During our conversation the following point jumped out at me, and continues to remain with me, Bishop Gumbleton said, “Most Catholics are more influenced by the culture than the Gospel.” I then asked him, “Would you say that about your brother bishops as well?” Without hesitation, he replied, “Absolutely!”

Clearly it appears that most Catholics are not actively engaged – from a Gospel/Catholic social teaching perspective – in the life and death issues facing humanity like hunger and poverty, the arms trade and war, environmental degradation and climate change, the death penalty and abortion.

The late founder of the U.S. annual “March for Life,” Nellie Gray, once told me that “If Catholics alone would stand up and demand an end to abortion, it would end!”

For many years, ministering in several dioceses, I have found it extremely difficult to persuade the vast majority of Catholics to speak up and act out on behalf of our countless suffering brothers and sisters, and that of our wounded earth home.

Furthermore, rarely do we hear challenging, countercultural social justice and peace homilies from the clergy.

Pope Francis has often called this sad reality the “culture of indifference” where solid commitment to nonviolently protecting and enhancing the life and dignity of all human beings – especially the vulnerable and poor – is of little concern. He recently said that in societies often polluted by a culture of indifference and of waste, “as believers, we are called to go against the tide with a culture of tenderness, that is, of caring for others as God has cared for us: for me, for you, for each one of us” (see: <https://bitly.ws/3aQTz>).

Encouragingly, there do exist a relatively few prophetic souls who refuse to allow the “culture of indifference” to silence their words. An example here is the recent joint statement by Cardinal Robert McElroy of the Diocese of San Diego, and Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico calling for an immediate cease-fire to the Israel-Hamas war (see: <https://bitly.ws/3aVpu>).

And fairly recently, seven Catholics known as the “Kings Bay Plowshares 7” even put their words of peace into courageous action by placing signs of Christian nonviolence inside the Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia – where at least five nuclear submarines are based. And consequently, they did jail time for their acts of nonviolent resistance (see: <https://kingsbayplowshares7.org/>).

Another encouraging act of faithful, courageous Gospel-based witness was the nonviolent blocking of doors and locking gates at a Washington, D.C. abortion

centre by veteran pro-life Catholic activist Joan Andrews Bell, along with several other Christians. Consequently, Bell (a friend of mine), is now in jail (see: <https://bitly.ws/3aVuD>).

It does us good to reflect again on the profound words of Elie Wiesel, "I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Tony Magliano is an internationally syndicated Catholic social justice and peace columnist. He is available to speak at diocesan or parish gatherings.

First Friends offers 2023 recap of services offered to immigrants

Over the course of 2023, First Friends supported immigrant friends in the following ways:

- 280 deposits into Friends commissary accounts, enabling them to supplement their diets and purchase personal hygiene supplies and stationary;
- 5 immigration bonds paid for detained friends, freeing them from detention to return to or settle into new communities as they awaited the outcome of their immigration cases;
- 22 individuals and families received rental assistance;
- 2 immigrant families were provided with temporary housing;
- 71 individuals and families (230 people total) received gift cards for food and other emergency needs, including medicines, diapers and infant formula;
- 7 individuals were accompanied to their immigration court hearings or ICE check-ins;
- 200+ newly-arrived immigrants received referrals to other services through our dedicated hotline.

In addition to the above, First Friends staff, volunteers, and supporters participated in over 20 actions aimed at advocating for one or a combination of the following:

- 1) Closure of the Elizabeth Detention Center;
- 2) The passage of the New Jersey Values Act;
- 3) The passage of the New Ways Forward Act;
- 4) Rejection of the appropriation of additional funds for ICE or CBP;
- 5) Rejection of additional restrictions on access to asylum.

Please support First Friends. You can provide compassion, dignity and hope to immigrants in detention or those who have newly arrived by making a donation to First Friends.

[Make a donation to First Friends here.](#)

Or mail a check to: First Friends, 52 South Hackensack Ave. Kearny, NJ 07032

Plan now to join Poor People's Campaign event March 2nd

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN POOR AND IMPACTED PEOPLE, CLERGY,
AND ADVOCATES IN YOUR STATE!

MASS POOR PEOPLE'S & LOW-WAGE WORKERS' STATE HOUSE ASSEMBLIES & TO THE POLLS

A DAY OF NATIONALLY-COORDINATED, SIMULTANEOUS
DIRECT ACTION ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

CALLING ALL PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN & DEMAND

LIVING WAGES,
HEALTHCARE,
VOTING RIGHTS &
STOPPING VOTER SUPPRESSION,
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL,
WORKER/LABOR RIGHTS,
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE,
ACCESS TO HOUSING,
FULLY-FUNDED
PUBLIC EDUCATION,
ABOLISHING POVERTY,
AND THE UNITY OF LOVE,
NOT THE DIVISION OF HATE.

BRING THE DEMANDS OF 140 MILLION
POOR & LOW-WEALTH PEOPLE
DIRECTLY TO LAWMAKERS AT STATE CAPITOLS.
EVERYBODY IN, NOBODY OUT!
WE MUST CHALLENGE POVERTY BEING THE 4TH
LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THIS COUNTRY!
WE MUST ACTIVATE 85 MILLION
POOR & LOW-WEALTH ELIGIBLE VOTERS!
WE WON'T BE SILENT ANYMORE!

REPAIRERS
OF THE BREAD

Poor People's Campaign
MICHIGAN, CALIF., TEXAS, ILL.

KAIRÓS CENTER
FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE & SOCIAL JUSTICE

3/2/24

10AM Meet
in Mill Hill
Park

E. Front St., S.
Broad St.
Trenton, NJ



10:30 Begin to
march to
Statehouse

11AM-1PM Rally

NewJersey@PoorPeoplesCampaign.org

Horizon Post Office Scandal

By David Richardson

Over the past 12 years, the UK has experienced change and decline. Roads now have potholes, NHS waiting lists are long, local authorities are going bankrupt, turmoil and the lasting impact of Brexit, life has got more difficult and expensive. We have had five Conservative prime ministers in the last 12 years. In contrast, there were just three prime ministers in the 28 years before. This week, it was reported by [Sky News](#) that water bosses have pocketed more than £25 million in bonuses, benefits, and other incentives despite mounting concerns over illegal sewage spills. A report by the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) said 6 million of the poorest people would need, on average, more than double their incomes to move out of hardship. Yet, despite this catalogue of concerns, nothing has captured the anger of the UK population like the Horizon Post Office scandal.

[CNN reported](#) that over two decades, livelihoods and reputations were destroyed, families shattered, and savings lost. Out of thousands of affected sub-postmasters who ran small Post Office businesses in communities across the UK, 700 were convicted of criminal offences, with some spending time in prison.

It began with errors in an IT system called Horizon, built by Japan's Fujitsu and introduced in 1999 to replace paper-based accounting.

Soon after its installation, branch managers realised the system was faulty. The software regularly showed that money, often thousands of pounds, had gone missing from Post Office accounts, which was often incorrect.

Under the terms of their Post Office contracts, sub-postmasters were liable for any financial losses in their branch. After their contracts were terminated, many were barred from entering their business premises by Post Office investigators, preventing them from finding evidence to prove their innocence. Sub-postmasters were told they were the only ones experiencing problems with the Horizon system, which was clearly not the case. Others reported ruthless investigators who were set targets by the Post Office to recover money from sub-postmasters accused of false accounting and theft.

The scandal surrounding the UK Post Office has been the subject of legal cases and media reports for several years. However, it was only after the recent airing of the TV drama "Mr Bates vs The Post Office", which highlighted its destructive impact, that public awareness and outrage significantly increased. Since the program's release, the government has shown an urgent response, which sub-postmasters have been demanding for years.

However, the UK's political and legal establishments need to answer some essential questions, including who knew what and when, which individuals, if any, should be held criminally responsible, and the extent to which Fujitsu should compensate the victims.

The Cambridge Dictionary defines integrity as "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change." As I have reflected on what the sub-postmasters are going through, I can't help but ask where was the integrity of the Post Office, Fujitsu and politicians? Where was the integrity of the employees working for these companies?

It is easy in our culture to reserve our Christian life for Sundays or moments when we call upon God. The fragmentation of our faith life is dangerous. It is so easy to be swept along by the pressures of the cultures surrounding us. To act with integrity requires faithfulness and courage to act in accordance with our faith, which is easier said than done.





The Simple Living Group has been reading, *Choices for Sustainable Living*, which has not only presented significant background information, but has offered a variety of suggestions for action. This book is available from <https://ecochallenge.org> (formerly Northwest Earth Institute,) and is highly recommended for individuals and groups doing their part for peace and justice and the environment.



EarthMinistry (<https://earthministry.org>) is an interfaith organization based in Seattle which also serves as the Washington State Chapter of Interfaith Power and Light (WAIPL.) They are lobbying for a number of environmental bills during this 'short' session of the WA State Legislature. Of particular interest to the Simple Living Group is the "Re-Wrap Act," HB2049/SB6005, which would require manufacturers to be more responsible for marketing products that are easier to recycle and reuse. Consumers have long needed this kind of support. EarthMinistry/WAIPL provides ongoing legislative updates and a variety of resources for individuals, groups, and houses of worship – including information that is applicable beyond the Pacific Northwest.



The BBC Website (www.bbc.com) often features articles relating to the environment and sustainability. Recent examples include: "How to choose the right sneakers, shoes and boots – and make them last;" " Nine breakthroughs for climate and nature you may have missed."



2/6 Waterspirit's Eco-Anxiety Support Group Info Session Tuesday, Feb 6, 2024, 2pm ET

On Zoom

Climate change, super storms, rising sea levels, large-scale pollution—do these problems seem large, looming, intractable? If you're feel vulnerable, dis-empowered, or burnt-out, you're not alone: eco-anxiety, climate grief, and other climate feelings are shared by many people who are paying attention to the climate crisis. Addressing these heavy feelings in community can be a way of generating the personal resilience needed to cope with an uncertain future. Waterspirit hosts eco-anxiety peer support groups using the Good Grief Network's "10 Steps to Personal Resilience and Empowerment in a Chaotic Climate" method. Please join us for this informational session that will introduce the group's methodology, giving you an opportunity to meet the facilitators and ask any questions prior to committing to the 10 weeks. After this informational session, Waterspirit's Spring 2024 group will run from 2/6/24 to 4/23/24 from 2-4 p.m. ET. www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar

2/21 Lament with Earth February 21, 2024 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm ET On Zoom

Waterspirit is co-sponsoring this event. [The BTS Center](#), in partnership with [The Many](#), invite you to [Lament with Earth](#) — five seasonal events which will include original music, poetry, rituals, images, scripture and videos to reflect different seasons of loss through the liturgical year. These events are free and interactive, inviting you to pray and sing along and to bring your own sense of loss and sadness into this communal space. The first event will take place on November 1, 2023, with following events held in December, February, May, and June.

Registration is required for this free event. www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar

2/24 Sandy Hook Seal Monitoring Saturday, January 27, 2024, 1:00 pm

Sandy Hook Parking Lot D

Did you know there are several species of seal which visit NJ? The Seals feed and then haul out to rest and digest. Save Coastal Wildlife has been recruiting and training volunteers to monitor these seasonal populations. Our own Anne Price has been trained as a volunteer. She is inviting the public to join her at Sandy Hook to see the seals in person. We will watch the seals and record data to report. While we are there, we will discuss all of the wildlife around us.

Registration is required for this free event. <https://www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar>

2/24 Water Ceremony with Waterspirit Saturday, February 24, 2024, 5:30 PM 6:00 PM, Monmouth Beach Bathing Pavilion

Join Waterspirit as we celebrate 26 years of service to protecting sacred waters with a Water Ceremony by the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. The ceremony will include poetry readings, a candle-lit labyrinth on the sand and watching the full moon rise. Join us at the Monmouth Beach Bathing Pavilion and share this special moment with us. *This is a fair-weather event. All registered participants will be notified via email if we need to cancel due to inclement weather.

Registration is required for this free event. <https://www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar>

2/26 Waterspirit's Book Club Monday February 26, 2024

6 pm ET on Zoom

Waterspirit's book club meets quarterly on Zoom. For each session we read and discuss books focusing on Spirituality, Nature, Ecology and Action. Join Waterspirit's book club this February while we discuss the book Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World by Tyson Yunkaporta. [Registration required. www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar](https://www.waterspirit.org/events-calendar)



Meditation for Earth



Meditation for Earth is held every Tuesday at 12:15 p.m. ET.
In-person in the Sanctuary at Rumson Presbyterian Church 4 East River Rd.
Rumson, NJ
Join our virtual meditation on our YouTube channel [HERE](#)

Ignatian Solidarity Network offers Lent reflections: "A time to refresh"

In a world filled with personal and structural sin that allows injustice to grow, we are invited to refresh our souls and our imaginations to make space for the Spirit to work through us:

To reshape a dehumanizing immigration system into one that centers human dignity.

To recommit to making racial justice a reality.

To renew trust in abundance versus scarcity so that all people's needs are met while safeguarding a fragile planet.

During the Lenten season, Psalm 23 reminds us of God's intent that we find times of refreshing: Beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul.

St. Ignatius of Loyola refers to these **times of refreshing** as consolations: a deep-seated sense of God's presence leading to spiritual growth. How are we being refreshed and consoled in our lives, in our Church, and in our work for justice?

Throughout Lent, writers from the Ignatian Solidarity Network will guide us in a season of refreshing. Join us each day to be replenished, reinvigorated, and refreshed.

[Subscribe to the reflections here.](#)

Pax Christi USA Lent booklets

[*A Fast That Matters: Reflections for Lent 2024*](#), features reflections for every day of Lent from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday written by Frida Berrigan. Frida is a writer, columnist, community organizer, and gardener who lives with her family in Connecticut. She is the author of [*It Runs In The Family: On Being Raised by Radicals and Growing into Rebellious Motherhood*](#), the story of how she tries to apply the lessons of her parents, Pax Christi USA Teachers of Peace Phil Berrigan and Elizabeth McAlister, and the community of Jonah House they helped found, to her own mothering and life.

[>> Order the digital \(e-booklet\) version of the Lent booklet by clicking here.](#)

[>> Order the print version of this Lent booklet by clicking here.](#)

Frida's Lenten reflections are personal and political, provocative in the questions they raise and beguiling to any of us who are trying to make our way in the world as people of peace, compassion and justice. Her words challenge and amuse, rooted in the experiences of her everyday family life and a long history with the peace movement. Reading Frida's stories and insights is like conversing with an old friend over matters both great and small, but all imbued with meaning and wisdom. She is an excellent companion for anyone wishing to spend these days of Lent deepening their experience of what it means to witness to the God of nonviolence and love.

Third Harmony Workshops and Events-- February 2024

The Metta Center (a recipient of CSJP Charitable Giving) is offering several workshops in February on The Third Harmony, Nonviolence and the New Story of Human Nature.

Online Workshop

Saturday, Feb 10 Third Harmony Workshop online 1:30-4:30

You will watch the video, learn about the game and learn facts about nonviolence.

Book Group

Sunday February 18, 2024 10 AM, Sunday February 25, 11:30 AM

A signed copy of the Third Harmony book can be purchased for \$20.00 [here](#).

Online game play

Sunday February 25, 3:00-4:30 PM

Cosmic Peaceforce online This is a cooperative game where you travel though the cosmos toward Harmony 3. New and experienced players welcome.

All times are Pacific.



Understanding the immigration debate



Here is a attempt to understand what is happening in Congress on a the Immigration bill that has been in the news.

First we cannot describe all the details because they are not published yet, but the thrust of the Senate bill is to enable President Biden to virtually close the border if more than 4,000 persons try to enter the US on any given day. It requires the president to close the border if more that 5,000 persons seek entry on a given day. President Biden has publicly promised to sign the bill and close the border if conditions, as outlined, exist.

Positively, the bill provides more funding for asylum processing and judges in order to expedite the backup of asylum requests. But it also provides more funding for detention.

The Speaker of the House claims that the bill will be dead on arrival in the House. One reason given is the former president wants to use it as an election issue. Another possibility is that the Speaker makes that promise to be sure the bill is as harsh as it can be, and then pass it to restrict Biden's options.

Immigration advocates oppose the proposed bill as unjust and immoral. Immigrants have the right to seek asylum in the US under US and international law. If the bill passes and Biden signs it, it may cost him many votes in the November elections.

Why is Biden for the bill? It is to get concessions from the far right of the House republicans that would include military funding for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

So we will close the border to fleeing migrants in order to be able to send more lethal weapons for this "world war fought piecemeal???" You cannot make this up.

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Visit our CSJP website!

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