



Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

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2nd Sunday of Lent: Transfigured Sacrifice

Reflecting on the Readings

1st Reading: [Gen. 15:5-12, 17-18](#)

Psalm: [Ps 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14](#)

2nd Reading: [Phil. 3:17-4:1](#)

Gospel: [Lk. 9:28b-36](#)

The Psalmist proclaims, “I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD in the land of the living” (Ps. 27:13). When we choose what to eat, do we seek the Lord’s bounty, a bounty raised and tended according to God’s laws of love and honesty? Are we so satisfied with whatever pleases our senses that we fail to reflect on how it affects our relationships with God, with each other, and with all of creation? Are our minds so “occupied with earthly things” (Phil. 3:19) that we stifle God’s plan for every creature? Do we seek and find God’s glory on our plates?

As with Peter and his companions, perhaps we have been “overcome by sleep” (Lk. 9:32) in our ignorance of what we eat. As the Father establishes his relationship with the Son as beloved during Jesus’ Transfiguration, let us cultivate a loving and life-giving relationship with what sustains our earthly lives. Imitating Abram, may we turn to prayer in our Lenten sacrifices this week and search for God’s will there.

As citizens of heaven, may we allow Christ to “bring all things” in our lives, including our food, “into subjection to himself” (Phil. 3:21). When our efforts to understand the story of our food from farm to table seem to envelop us in darkness or terror, we can remember the experiences of Abram, Peter, James, and John. Let us “stand firm in the Lord” (Phil. 4:1) with Paul and “wait for the Lord with courage” with the Psalmist (27:14), trusting that Christ’s power to “change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body” can bring peace and all good to what nourishes our bodies here and now.

PRAYER

Hear our humble prayer, O God,
for our friends, the animals, your creatures.
We pray especially for all that are suffering in any way:
for the overworked and underfed,
the hunted, lost, or hungry;
for all in captivity or ill-treated,
and for those that must be put to death.

For those who deal with them,
we ask a gentle heart of compassion, gentle hands, and kindly words.
Make us all true friends to animals
and worthy followers of our merciful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, 177)

FASTING from *factory-farmed animal products*

The Church invites all Christians to abstain from meat on Fridays and Ash Wednesday. FAN invites all Franciscan and Franciscan-hearted people to **abstain from all forms of factory-farmed animal products** this week and to consider making a long-term commitment to pasture-raised animal products.

Factory-farmed animals live in “Confined Animal Feeding Operations” (CAFOs) and eat grains, usually genetically modified corn and soy. Sustainably-raised animals forage on pasture, which is their traditional diet.

According to the [Nature Conservancy carbon footprint calculator](#), a meatless diet reduces individual greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 42%, a diet free of all animal products reduces GHG emissions by 72%, and a heavy meat diet increases GHG emissions by 24%. These impacts are typical of factory-farmed animals, whereas the grazing land for pasture-raised animals acts as a “sink” for capturing emissions.

As we abstain from the products of factory-farmed animals this week, let us remember these creatures, whom God’s loving will holds in existence. We can share this week’s prayer at meal times, whether we eat or abstain from animal products. Let us thank God for the service and gifts of these creatures and seek right relationship with them. Let us remember that even as we enjoy their roles in our lives, they belong to God, and we will offer an account for our relationships with them.

ALMSGIVING

In 2006, Jackie Schramm, Director of Social Justice at the Franciscan community of St. Mary’s Parish in Pompton Lakes, NJ, and their [JustFaith](#) committee, North Jersey Citizens for Environmental Action, sought the assistance of [GreenFaith](#) and [Interfaith Power and Light](#) to host a screening of “An Inconvenient Truth” as a way to learn more about caring for creation in response to climate change. They invited Rev. Fletcher Harper, Episcopalian priest and Executive Director of *GreenFaith* to speak at St. Mary’s on two occasions to enliven the spiritual foundation of their Franciscan tradition’s care for creation. A desire for sustainability in their worship, education, and meeting spaces emerged. Pastor Fr. Kevin Downey, OFM, approved the formation of a taskforce to develop with *GreenFaith* a plan of action for the parish’s renewal.

Rev. Harper assisted Director of Parish Programming, Michael Burck, and the taskforce in a multi-year process to identify and implement more sustainable practices. Parish “audits” of energy use and waste in the 100-year-old complex of church, school, parish center, and office buildings led to significant changes, such as eliminating toxic cleaning products, repairing air leakages, and replacing light bulbs. School Principal Sr. Mary Byrnes, PBVM encouraged paperless lunch hours and lesson plans to help youth learn about caring for creation, and hosted a *GreenFaith* training program for other New Jersey Catholic Schools. The parish also received a \$130,000 rebate from the state of New Jersey to install solar panels on its 20,000-square-foot Faith Formation Center. The panels provide electricity for the parish, which may at some point be able to sell back energy.

Local, state, and national awareness and advocacy also came to life through a *JustFaith/GreenFaith* Environmental Justice Bus Tour in Newark, NJ, in 2008 and 2009 and *JustFaith* members' participation in the annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days on "Enough for All Creation" in Washington, D.C. in March 2009. These experiences forged an Environmental Advocacy Group (EAG), which joined FAN's "Franciscan Campaign for Climate Change." The EAG collected 1,200 postcards from parishioners June 13-14 and sent several delegations to area Members of Congress to support climate change policies consistent with Franciscan values. The House of Representatives passed a climate change bill on June 26, 2009.

In November 2009, *GreenFaith* honored St. Mary's Parish with certification as a "Sustainable Sanctuary." *JustFaith* will participate in another Environmental Justice Bus Tour this February 28, and EAG members will attend [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) in March as the parish and community continue to explore ways to live out care for creation through advocacy; individual and community action; and preaching.