

December 6, 2019
Immediate Release

Media Contact: Janine Walsh
walsh@franciscanaction.org | (203) 685-1856

Multiple Faith-based Advocacy Organizations Join Jane Fonda for Today's Fire Drill Friday

Faith based advocates risking arrest to show connection between migration, human dignity, and the climate crisis

Washington, D.C. - Today's Fire Drill Friday rally saw Jane Fonda welcoming climate, faith, and migrant justice organizers who spoke with passion about the connection between climate crises and migration along with our moral call to care for both creation our immigrant neighbors.

Beginning Thursday evening with an online Teach-in, Jane welcomed GreenFaith executive director, Rev. Fletcher Harper and labor organizer and human right strategist, Saket Soni to discuss migration and human rights in connection with the climate crisis. The recording of the Teach-in can be found [here](#).

This morning, hundreds gathered at Franklin Square in Washington, DC to take part in a rally before marching through the streets to bring awareness to the need for action now.

Patrick Carolan, Executive Director of the Franciscan Action Network:

“Saints Francis and Clare had a relational understanding of creation. For them and for Franciscans today, we believe that all people and all creatures, from the smallest to “our Sister, Mother Earth,” are sisters and brothers, part of the very fabric of the family of God. Following this tradition, St. Bonaventure developed a theological and spiritual vision that acknowledged all creation as emanating from the goodness of God, existing as a “footprint” of God, and leading us back to God if we are able to “read” nature properly. He spoke of creation as the first book that God wrote. For this reason, Franciscans all over the country work to build, repair and sustain a living relationship with all of God’s wondrous creation, and that includes caring for our sisters and brothers forced to leave their homes due to climate disasters.”

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Director Social Justice Organizing/Faculty, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College:

“We, like, Noah know that there is a great cataclysm coming but there is no ark that can save all the species. We must act like the prophets and call on the powerful to repent and for systems to change. Today we are calling on the financial system to forsake mammon and choose life.”

Sandy Sorenson, Director, Washington Office of the United Church of Christ:

“Scripture tells us that the Earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it. As people of faith, we are called to be responsible stewards of the Earth, and we are called to treat our neighbors with justice and compassion. Science tells us that the climate crisis will continue to significantly harm our most vulnerable neighbors, including migrants and refugees. We have a moral responsibility to address the urgent threat facing all of God’s creation. The United Church of Christ Washington office stands in solidarity with Fire Drill Fridays and Shut Down DC to say that climate justice is migrant justice.”

Doug Pagitt, Executive Director, Vote Common Good:

“There is no greater pressing need facing humanity than the current climate crisis. We are all called to care for the planet and to call for policies and practices that change the pattern of warming the planet. This call must be answered by all people of faith. Put simply, there is no planet B. We must care for the planet and all living creatures on it.”

Rev. Noel Andersen, National Grassroots Coordinator, Church World Service:

“Climate change threatens to displace millions of people worldwide causing massive human suffering and vulnerability. As people of faith and a nation with the largest cumulative greenhouse gas emissions we must respond. This week we join Fire Drill Friday and National Climate Action Day to reaffirm our solidarity with immigrants while addressing the dire need to stop future displacement of people due to climate change. We call on policy makers, as well as banks that fund detention centers and the fossil fuel industry to listen, to hear our call and join the struggle to stop detention and promote climate policies that reflect our values of justice, equity, compassion and truth.”

The Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director, GreenFaith:

Five years after the Paris Agreement, the world's richest and most powerful investors are at it again. They're increasing their profits day after day from oil and gas deals that cause climate-induced droughts, storms and floods that force innocent people around the world to become climate refugees. Then, when these same refugees seek a safe home in a new country, these investors gain by underwriting private prison systems which lock them up. These profits are the wages of sin. These investments are nauseatingly immoral because at every turn, they destroy people's lives rather than building a sustainable future. These investors need to help create an economy of life - no fossil fuels, no private prisons, no profiting from misery - and they need to change now.”

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director, The Shalom Center:

About 2500 years ago, the very last words of the very last of the ancient Hebrew Prophets were: “I [YHWH] will send you the Prophet Elijah to turn the hearts of parents to children and the hearts of children to parents, lest I come and utterly destroy the Earth.” (Malachi 3: 23-24)

Malachi's words begin a new Rabbinic Statement on the Climate Crisis, signed by more than 400 Rabbis of every strand of Jewish religious life in the US, Canada, the UK, and Israel. For the first time in the history of Humanity, we are actually moving toward the burning and devastation of the web of life on Earth by human action -- the unremitting use of fossil fuels. Our children and grandchildren face deep misery and death unless we act. They have turned their hearts toward us. Our hearts, our minds, our arms and legs, are not yet fully turned toward them. We gather here today to more fully turn our hearts to these, our children. We must lift up old prayers and new, old rituals and new, that celebrate Earth. We must urge our banks and our politicians to Move Our Money, Protect Our Planet (MOM/POP): Move away from investments in and subsidies of carbon, and protect by investing in renewable wind and solar energy. In the spirit of the biblical Sabbatical Year and its unification of social justice with ecological sanity, we must support that unity of eco/ social justice in the Green New Deal.”

Rev I. Malik Saafir, GreenFaith:

“BlackRock has notoriously profited from the twin evils of Corporate exploitation. The exploitation of People's labor and the Planet's resources. We can no longer ignore the ravishing effects of climate change on poor People nor remain silent as we witness the poisonous effects of fossil fuels on our Planet. Now, we must stand with poor People who are being forced from their homes into private prisons. We must defend our Planet which is threatened by fossil fuel extraction.”

The Rev. Kaji S. Dousa, Senior Pastor, Park Avenue Christian Church/Co-Chair, New Sanctuary Coalition:

“As people flee the devastating effects of climate change in their homes, we are seeing a mass Exodus of people leaving the uninhabitable places they have loved and called home. This rapid change of global migration patterns is not going away. As a follower of the very Jesus who crossed some of the most notorious borders in the world proclaiming life and love, I firmly believe migrants fleeing death deserve

our protection and hospitality. Migrants bear the face of Christ - turning them away means turning away Jesus himself. Christians do well to remember this mandate. On the Day of Reckoning, God will not forget how we respond right now.”

Sister Patricia McDermott, president, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas:

“The interconnected climate and migration crises are all too clear for us as Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. As we minister to families at the US-Mexico border and to individuals in detention facilities, and hear the heartfelt sharing of their migration stories and journeys, we increasingly recognize that some were forced to flee Central America due to droughts, storms, floods and changing weather patterns that have impacted their livelihoods, health and survival. These conditions are exacerbated by human-made global heating, which is fueled by the perilous, all too prevailing and death-dealing extractive and agribusiness development models. We expect climate displacement, climate forced migration and the numbers of climate refugees globally will only continue to grow. This compels us to advocate for the development of rights-based protections for climate migrants and refugees in international and national law, and for real community and people-centered solutions to the climate emergency. The compassionate and just treatment of migrants seeking recognition of their inherent dignity, legal protection and a way out of starvation, disease and poverty for their children is our imperative.”

Susan Gunn, Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns:

“Our faith, our economy, and our earth are interconnected yet grossly out of harmony. Nowhere is that more evident than in our financial institutions. Many of the same banks and financial institutions that fund and profit from the fossil fuel industry and the destruction of the earth also fund and profit from the United States’ inhumane and immoral immigration detention system. Maryknoll Missioners, Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world, see the impact climate change has on the lives of our sisters and brothers who are least able to respond to climate disruptions like sea level rise, drought, extreme storms and fires. We have also seen through our mission experience the devastation that large-scale energy projects can bring – displacing communities, destroying local economies, livelihoods, ecosystems, health – sometimes violently and with mortal consequences. We need banks to stop trafficking in misery, death and destruction, and instead to prioritize the care for our earth and our vulnerable brothers and sisters.”

###