



Integrity of Creation



Prairie Fire News

May 2018

Editor: Dennis R. Dowell, O.F.S.

Ed. Note: We have invited Kent Ferris to provide a guest column this month. Anyone else who has an issue that they would like to highlight in the *Prairie Fire News* is welcome to submit their article. Here's Kent's article:

The Death Penalty as a JPIC Issue

A colleague of mine in the Diocese of Pittsburgh gives presentations on, The Dignity of Human Life: The Basis of all Social Concerns. It is in the same spirit that our Rule calls us to accept "...all people as a gift of the Lord and an image of Christ..." and to also be "in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives." Upholding the dignity of human life, from conception to natural death, then is both central to our faith and in turn our responsibilities to Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation within our Order. And within this, understanding Church teaching on the death penalty and knowing how to respond to it as a justice issue, is also important.

The very best place to begin when considering the death penalty is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Specifically, sections 2258-2267 speak to the death penalty. In particular, there are two parts of 2267 which are worth highlighting:

"Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor."

And this part as well:

"Today, in fact, as a consequence of the possibilities which the state has for effectively preventing crime, by rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm-without definitively taking away from him the possibility of redeeming himself-the cases in which the execution of the offender is an absolute necessity 'are very rare, if not practically non-existent.'" (John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* 56.)

The second educational source to become familiar with is, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, a



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statement by the United States Conference, of Catholic Bishops,, USCCB, 2000.

When would the death penalty be of interest to Secular Franciscans? Education and advocacy to oppose the death penalty can become important if one lives in a state where the death penalty is already legal, such as it is in Missouri, or where it is illegal but where efforts to reintroduce it gain political support, as is the case in Iowa. State Catholic Conferences can provide individuals and fraternities a means of being involved in legislative advocacy by encouraging office visits or written correspondence with elected officials. Often, in such instances, the state Catholic Conferences will be working with the Catholic Mobilizing Network, CMN, a national organization working in close collaboration with USCCB. Through education, advocacy, and prayer, CMN proclaims the Church’s pro-life teaching and prepares Catholics for informed involvement in the public debate to end the death penalty and promote restorative justice.

To learn more about the Catholic Mobilizing Network, please go to: <https://catholicmobilizing.org/>

ed. note: *The death penalty was abolished in Illinois when Governor Quinn signed SB 3539 into law on March 9, 2011.*

***Love requires a creative, concrete response.
Good intentions are not enough.
The other is not a statistic, but a person to take care of.***

Pope Francis tweet

Carbon Footprint

We often wonder how we can participate in reducing Global Warming. It seems such a huge problem. How can we contribute? One way is as simple as choosing the foods that we eat. How often do you think about the way your food is grown? Packaged? Delivered? Here is a side panel from a box of cereal?

GENERAL MILLS IN ON A JOURNEY to always make our cereals better. —HOW?—



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*Being responsible. We have committed to sustainably source 100% of our cereal boxes by 2020. GIVING BACK Since 1996, our cereals have given more than \$175 million to America's Schools through Box Tops for Education™. —THAT'S WHY— HONEY NUT CHEERIOS *made with real honey *no high fructose corn syrup *12 vitamins and minerals.*

So next time you go shopping, read the labels and select sustainable produced, packaged, and transported items. Reduce your carbon footprint.



Catholic Climate Covenant recently launched a new nationwide campaign (Catholics Are Still In) to garner the U.S. Catholic community's support for climate action. With our partners, we developed the U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration to express the Catholic imperative to protect and promote human life and human dignity, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable peoples, by protecting our common home and acting on climate change.

This is a unique opportunity to let the world know that the U.S. Catholic community is saying "We Are Still In the Paris Agreement"! To be successful and reach as many Catholic institutions as possible, we need YOUR help between now and June 11th (deadline for institutional sign-ons to Catholic Climate Declaration)

- 1) If you lead a Catholic organization (e.g., parish, school, college/university/institute/center, health care facility, etc.), you can sign your organization on to the U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration [here](#).
- 2) If you are a member of a Catholic organization/institution/community, you can urge your leader (priest, bishop, president, CEO, etc.) to sign the U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration. For more information on how to do this, we have prepared several documents:
 - a) [Step-by-Step](#) Guide
 - b) [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - c) [Leave-Behind](#) document that includes the text of the Declaration and infor-



Justice



Peace



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mation about the Catholics Are Still In campaign, all in a two-pager you can give Catholic leaders as you urge them to enroll their institutions on the Declaration.

FARM BILL

The new farm bill is under consideration in the US House right now. This new iteration is changing the face of the programs tilting its benefits toward factory farms and away from the family farm as well as reducing food aid to the hungry in the US. Check out the US Bishops website for details @ www.usccb.org.

CATHOLIC ENERGIES (from their website)

Catholic Energies is the first nonprofit energy program designed with the specific needs of Catholic facilities in mind. A program of the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#), Catholic Energies helps Catholic facilities investigate, pay for and implement energy projects including:

- Energy Procurement—buy greener, cleaner energy...at a lower cost than you're paying now
- Energy Efficiency—lighting, HVAC and controls project can save your facilities thousands annually
- Renewable Energy—generate more of your own power
- Energy Storage—capture the excess energy you're making to use it when you need it.

Best of all, our program costs you nothing, and we provide you no-cost assessments to help you understand the opportunities on your campus.

Oh, and did we mention we offer unique financing options to help you move ahead with projects with no money upfront and a full performance guarantee?

Buildings waste 40% of the energy they consume - let us help you reduce your energy waste and mitigate the environmental harm this waste causes, especially to the poor and vulnerable.