

# Prairie Fire News

Franciscans of the Prairie Regional Fraternity, O.F.S.

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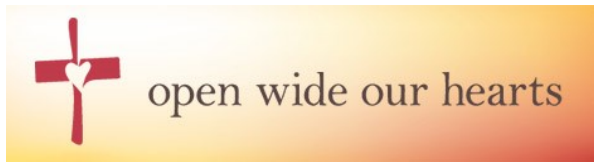
Justice



Peace



Integrity of Creation



During the November 2018 General Meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the full body approved the document *Open Wide our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love—A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*. This letter is the most recent of statements by the Bishops addressing this “original sin” of our country. Letters from 1958, 1968, and 1979 have all addressed this most basic of issues in our country today.

*With the positive changes that arose from the civil rights movement and related civil rights legislation, some may believe that racism is no longer a major affliction of our society—that it is only found in the hearts of individuals who can be dismissed as ignorant or unenlightened. But racism still profoundly affects our culture, and it has no place in the Christian heart. This evil causes great harm to its victims, and it corrupts the souls of those who harbor racist or prejudicial thoughts. The persistence of the evil of racism is why we are writing this letter now. People are still being harmed, so action is still needed.*



With February being *Black History Month*, it would be a good time for us to review this important document and reflect on our individual attitudes on this topic.

*Continued on next page*

## Inside this issue:

Green New Deal	2
Plastics	3
HR1	3
Prison Ministry	4

## COMING REGIONAL EVENTS

**March 8—10, 2019**

Regional Meetings & Elective Chapter

**July 20, 2019**

Regional Formation Gathering

**September 27—29, 2019**

Regional Retreat and Silver Jubilee

## Suggested topic for April Gatherings

### Reserve Your Copy of the 2019 Earth Day Program.



Grounded in scripture, Catholic social teaching, and *Laudato Si'*, this year's Earth Day program will help mobilize the Catholic community to take urgent action to protect all of God's creation. The one-hour educational program will include prayers, readings, a short video, and suggested activities.

*Continued from Page One*

The Bishops point out how in this country some form of racism has existed from the very beginning:

*As explorers, and then pioneers, arrived, relations with Native Americans also varied but were mostly to the detriment of Native peoples.*

*As this country was forming, Africans were bought and sold as mere property, often beaten, raped, and literally worked to death.*

*Hispanics have been referred to by countless derogatory names, have encountered negative assumptions made about them because of their ethnicity, have suffered discrimination in applying for college, for housing, and in registering to vote.*

Many of us say, “I’m not racist. I’m not prejudiced.” However, in many subtle ways, we betray this belief:

*Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God. When this truth is ignored, the consequence is prejudice and fear of the other, and—all too often—hatred.*

*Racism can often be found in our hearts—in many cases placed there unwillingly or unknowingly by our upbringing and culture. As such, it can lead to thoughts and actions that we do not even see as racist, but nonetheless flow from the same prejudicial root. Consciously or subconsciously, this attitude of superiority can be seen in how certain groups of people are vilified, called criminals, or are perceived as being unable to contribute to society, even unworthy of its benefits.*

Unfortunately, this complex issue raises its ugly head every day in our current political climate. We see examples in our national conversation and probably in our daily lives. So how do we address our predilection toward racism: The Bishops call us to follow the wise advise of Micah:

You have been told, O mortal, what is good,  
and what the LORD requires of you:  
Only to do justice and to love goodness,  
and to walk humbly with your God. (Mi 6:8)

*The ultimate test of your greatness  
is the way you treat every human  
being...  
~ St. John Paul II*

The Bishops provide much information and detail in the causes of this important issue in our society today and many remedies to just how to “do Justice, love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.” It would be well for all of us to spend the time reading and reflecting this new document from our Bishops.

This [link](#) will take you to the Bishops’ website where this document is located.

## Green New Deal

If you’re paying attention to current events, you have heard about the Green New Deal. Although these are nice sounding words, what do they mean? What is the impact of this proposed program for our country? To find out more and understand the extent of these proposals, click on this [link](#).

Of course, like any new proposal, this one is tied up with radical opinions on both sides of the political aisle. To be informed properly, we have the responsibility to find out what it’s all about, make logical decisions about it’s viability and then let our representatives know where our support lies.

## From *Franciscan Action Network*



*It does not matter how many prayers we "say," how many religious services we "attend"; while he walked this earth Jesus did not teach us how to worship him, but Jesus taught us how to follow him. This is what made the people in Nazareth so angry. We cannot "rejoice with the truth" (1 Cor. 13:7) when we assume the worst about*

*any person or when we act out of a sense of superiority or control over another. These readings impel us to question: Does prejudice, racism, or "othering" define our relationship with any other human being? If the Gospel does not challenge us to examine and reorder our relationships with each other, we are not listening.*

### OSF Philadelphia Devotes a Year to Education and Action about Harmful Impact of Plastics

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia [Care for Creation Committee](#) has decided to devote 2019 to information and action about harmful impact of plastics. Each month, the sisters will be posting monthly actions that you can take to help make our world a better, cleaner, and safer place. [January's resource is available here.](#)

You or your community have resources for ways to care for God's creation, please [let us know](#) if we can promote them to our national network.

### Take Action: Show Your Support for HR1: For the People Act

Last November, the people of the United States overwhelmingly demanded change through our votes. We said that we want a government that works for all of us -- that gives us all a say and puts our needs ahead of special interests. That is why Franciscan Action Network joined a coalition of public service and good governance organizations in [demanding that Congress makes a bold show of support for our democracy](#) -- and supports the strongest possible version of the For The People Act.

This legislation ensures a democracy where voters are protected from discrimination and can make themselves heard at the ballot box. A democracy where electoral districts are drawn fairly, so that every voter's ballot is worth the same. A democracy that isn't bought and paid for by the highest corporate bidder. And a democracy where ordinary Americans -- more women, people of color, and working people -- can run for office without relying on special interest Big Money.

We are encouraged to [add our name to urge our representatives to support HR1.](#)

From *This Nonviolent life—Daily Inspiration for your non-violent journey*

~Pace e Bene Nonviolent Service

*"To heal our society, our psyches must heal as well. The military, social, and environmental dangers that threaten us do not come from sources outside the human heart; they are reflections of it, mirroring the fears, greed, and hostilities that separate us from ourselves and each other."*

~[Joanna Macy](#)

### *Prison and Jail Ministry*

The Catholic Conference of Illinois coordinates a statewide effort of prison and jail ministry offered through the dioceses. Lay Catholics receive training to offer hope to inmates through the salvation of the Gospel.

Are you interested in this important ministry?

[Learn More](#)



From *This Nonviolent life—Daily Inspiration for your non-violent journey*

~Pace e Bene Nonviolent Service

*"Unless we accept deeply (in nonviolence resistance) the spirit of nonviolence, we can end up waging our own form of war and contributing to the conclusion we seek to overcome. Because the evil we resist is so great, we are inclined to overlook the illusion inherent in our own position, the will to transform others from the outside."*

*Jim Douglass, "Civil Disobedience as Prayer" found in [Peace is the Way](#)*