

INTERCONNECTION

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Newsletter
Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph, USA



MAR/APR 2019

KINSHIP WITH CREATION

By Truong Dinh, OFM Cap.

As we continue to put our efforts into recycling, I don't know what else I can do to promote a lifestyle that fits in our charism. I have always been taught to have the attitude of recycling since the earth is dying, and in my opinion, we must protect all life on earth from going extinct. I have been wondering about the notion of this duty to protect the earth and its origin. Surely, it's human fault for putting the earth at risk, but is the earth our possession to protect?

In my ongoing study of the life of Saint Francis, I've been struck by the realization that he was already talking about the relationship between human beings and the environment in the 13th century through *The Canticle of Creatures*.



"Monastery Lake at Conyers", by Mike Dorn, OFM Cap.

Within it, there's only one place that humans are mentioned, in line two- "...no human is worthy to call [God's] name," while the remaining thirteen lines encompass all of Creation.

It's clear that Francis was pointing to the fact that all creatures give praise to God. For Francis, the relational aspect with all of Creation is the most important. What we humans are doing at the moment is *stewardship* while Francis was talking about *kinship*. Dan Horan, OFM, a professor of mine at Catholic Theological Union, wrote the book, [*Francis of Assisi and the Future of Faith*](#). In the book, he devoted a chapter to this observation and suggested that the word *stewardship* already puts us at a higher status than the non-human elements of Creation around us. Thus, since we tend to steward all the blessings that God has given to us, I agree with Horan that we have missed the point of living in *kinship* rather than *stewardship* with God's creation.

The phrasing of 'stewardship' is yet another way that we make ourselves the center of Creation while a model of 'kinship' is barely known. Discerning how we can change this attitude is one thing that I want to devote more time to in prayer.

BUILDING CONCIIOUSNESS IN OUR PROVINCE

By JPIC Editors

In November 2017, Provincial Minister, Michael Sullivan wrote a [letter](#) to the friars raising awareness around our eating habits in the province. Specifically, he highlighted a portion of a [JPIC proposal](#) asking that we observe at least a day each week year-round without meat and he called for attention to the amount of food we waste in our friaries. This issue was revisited in his [letter](#) of 3/6/19. Recently, we asked our local ministers from around the province to provide feedback on how the provincial's first letter was being addressed locally. The following excerpts shed some light on efforts thus far from our diverse locations: **(note: any single viewpoint printed here does not reflect the respective friary or province as a whole.)**

From St. Lawrence Seminary High School:

"SLS has been working with SODEXO, the food catering service we hired, to track the amount of food waste at each meal. We have separate canisters for different types of food/food stations. This helps SODEXO to plan the meals more efficiently. So far, we are pleased on how this is progressing."

From the friary at Mt. Calvary:

"Our lunches are primarily the leftovers from previous meals (e.g. in soup) and we don't eat meat on Fridays."

From San José Friary, Chicago:

"We have been more conscious about not wasting food. We get quite a bit of prepared as well as packaged food donated to the friary, often more than we can eat. But we make a lot of effort to eat what we have received. I don't know if we have been as deliberate about meatless Fridays, but from what I've observed it seems that the friars in our community are individually going meatless 1-3 days per week, and one friar is a vegetarian."

U.S. Consumers waste nearly 150,000 tons of food per day

-according to a 2018 [national study](#) by the University of Vermont, published in the peer-reviewed journal, [PLOS One](#).



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From St. Katharine Friary, Crow Agency:

"We do not waste very much food, if any, and have always been conscious of this. We cook for ourselves, and although some of our meals are meatless, we have not committed to meatless Fridays due to different reasons cited by friars as well as a cultural consideration in the context of where we serve. Additionally, some friars have objections given a feeling that the trend is a vegetarian agenda or a concern that it reflects a pre-Vatican II sense of piety."

From Dan Fox, Sanford, MI:

"In general, I know I have tried to follow meatless Fridays when possible. Sometimes, we are not in control of what is served to us. I have tried to be conscious of the use of left-overs by sharing my home-made dishes with Seniors, especially the homebound with no children."

Our JPIC group is thankful to all for participating!



Catholic Social Teaching & the Green New Deal, a Webinar

Tuesday, April 30th at 2:00 pm EST

NOTE: All who register [here](#) will receive a link to the webinar recording.

Excerpts from Catholic Climate Covenant: *"You've heard about the Green New Deal, an ambitious, visionary, and for some, controversial Congressional proposal to deal with the urgent climate crisis while simultaneously investing in job creation and advancing social and racial justice. Do you have questions about how we as people of faith should respond to the Green New Deal?"*

In this webinar we will discuss:

- 1)** What the Green New Deal is, how and why it's a lightning rod on Capitol Hill and around the nation, and why young people are the driving force behind this proposal.
- 2)** How Catholic social teaching should inform legislative approaches (such as the Green New Deal) that address climate change.
- 3)** How the US Catholic community can faithfully respond to legislative opportunities that address the climate crisis, including ideas found in the Green New Deal."

Archived webinars can be accessed [here](#).

What's the future of recycling?

By Dave Schwab, OFM Cap.

While many of us feel good about recycling and doing our best for the environment, I am distressed at the recent reports that indicate that recycling nationally is in trouble. That is due in large part because we export a lot of recycling to China, and they have put a number of restrictions on what they will now accept. That has hit many recyclers in the pocket book as it eliminates items that were previously recyclable and makes many recycled items less valuable on the market. This has caused many municipalities to cut back on their recycling efforts. As we reflect on Earth Day 2019 this month, this is distressing news.

I have also been disappointed as I bike around the countryside to see cans, bottles, and especially plastic grocery bags on the side of the road. The bags are a major nuisance as they get hung up in trees and bushes and mar an otherwise beautiful landscape. I must confess that my cynical side really questions the "one stream" recycling programs. Where do all those recyclables go? Can a facility really separate out paper/plastic/aluminum etc. I have a goal to visit a recycling center in the area to get a feel for how the program really works.

I really appreciated Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* and his approach to the environment and the challenging issues that we face. I hope we can continue to educate ourselves about the hazards that threaten our creation. We have a beautiful world, but there are a lot of threats, especially to the clean water and air that we all need.

Capuchin Franciscan Province of St. Joseph, JPIC Commission

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