

NEWS

NATIONAL FRATERNITY
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
IN THE UNITED STATES

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**Secular Franciscan Order Has Message for Presidential Candidates:
*All of Creation, Especially Human Life, Has Dignity and Value***

DENVER, Oct. 19, 2012 -- The Secular Franciscan Order is urging President Barack Obama and Gov. Mitt Romney to regard all of creation, especially human life, as having dignity and value. Representing 13,400 Secular Franciscans across the country, the national body meeting in Denver, Colorado unanimously endorsed a statement to the presidential candidates Oct. 19, and pledged prayer and action over the next year.

The Secular Franciscan leaders encouraged the winner of the presidential election to approach politics and the marketplace with that "foundational premise" of dignity and value, and noted:

"That sets the stage for recognizing that: people with disabilities have value, disabilities are a normal part of life, we should assume people with disabilities want to be meaningfully engaged in society, and that their participation contributes significantly to the fabric of society."

They went on to say that "this vision seeks to preserve the dignity of a wide range of people -- persons such as those with Down syndrome or other disabilities, victims of human trafficking, elderly persons in declining health, the poor among us, refugees who come across the border, homeless children everywhere."

Recognizing the value of people goes beyond charity and is in fact an issue of justice, they said, adding: "This is counter to today's cultural notion that some people are disposable -- are despised because they're costly, inconvenient or requiring too much time. This involves everything from aborting babies thought to be less than perfect... to organ donation pressure... to so-called 'compassionate' death."

The national body announced it was "committing the Order to prayer and activity around the issues confronting our national leaders in 2013 and beyond (especially during the American Catholic Church's Year of Faith)," and noted that its Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission "will coordinate action items for the 30 Secular Franciscan regions across the U.S."

FULL TEXT OF STATEMENT

Statement of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order,
in a national gathering from Oct. 16 to Oct. 21, 2012 in Denver, Colorado,
addressed to the U.S. Presidential Candidates,
President Barack Obama and Gov. Mitt Romney.

We encourage the winner of the presidential election, as well as other leaders of government and business, to approach politics and the marketplace with the foundational premise that all of creation, especially human life, has dignity and value.

That sets the stage for recognizing that: people with disabilities have value, disabilities are a normal part of life, we should assume people with disabilities want to be meaningfully engaged in society, and that their participation contributes significantly to the fabric of society.

Further, this vision seeks to preserve the dignity of a wide range of people -- persons such as those with Down syndrome or other disabilities, victims of human trafficking, elderly persons in declining health, the poor among us, refugees who come across the border, homeless children everywhere.

Recognizing the value of people is not just an issue of charity. It is an issue of justice. This is counter to today's cultural notion that some people are disposable -- are despised because they're costly, inconvenient or requiring too much time. This involves everything from aborting babies thought to be less than perfect... to organ donation pressure... to so-called "compassionate" death.

The national body of the U.S. Secular Franciscan Order, gathered in Denver, Colorado, and representing 13,400 members, is committing the Order to prayer and activity around the issues confronting our national leaders in 2013 and beyond (especially during the American Catholic Church's Year of Faith). Our National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission will coordinate action items for the 30 Secular Franciscan regions across the U.S.

October 19, 2012