



# JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



## The Franciscan Presence at the 2013 March for Life

By Kent Ferris, OFS, Chair JPIC Commission

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Roe v. Wade U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, I boarded a train with our 13 year old daughter, Clare, and headed for Washington D.C. Clare and I set off on our journey to not only represent the Diocese of Davenport, but also our Secular Franciscan Order. We were able to attend the Pro-Life Leadership Mass celebrated by Sean Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap, from the Archdiocese of Boston and reconnect with fellow Secular Franciscan and 2012 JPIC Award Winner, Jan Benton. Cardinal O'Malley was very gracious, both with the challenge in his homily, but in agreeing to be photographed with us and later blessing Clare's rosary!

The message that we carried to the staff of both our U.S. Senators was consistent with both pro-life/respect life efforts from the Diocese and the JPIC efforts within the Order. Clare spoke of her reason for being part of the March, the right for nascent life to reach birth. I spoke of two nationwide postcard campaigns that are being undertaken, one relating to the need for immigration reform and the other stressing the importance of religious freedom. Even though Clare is younger yet than the cohort group that will command the Youth Commission's attention, she received compliments from Senate staff members.

Two other facets of the trip also had a Franciscan feel to it. Patrick Carolan, Executive Director of the Franciscan Action Network invited us to be part of two conversations in his Franciscan parish, St. Camillus, in the DC Metro section of Maryland. One night we were able to participate in a strategizing session relating to climate change, while the second night we listened to a conversation with young adults in the parish and the prospects of working collaboratively with FAN.

Finally, while at the March, we were able to meet, Chad Judice, the author of *Waiting for Eli: A Father's Journey from Fear to Faith*. The book is about a couple and their infant son, Eli who was born with a dreaded birth defect called spina bifida. It is an inspiring story of faith, hope and the power of prayer. This moving story has a strong pro-life, pro-love message, and is made even more compelling by

the author's descriptions of little miracles along the way. I highly recommend the book available through Trent Angers, OFS, Publisher of Acadian House Publishing, [info@acadianhouse.com](mailto:info@acadianhouse.com) or at (337) 235-8851.

## What Would Francis Do?

by Jim Hanna OFS, JPIC Commission Member

What would St. Francis do about our global environmental crisis? As Franciscans, we cannot ignore the devastation that our beautiful planet faces. To say the crisis is now, not tomorrow, is not an overstatement. Just ask the people of the Carteret Islands. Due to climate change, the waters of the Pacific Ocean are rising and covering the island, home to several thousand people. CNN calls them the world's first environmental refugees.

Our Lady of Mercy Fraternity in Springfield, Ohio, recommends the award-winning documentary, *Sun Come Up*, as a way to bring the message home that we must take action now to help protect the environment. The movie touches the heart while showing the plight of a people who for centuries have loved their land and their homes but must leave to survive. The extreme weather patterns we have experienced this past year seem to be a wake-up call. We must listen to our Popes who have spoken on this issue in the past. Surely St. Francis would agree.

Pope John Paul II's 1999 World Day of Peace Message said, "The danger of serious damage to land and sea, and the climate, flora, and fauna, calls for a profound change in modern civilization's typical consumer life style, particularly in the richer countries." He continued to talk about the depletion of the ozone layers and the "greenhouse effect" consequences of industrial growth, massive and urban concentrations, vastly increased energy needs, and unrestricted deforestation. He pointed out that these are known to harm the atmosphere and environment.

Pope Benedict XVI in 2010 in a World Day of Peace Message asked, "Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change?"

The inspiring DVD and additional resources are available by contacting the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change at their link:

<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources/sun-come-up-screening/>.