



# JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND FRATERNAL LIFE

By Carolyn D. Townes, OFS, National JPIC Animator

***A sense of community will make them joyful and ready to place themselves on an equal basis with all people, especially with the lowly for whom they shall strive to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.*** (OFS Rule, Art. 13b)

When we think about Catholic Social Teaching (CST), we tend to think of musty old volumes of writings dating back three centuries that have no impact or effect on our lives today. Nothing could be further from the truth. Catholic Social Teaching is a body of work that affects us today just as much as it did three centuries ago; perhaps even more so. In the simplest terms, CST is an invitation to a relationship with God and with all of God's creation – God's people and God's world. God has always desired a relationship with His people; but He wants us to return the favor. Catholic Social Teaching is the expression of that relationship. It helps us have a right and just relationship with God and God's creation.

relationships, you must spend quality time with the people in those relationships. During this quality time, you dialogue, you listen, and you get to know the other person. In the same way, we must spend time with God to get to know Him. From that relationship, we are better able to be with our brothers and sisters – in family, in community, and in fraternity. Catholic Social Teaching is about being in relationship and making sure that relationship is vibrant, healthy and strong.

***“Our culture is tempted to turn inward, becoming indifferent and sometimes isolationist in the face of international responsibilities. Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences.”*** (US Catholic Bishops)



I am reminded of the line from the song from the movie *Funny Girl* starring Barbra Streisand: “*People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.*” And yet I know that some people don't feel so lucky.

Think about all the relationships you have in your life. In order to strengthen and nurture those

Today, more than ever, we need our communities and fraternities. Biological families are either quite spread apart or dwindling. Loneliness has heightened, and more and more people are hiding behind the screens of their online devices. Research has shown that more people would rather text another person than to sit and talk with them face to face. I know from experience the danger of trying to communicate via texts and emails. Words get misinterpreted and meaning is misunderstood. You cannot convey

tone, and there is no eye contact or body language to gauge.

Building fraternal life in our isolationist society is more important than ever before. How we encounter one another is an essential part of building fraternal or community life. The social doctrine of the Catholic Church teaches us how to be in communion with one another, especially with those who are more vulnerable and on the margins of society. Is someone in your fraternity on the margins of society? Are they more vulnerable because of their socio-economic status? Dialoguing with them will uncover new ways of assisting them to become more vibrant in their lives and in the fraternity. Could this be part of your ongoing formation? Forgo the books for a month or two, and just have some good old-fashioned dialogue. It is said that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. This builds community, and community builds vibrant, healthy fraternal life.



**~ SAVE THE DATE ~**

**National Gathering of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Animators**

**"Handling Conflict with Lessons from St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio"**

**Thursday 29 August - Sunday 1 September 2019**

**Marianist Retreat and Conference Center in St. Louis, MO**

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## The Gift

By Kathleen Collins, OFS

Francis, did you worry as I do  
About the journey, the meaning of it all  
As you wandered through the woods  
Enthralled by beauty, overwhelmed with awe  
At the hand of the Creator in the smallest flower?  
Was your heart brought to tears  
At the sight of the nursing fawn  
Or the devotion of the nesting birds?  
What did you do with all this wonder  
All this beauty that the Lord sent you  
Each moment of your life?  
Why, of course! You sent it out into the world  
A kiss to the leper, a song to the tired, a sign to  
the world  
And down through the ages to me  
A poor pilgrim like yourself  
Separated by time but not by love

### OFS Conference at St. Bonaventure University in New York

#### **"Enduring Presence: Franciscan Laity, Their Relevance Today"**

July 12-14, 2019 - Led by Darleen Pryds, Ph.D., associate professor of spirituality and history, Franciscan School of Theology, Oceanside, CA. Conference Fee: \$400. This workshop/retreat examines the unique roles of lay women and lay men in the early years of Franciscan life and explores their relevance for lay practitioners today. Contact Pat Serotkin at [pserotkin@francis.edu](mailto:pserotkin@francis.edu)