



# JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



## JPIC FORMATION: WALKING WITH TWO FEET OF LOVE IN ACTION

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*“The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of justice and charity in society. Social justice . . . concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.” ~ Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*



At the 2018 National Chapter held in St. Louis, Mo., the participants were treated to a lovely dose of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Formation. During the formation time, I spoke of walking with two feet of love: the **foot of charity** and the **foot of social justice**. Sometimes we tend towards one foot and neglect the other. But if we are to walk justly, let alone stand, it must be with both feet.

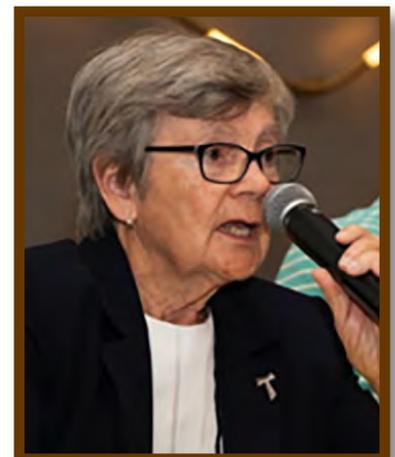
The formation time included my sharing that Sister Mother Earth belongs to God

and all that it contains (cf. Psalm 24:1). If we are not properly and lovingly walking with those two feet, that we are doing a great disservice to our Sister Mother Earth. Along with the handouts, I also gave each participant an Earth stress ball, asking each one to hold the Earth in their hands. This is our power; to hold Sister Mother Earth in the palm of our hands and care for it. This is not only our power, it is our responsibility as stewards and children of our Most High God.



*Social justice is ensuring that those in society, our neighbors, can fulfill their basic needs. Church teaching tells us that all people, no matter who they are or where they come from, have a right to what is required for human decency, such as “food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, social services, and security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, or unemployment” (Pacem in Terris, 11; Gaudium et Spes, 26)*

*Charitable Works are the immediate actions that are in response to our love for God and neighbor, in accordance with direct generosity or compassion towards those who are most in need of help.*





Our formation time included a panel discussion about how we are to walk with those two feet. The panelists included Marie Lucey, a Franciscan Sister of Philadelphia; Kevin Queally, Third Order Regular Friar based in the Philadelphia area; and Joe Makley, a Secular Franciscan from St. Elizabeth of Hungary Region. These three panelists were carefully selected as Franciscans who not only walk with both feet, but also talk the talk.

One of the questions addressed civil disobedience, as there are many Franciscans who believe we should not engage in civil disobedience or that we should stay away from the political arena altogether. Yet our Holy Rule clearly states: ***Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith*** (Article 15).

The Merriam-Webster definition of **civil disobedience** is a **refusal to obey governmental demands or commands especially as a nonviolent and usually collective means of forcing concessions from the government.**

I was very pleased that our panelists echoed this definition especially as a nonviolent action beginning with prayer and discernment. It is not about marching in and taking over; but a civil and collective means to bring about change for the common good. It was also stressed that civil disobedience needs to contain mutual invitation. Both sides must talk with one another peacefully and civilly. This way, everyone is aware of one another's thoughts and motives. As we engage in the public arena, we must remember that we are Franciscans, and we are people of faith and people of peace.



***“Our commitment to the Catholic social mission must be rooted in and strengthened by our spiritual lives. In our relationship with God, we experience the conversion of heart that is necessary to truly love one another as God has loved us.”*** ~ From USCCB Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions

I was also pleased and honored to present the **2018 Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award** to **Kathleen Carsten, OFS**. Kathleen is a member of the Divine Mercy Region and resides in Michigan with her husband, Michael Carsten, OFS, our Ecumenical/Interfaith Committee Chair.



Kathleen gave a heartfelt talk about the work she does as a parish nurse in the Detroit area dealing with seniors and housing issues. You can watch our interview on the national website at: <https://secularfranciscansusa.org/2018-national-chapter>. Scroll to the bottom of the page to watch the video.

For more memories of the day with JPIC Formation, be sure to check out Bob Stronach's awesome photos on the national website. Bob's photo links are right below the video. The JPIC Formation is on Day 3.