We commit ourselves:
A social justice newsletter of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Third Order St. Francis

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—Social Justice Committee

Civility and Non-Violence
by Sister Dorothy Pagosa

We are celebrating the life of St. Francis this month:

“We return to the bishop’s palace in Assisi in 1225. We recall Francis’ call to the brothers to carry him out on his stretcher to the bishop’s court where he could confront the bishop and the mayor, remind them of their fundamental dignity as children of a loving and forgiving God and invite them to take up the way of forgiveness and reconciliation as the way back from a culture of death and towards the renewed culture of life, the life of the new creation in Christ.”

—Anonymous Transitus Sermon

“We praise you, my Lord, through those who give pardon for Your love, and bear infirmity and tribulation. Blessed are those who endure in peace for by You, Most High, shall they be crowned.”

—Canticle of Creatures
St. Francis of Assisi

It is said that when the bishop and mayor heard this canticle, they were moved to embrace each other as brothers.

Oh, that this might be the case in our world today. In this newsletter we will address civil discourse, new issues around immigration, our responsibility to vote, and self-care.

Also included is a flyer for a fundraiser to help raise fees for DACA recipients to extend their eligibility. I, Sister Dorothy, have represented the congregation at planning meetings which included the School Sisters of St. Francis and other interfaith groups in Milwaukee.

LCWR Calls for Protection of Immigrants

The US Department of Homeland Security’s proposed changes to the public charge regulation are yet another attempt by President Trump to restrict immigration and punish immigrant families. The new regulation would force parents to make impossible choices between the well-being of their families and the prospect of future citizenship.

The rule changes would dramatically increase the barriers to lawful status for low-income immigrants and their families. It could dissuade parents from obtaining benefits for which their children qualify, out of fear that they may not be able to regularize their immigration status in the future.

Lack of access to public benefits programs will in-

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create poverty, hunger, homelessness, and disease, and decrease children’s school attendance and general well-being.

The attempt to target the most vulnerable within the immigrant community violates the tenets of our faith and threatens the values of our nation. We are called by our faith to welcome the stranger and care for the most vulnerable and we are challenged by our national values to promote the welfare of our children and tend the common good. If we want our communities to thrive, all families in those communities must have access to the care and services they need to which they are entitled. The Trump administration’s proposed changes to the public charge regulation threaten us all.

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious urges all people of faith to call for protection of immigrants, especially those who are most vulnerable, and to register their objections to this unreasonable and mean-spirited proposal during the 60-day comment period.

Leadership Council of Women Religious

PUBLIC CHANGE RULE

LCWR Continues:

What Does This Proposed Rule Do?

The proposed Public Charge rule would punish immigrants going through official immigration processes and their families for applying for or receiving benefits for themselves or their family.

This would mean the use of Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicare Part D, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program or Public Housing, could render a family member ineligible for a green card or unable to keep their family together.

The rule also raises the option of including the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) among benefits programs included and describes a series of other factors that would make someone more likely to be considered a public charge, including family size, English language ability, income, education and ability to pay for private health insurance.

Leadership Council of Women Religious

VOTING: A Citizen’s Right and Responsibility

Facts and Figures

As we approach the mid-term elections next month, here is some data about the state of our democracy.

- 61% of the eligible voters in the U.S. participated in the recent Presidential elections.
- The U.S. Ranks 26th out of the 35 democracies in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.
- The Constitution does not guarantee the right to vote and 34 states have voter ID laws requiring some form of government-issued identification at the polls.

Southern Poverty Law Center

- A recent study found that strict voter ID laws significantly increased the turnout gap between white voters and Latino, African-American and multi-racial voters.

Southern Poverty Law Center

- A U.S. resident is more likely to be hit by lightning than to commit voter ID fraud.

Brennan Center for Justice

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Many people throughout the U.S. and beyond were riveted to the recent testimony of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and Judge Brett Kavanaugh.

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in three women and one in six men experienced some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime.

One in five women and one in 71 men will be raped at some point in their lives.

During Dr. Ford’s testimony, the calls to the National Sexual Assault Hotline increased by 205% as women faced their own abuse.

If any of you have been activated by the testimony to deal with your own sexual assault, please take care of yourself through finding a counselor who deals with these issues.

You can also call the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-4673 at any time.

You are not alone.

During these hard times, we need to take care of ourselves in order to take care of others.

November 6, 2018 is the date for the U.S. mid-term elections.

Please, use your right and your responsibility —

Vote on November 6th!
Keep Our Dream Alive

A benefit concert in support of Milwaukee area DACA recipients

Sunday, October 21
2:00-4:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Chapel

Featuring the Latino Arts
Mariachi Juvenil and Infantil
Dinorah Marquez, founder and director

Refreshments following the concert

Tickets $20 in advance or at the door

Presented by the Faith Alumni partners:
Archdiocese of Milwaukee • Ascension Lutheran Church
Carmen Schools of Science & Technology • Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes • Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia
Dorothy Ann • Francis of the Sacred Heart
U.S. Province • Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order
School Sisters of St. Francis • Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi
School Sisters of Notre Dame • Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis • St. Francis of Assisi Parish

1501 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee
Free parking in the St. Joseph Center lot
29th St. & Orchard St.

Tickets/Info: Contact Sister Dusty
dfarnam@sssf.org • 414-335-5261
Civil Discourse

“Stemming from our Franciscan values and the fact that all life is interconnected, members, vowed and non-vowed, are encouraged to be engaged in ministry with those living on the margins of society and struggling to live with dignity.”

SSJ-TOSF Congregational Commitments
26th General Chapter

Currently we hear about tribalism. People who have set ideas and are unwilling to listen to the “other” hang with their tribes. The challenge for us is to practice civil discourse and be willing to hear all sides.

This does not mean that we must compromise our values, but it is helpful to hear what the other people are feeling. It might open our eyes to new possibilities. Remember, we are more alike than we are different.

So, what is civil discourse?

Civil discourse is engagement in discourse (conversation) intended to enhance understanding. (Definition)

To engage in civil discourse:

- Stay in a contemplative state of mind
- Remember that we all have a piece of the truth
- Try to persuade, not demand agreement
- Listen... Listen... and Listen some more
- Don’t question motivation... ask why?
- Avoid name-calling, personal attacks, and profanity
- Stay on topic
- Be truthful and use facts
- You want to leave feeling as if each of you was heard, even if minds weren’t changed

REMEMBER...

We welcome your submissions in the form of
- “Sightings”
- Brief write-ups of your activities, suggestions for workshops, books, articles, films, resources, etc.

Note: The next issue of We Commit Ourselves will be published in December.

Please send any items for inclusion in this next issue to Sister Dorothy Pagosa no later than November 26th, the Monday after Thanksgiving.

~ Your Social Justice Committee