



PARTICIPANT PROGRAM

feast of st. francis

Who Is My Neighbor in a
Climate Threatened World?

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INTRODUCTION

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining with thousands of others to host an educational session highlighting the urgent need to engage in civil dialogue and concrete actions on climate change. As Catholics, we are faced with the following question: How can we, in an era of political polarization, find common ground to protect the earth, our common home? Since 2006, Catholic Climate Covenant has inspired and equipped Catholics to care for creation and care for the poor. Since 2012, in collaboration with our 17 national partners, the Covenant has provided the Feast of St. Francis (FOSF) program, a template for a 90-minute program focused on Catholic social teaching and creation care.

WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

By participating in a Feast of St. Francis event, you are joining thousands of Catholics and other people of faith who want to learn, grow, and respond to the Church's teaching on caring for creation and the poor.

As you know, Pope Francis was so inspired by St. Francis of Assisi that he is the first Roman pontiff to take the saint's name. He has challenged us to make care for creation and care for the poor a cornerstone of our Catholic witness.

This year marks the 39th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi being named the patron saint of those who promote ecology by St. John Paul II.



Feast of St. Francis

2018 Program Guide

OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Show Me My Neighbor

L: God of All Love, as I step out the door

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: As I read the news...

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: As I pray...

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: On my left, on my right. Perhaps turning to me right now

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: Where my eyes have passed before and then turned away

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: Where my ears have heard cries that I have ignored

All: Show me my neighbor.

L: As they share a story that is different from my story, help me to listen as if it is my own.

ALL: Show me my neighbor.

L: As I open my senses to all of your creation

All: Show me my neighbor and then let me love them.

L: In their joy and in their distress

All: Let me love them.

L: That their delight be mine and their pain be mine too

All: Let me love them.

L: As completely and mercifully as you love me

All: Let me love them.

L: In true solidarity, singing our songs together until a new song emerges

All: Let me love them.

L: I look up now, God of love and grace.

All: Show me my neighbor.

-Adapted from Catholic Relief Service Prayer, Show Me My Neighbor



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (5 MINUTES)

Who is your neighbor?

- A. *Individual reflection:* Take a minute to silently reflect on the question “Who is your neighbor?”. Picture your neighbor. You may have multiple answers.
- B. *Share your answer(s) with your small group.*
- C. Your small group will write down on a piece of paper (marked as “**List A**”) a list of who is their “neighbor” and then tape the list to the wall.

READINGS (10 MINUTES)

Reading #1: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?”

He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”

He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim? He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” - **Luke 10:25-37.**

Reading #2: St. Francis and the Leper

St. Francis of Assisi’s biographer, Thomas of Celano, writes, ‘Among all the horrors afflicting the human condition, the one Francis feared most was leprosy.’ One day, while he was riding his horse in the valley below Assisi, Francis encountered a leper. Instinctively, he spurred his horse on to escape the disgusting sight but was struck with remorse. So, he turned his horse around and dismounted. He then gave some money to the leper, hugged him and kissed him. He then got on his horse again and left, his heart filled with gladness. While he was galloping away he turned to say goodbye, but the leper was gone. The man had mysteriously disappeared. This experience was fundamental for Francis and is remembered in his Testament. Clearly, it is God who is acting here. He is present in the guise of a leper. (Source: <http://www.messengersaintanthony.com/content/st-francis-conversion>)



Reading #3:

“Why do you see climate change as a moral and ethical issue?” It comes from the basic message that’s in all major traditions. It’s worded differently, but it is to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself. And who is our neighbor? Our neighbors are those next to me. They’re the future generations, the children. They’re brothers and sisters who are economically challenged. They are the refugees and immigrants who are being affected by climate change. And my neighbor is also, as St. Francis of Assisi would say, everyone and everything. All the elements, all of the creatures, the plants. What it really comes down to is: Am I following this basic command to put love into action?” - Sister Joan Brown OSF (Source: <http://globalsistersreport.org/blog/q/q-sr-joan-brown-way-cop21-34601>)

Reading #4:

“There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation [...] We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family [...] The poor and the earth are crying out.” –*Laudato Si’*: 25, 52, 246.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. How do the stories of the Good Samaritan and St. Francis and the Leper inform your view of who is our neighbor and how we should treat our neighbor?
2. Did Sr. Joan Brown’s quote open new paths for you? Had you thought, as St. Francis of Assisi did, of creation as your neighbor?
3. If we are all one human family and, as St. Francis believed, one family with all of creation, what is our responsibility to creation and to migrants/refugees displaced by climate change and poverty? How should we as Catholics respond? Are we living up to our responsibility to creation, to the poor, and to migrants?

VIDEO (15 MINUTES)

PLAY VIDEO <https://youtu.be/oyjHVxilh6E>

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

1. Three minutes:
 - Now that you have watched the video and discussed who is your neighbor, **consider who is your neighbor in a climate-challenged world?** Picture your neighbor again. Then share your answer with your small group.
 - Did you name different neighbors than in “List A”? Your small group will write down on a piece of paper (marked as “List B”) a list of any **“new neighbors”** in a climate-threatened world. Tape “List B” on the wall next to “List A”.
2. Ten minutes:
 - Discuss how you see climate change and migration as interconnected issues. How do we respond to communities facing the loss of their homelands due to climate change and being forced to relocate?
 - Consider Pope Francis’ words that we all share an attitude of rejection toward our brothers and sisters knocking at our doors and that this rejection is rooted in self-centeredness, indifference, and fear. These are the same attitudes that led St. Francis of Assisi to reject/fear the lepers! Do



those same attitudes lead us to neglect/reject creation? How do we begin to see God in all our brothers and sisters, including our brothers and sisters in creation?

- What can you pledge to do to change these attitudes toward migrants/refugees and toward creation? On a piece of paper marked "I pledge to..." write all the individual pledges. **Tape "Pledge List" to wall.**

3. Two minutes:

- **Walk around the room and read all the taped lists** (A and B) and the pledge lists. Are there major differences between lists A and lists B? Do you see common themes? Are there pledges that you might incorporate into your life?

ACTIVITY (10-15 MINUTES)

Your facilitator has chosen the activity or activities you will participate in today. Please follow their instructions.

For more information on all the suggested activities:

A. Sign the *Catholic Climate Declaration* (as individuals and/or as an institution) by going here:

<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-climate-declaration>

B. Sign the *St Francis/Laudato Si'* Pledge by going here:

<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/pledge>

C. Participate in a Share the Journey Pilgrimage Walk for Migrants and Refugees by going here:

<https://www.sharejourney.org>

CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Prayer for Creation and Migrants

Lord, we pray for the protection of all refugees, migrants and displaced persons in the world today, especially those displaced by war, poverty, and natural disasters. You experienced the life of a migrant in the flight to Egypt, when Joseph and Mary fled to protect Your life. Today, this phenomenon continues in a world that does not respect the vulnerable.

Help us to respond to the needs of these people, our brothers and sisters. You told us that when we welcome the stranger that we welcome You and that the reward of that assistance is not forgotten on the day of our judgment.

We invoke the Migrant Family of Nazareth to protect those who migrate today, especially those who do so because of environmental reasons.

Keep them safe and bring them to their destinations with Your guidance. Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer by Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn Copyright © 2016 Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., Silver Spring, MD. All rights reserved.)

