

## MOVED BY MERCY



We are called to  
show mercy because  
mercy has first been  
shown to us.

POPE FRANCIS



# SAINT ANNE OF THE HEIGHTS CHURCH

3545 Kennedy Blvd., Jersey City, NJ 07307  
Tel: 201-360-0838 Email: [info@sahjerseycity.com](mailto:info@sahjerseycity.com)  
Fax: 201-721-5996

Parish registration:  
General parish feed:  
Website:

[sahjerseycity.com/register](http://sahjerseycity.com/register)  
[@stah\\_nation](https://twitter.com/stah_nation)  
[sahjerseycity.com](http://sahjerseycity.com)

## Pastoral Team

**Fr. Nigel** Parish Priest  
**Fr. J. Ranieri** Weekend Assistant  
**Msgr. L.J. Miller** Weekend Assistant  
**Fr. D.X. Stump, S.J.** Weekday Assistant

**Mrs. J. Waddleton & Lt. J. Carroll** Trustees

## Weekly Planner

### SUNDAY 10/2

#### 27<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

##### Respect Life Sunday

10 AM Family Mass **Church**

10 AM/12 PM Baptism **Church**

After 12 Noon Mass: *Blessing of Animals*

**St. Francis Statue**

### MONDAY 10/3

3:30—4:30 PM Legion of Mary **Cent Hall**

### TUESDAY 10/4 St. Francis of Assisi

12:15 PM Bingo **Cent Hall**

### THURSDAY 10/6

9:30—10:30 AM Holy Hour for Priests

**Church**

### FRIDAY 10/7

12:15 PM Bingo **Cent Hall**

3 PM (setup) Mass of Anointing

**Cent Hall**

### SATURDAY 10/8

2—4:00 PM Mass of Anointing

**Cent Hall**

### SUNDAY 10/9

#### 28<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

##### Vocation Awareness Sunday

10 AM Family Mass **Church**

10 AM—1 PM H.N.S. Mass/Mtg

**Church/Cent Hall**

1—3 PM Fil-Am Mtg **Cent Hall**

## Sick List

**Let us pray for the sick** (People will remain on sick list for 2 weeks unless otherwise notified): Rosemary Perduto, Juliet Nawrocki, Doreen Busacca, Kathleen Link, Orlando Basile, Marie Carlson, John Norton, Patricia Kucinski, Frank McNamara, Jennifer O'Connor, Donna Tuzzo, Matt Bolger, Lawrence Shin, Lupe Pena, Frances Kearns, Josephine Cermak Rowan, Steve & Rachel Mastin, Diane Shea, Joseph Callandrillo, Humberto Quintana, Javier Vega, Jennifer Moloughney, Antoinette Maddi, Carol Jordan, Anthony Biggio, Sammy DeLeon, Shane Quinn, Alice Daly, Sadie Krieger, Dolores DelMonte, Dianne O'Sullivan, Carl Carlson, Larry Bello, Miyuki Campbell, Diane Albert, Meghan Connaughton, Constance Czegular.

## Mass Intentions — October 3<sup>rd</sup> — 9<sup>th</sup> 2016

Date	Time	Offered for	Offered by
Mon 10/3	9 AM	Novena	
Tues 10/4	9 AM	Novena	
Wed 10/5	9 AM	Novena	
	7 PM	Special Intention	OL Perpetual Help Group
Thurs 10/6	9 AM	Novena	
Fri 10/7	9 AM	Novena	
Sat 10/8	9 AM	Novena	
	5:30 PM	Ellen Seborowski	Granddaughter Claire
	7:00 PM	San Judas Tadeo	Marquez Family
Sun 10/9	8 AM	Novena	
	10 AM	Helene Clifford	Marie Carlson
	12 PM	Christina Burke	

## Sanctuary Gifts October 2<sup>nd</sup> — 8<sup>th</sup> 2016

Gift	In memory of	Requested by
Altar Wine	Patricia Santana	Carol Dowd
Altar Bread	Patricia Santana	Carol Dowd
Altar Candles	Patricia Santana	Carol Dowd
	In honor of	
Sanct. Lamp	Lawrence Shin	Kathleen Castle

## Class of 1972 Graduates!!

Looking for 1972 Graduates from St. Anne's Grammar School JC Heights. 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Celebration Scheduled for 2017. **Please contact: [jam24336@aol.com](mailto:jam24336@aol.com) and/or look for our page on Facebook "St Anne School JC Heights Class of 72".**

## Baptism Information

Families are asked to please contact the Rectory for further information on preparing for the sacrament of Baptism.

## Sacrament of Matrimony

In accordance with archdiocesan policy, couples contemplating marriage are asked to begin the sacramental preparation program at least one year in advance of the wedding date. Please contact the Rectory for further information.

## Ministry to the Sick

We hope to give to all the sick and aged in our parish the opportunity to receive the Eucharist. If you or someone you know can no longer get to church, and would like a Eucharistic Minister to bring you Communion, please call **St. Anne's Rectory** at [201-360-0838](tel:201-360-0838) or [info@sahjerseycity.com](mailto:info@sahjerseycity.com)

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

# Anointing Mass

Join us at 2 PM for a Mass and Anointing of the Sick in Centennial Hall. This is a special time to bring your physical, mental and spiritual troubles to the Lord. Refreshments after Mass; Compliments of the Holy Name Society Please contact rectory at 201-360-0838, if transportation is needed.

## Bus ride to St. Joseph Shrine

Bus ride to St. Joseph Shrine in Stirling, New Jersey HAS BEEN POSTPONED to Saturday, October 22, 2016! Board bus at 8:30 am at St. Anne's Church. Bring your own lunch. Please respond as soon as possible; bus seating is limited. For more information, please call Fran Spazian at 201-653-1318. Enjoy a day of reflection, prayer and joy!

## Family Faith Formation

Please contact Rectory for more information. Please follow the Twitter channels of the parish:

[@sah\\_promise](https://twitter.com/sah_promise)

**Faith Formation Grade K—1**

[@sah\\_goodnews](https://twitter.com/sah_goodnews)

**Faith Formation Grade 2—3**

[sah\\_venture](https://twitter.com/sah_venture)

**Faith Formation Grade 4—6**

[sah\\_visions](https://twitter.com/sah_visions)

**Faith Formation Grade 7—8**

**Family Faith Formation**

**Registration: [sahjerseycity.com/ccd](http://sahjerseycity.com/ccd)**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN  
AND ADDRESSING ABUSE:**

### We Are All Hurt By Child Sexual Abuse

When someone commits an act of abuse against a child – whether within the Church or in public schools, town organizations or in homes – all of society suffers. For that reason, the Archdiocese requires everyone who works with children to be trained in sexual abuse awareness and to undergo a background check. By participating in this effort, we all say “We do not condone abuse within the Church, and are taking steps to eliminate it.” The Protecting God's Children® program is a requirement for those working with children, but is open to all adult parishioners or school parents who wish to learn more about how to ensure safe environments for children in our society.

For a listing of the current sessions of Protecting God's Children®, or to learn more about the Archdiocese's safe environment policies and procedures, visit the Archdiocese of Newark website at [www.rcan.org/charter](http://www.rcan.org/charter).

# Blessing of Animals

**In celebration of St. Francis of Assisi, bring your animal to be “Blessed” right after the 12 Noon Mass this Sunday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meet at St. Francis Garden (behind rectory/ near elevator).**

# The New Jersey Adoption law has changed

**Beginning January 1, 2017, adoptees and certain relatives will be able to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate without a court order.**

The birth certificate will include the names of the birth parents who placed children for adoption, even though for 40 years both the State and the Church promised anonymity to the birth parents at the time of the adoption.

The Catholic Church always has supported reunions between adoptees and birth parents if such reunions were by mutual consent. For this reason, Catholic Charities agencies continue to assist both birth parents and adoptees seeking reunions. The Catholic Church also supports adoptees having full access to their birth parents medical, cultural, and social history information.

## Can birth parents in New Jersey protect their privacy and indicate whether or not they want contact with the adoptee?

Yes, the New Jersey Department of Health now offers two forms – a Redaction Request Form and a Contact Preference Form – that allow birth parents of adult adoptees an opportunity to protect their privacy.

## How can birth parents protect their privacy?

Birth parents who finalized an adoption before August 1, 2015 can file a request with the State of New



Jersey indicating that they want the State Registrar to keep their Personal Identifying Information off documents provided to anyone. To do this, birth parents **MUST** complete and submit a Redaction Request Form no later than December 31, 2016.

## Can a birth parent request no contact with an adoptee?

Birth parents have three options related to contact with an adoptee. By completing and submitting a Contact Preference Form, birth parents can indicate they want no contact with the adoptee; or they can indicate that they agree to have a third party ar-

range contact with the adoptee; or they can indicate that they are willing to have direct contact with the adoptee. Submitting a Contact Preference Form is essential.

Adoptees who want to obtain a copy of their original birth certificate can submit a request. The New Jersey Department of Health will begin releasing birth records after January 1, 2017.

For more information regarding the changes to New Jersey's Adoption Law visit the New Jersey Catholic Conference website: [www.njcatholic.org/adoptions](http://www.njcatholic.org/adoptions).

## Update Your Compliance For “Protecting God's Children”

### A gentle reminder

Attending a “Protecting God's Children” Workshop is a requirement by the Archdiocese of Newark every three years; updated background checks and documentation are required every five years.

This is a reminder, to please contact St. Anne's Rectory if you feel you are due to update either the PGC workshop and/or your background check and documentation. We do not have enough people who need to attend a workshop, therefore, a workshop will not be scheduled here at St. Anne's Parish. **DO NOT REGISTER WITH VIRTUS**; Contact Georgene at the rectory to locate a PGC Workshops.

### For Online Recertification of Protecting God's Children

If you are recertifying your Protecting God's Children by doing the online option, please ensure you are reading the monthly articles in addition to doing the annual recertification module. Your ac-



count may be suspended in Virtus when no articles have been read in the previous year, and you will be unable to volunteer.

## Faith and Service

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus teach about faith and service to God. The context is a continuing dialogue between Jesus and his followers about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus has just finished an instruction on sin and forgiveness. There are two related teachings that Jesus offers to his disciples when they cry out for an increase in faith. The first is the familiar reminder that faith, even just a little, will enable the followers of Jesus to do wondrous things. But this uplifting and inspiring teaching is quickly followed by the second teaching, a caution about knowing one's place in God's plans. The disciples of Jesus are to understand themselves as servants to God and his plans. Even when God works wonders through us, with our mustard seed-sized faith, we must not seek praise. Our participation in God's plans is God's grace to us—nothing more, nothing less. When we are graced enough to cooperate with God, the work we do is nothing more than our obligation to God as faithful stewards. And yet, our faith enables us to believe that what we have offered in service to God, as his servants, can be made to produce a hundredfold.

# October Novena of Prayer

Requested for	Requested by
† Lois Ricker <i>1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary in Heaven</i>	Parish Intention
† Lois Ricker	Urynowicz Family
† Mary Bakerowski <i>1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary in Heaven</i>	Parish Intention
† Giuseppe & Rosolina Tango	Mr. & Mrs. Angelo Tango
† Eugene Salati	Salati Family
Jeremiah Solis	Grandfather Gerry
Robert Bradley	Marie Bradley
Baby Melody	Marie Bradley
Jackie	Marie Bradley
† Antonio Ziccharella	Nancy Pelle
Mary Yori	St. Joseph Morning Prayer Group
Joan & Thomas Gorman	Loretta Dempsey
Maro Twal	Loretta Dempsey
Patrick & Kerry	Pat Roda
Patrick Roda	Pat Roda
Joseph Fasani	Pat Roda
† Richard Renee Sanchez	Paul Watroba
Frank Roda	Mom
Tony Roda	Mom
Lauren Faith Maglori	St. Joseph Morning Prayer Group
Spencer Roda	Grandma
Dr. R. Patel	Carroll Family
† Patricia Santana	Carol Dowd & Family
† Alfred J. Dentale	Panjikunnel Family
† Alfred J. Dentale, Jr.	Panjikunnel Family
Toni Belfiore	St. Anne Rosary Society
Valerie Rea	Pat Roda



Natural Family Planning Free Informational Night  
with Jill Cherrey, Certified SymptoPro NFP Instructor

October 5, 2016

St. Paul Roman Catholic Church  
200 Wyckoff Avenue  
Ramsey, New Jersey

*Celebrate and reverence God's vision of human sexuality.*

## Discover Natural Family Planning

Contact Jill Cherrey with questions at 973-497-4325.

## Bible Class

**Do you want to know more about the Word of God? To learn what is written in the Bible? Then come and see...**

There will be a weekly Bible Class at St. Anne's Church in Centennial Hall beginning Friday, October 14, 2016 at 7:30 PM. Bringing a Bible and writing pad a must. Fr. Bill Halbing, a Bible scholar teaches the scriptures passionately explaining them line by line. He will come to our parish and help us understand the Bible better. **Come and bring your relatives and friends. Free admission. Everyone is welcome.**



## Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children



The Scholarship Fund for Inner-City Children is hosting a Fall Benefit Concert on Friday, October 28, 2016 at Enlow Hall on the campus of Kean University. Proceeds from the event will provide low-income students from grades K-12 with partial tuition scholarships to attend Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Newark. The concert will feature *The Dominoes* from Saint Dominic Academy, VOX from Saint Peter's Prep, Tim McLoone and *the Shirleys* and acclaimed operatic soprano singer, Maureen Francis. To purchase tickets visit [www.KeanStage.com/SFIC](http://www.KeanStage.com/SFIC) or call (908) 737-7469.

### Sunday Readings / Lecturas del Domingo

1st Reading / 1ra lectura	HAB 1:2-3; 2:2-4
Psalm / Salmo	PS 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9
2nd Reading / 2da lectura	2 TM 1:6-8, 13-14
Gospel / Evangelio	LK 17:5-10

### Weekday Readings / Lecturas del Día

<b>Mon</b> GAL 1:6-12 / PS 111:1B-2, 7-8, 9 AND 10C / LK 10:25-37
<b>Tue</b> Memorial of Saint Francis of Assisi GAL 1:13-24 / PS 139:1B-3, 13-14AB, 14C-15 / LK 10:38-42
<b>Wed</b> GAL 2:1-2, 7-14/PS 117:1BC, 2/ LK 11:1-4
<b>Thu</b> GAL 3:1-5 / LK 1:69-70, 71-72, 73-75 / LK 11:5-13
<b>Fri</b> Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary GAL 3:7-14 / PS 111:1B-2, 3-4, 5-6 / LK 11:15-26
<b>Sat</b> GAL 3:22-29 / PS 105:2-3, 4-5, 6-7 / LK 11:27-28

### Oct Prayer Intentions of the Holy Father

**UNIVERSAL: Journalists**—That journalists, in carrying out their work, may always be motivated by respect for truth and a strong sense of ethics.

**EVANGELIZATION: World Mission Day**—That World Mission Day may renew within all Christian communities the joy of the Gospel and the responsibility to announce it.

## Register for Your PreCana

If you are planning your Catholic Marriage, you need to register for PreCana, the spiritual session to help you better understand the Sacrament of Matrimony to prepare for a joyful marriage.

UPCOMING SESSION:

**Saturday, October 22, 2016**  
at St Lawrence in Weehawken  
and Ss Peter & Paul in Hoboken  
near Lincoln Tunnel and I-495

Register at [spphoboken.com/precana](http://spphoboken.com/precana)



# Every Suicide Is Tragic

RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

Proponents of doctor-assisted suicide try to draw a sharp distinction between those with a mental illness who want to end their lives and those with a terminal illness who express the same wish. They even insist we should not call the latter "suicide," contrary to the plain meaning of the word. This is a tragically false distinction with far-reaching consequences.

## Doctor-Assisted Suicide Abandons Vulnerable Individuals

Even among terminally ill patients, a request to die is nearly always a cry for help. This request is a distress signal indicating that something in the patient's condition—at the medical, psychological, or social level—has not been adequately attended to.

Studies show that the desire for death in terminally ill individuals generally correlates with both physical pain and poor social support. When comfort or relief is offered in the form of more adequate treatment for depression, better pain management, or more comprehensive palliative care, the desire for death typically vanishes. In the Netherlands, for example, the request for "hastened death" was withdrawn by 85% of patients when their symptoms were better controlled.

Suicidal individuals—with or without a terminal illness—typically do not want to die; they want to escape what they perceive to be an intolerable situation, and they inaccurately believe that suicide is their only way out. The patient requesting assisted suicide is often asking, "Does anyone want me to be alive, or care enough to talk me out of this request and support me through this difficult time?"

Among terminally ill individuals, a request to die is often associated with a potentially treatable mental disorder such as depression or anxiety. Yet alarmingly, in Oregon, where assisted suicide has been legal since 1997, fewer than 5% of individuals who die by assisted suicide are ever referred for psychiatric or psychological evaluation to rule out the most common causes of suicidal thinking—and the percentage of those receiving such an evaluation is steadily decreasing.

## Doctor-Assisted Suicide Enables Suicide

While individuals who are at risk for suicide often contemplate and formulate suicidal plans, and some may show warning signs, they are often ambivalent about ending their lives. The actual suicide attempt is often done impulsively, in the midst of an acute crisis or while intoxicated or emotionally distressed.

A journalist tracked down the few dozen individuals who survived jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge, which is the #1 suicide spot in the world.<sup>4</sup> He asked them what was going through their minds in the four seconds between jumping off the bridge and hitting the water. Every one of them responded that they regretted the decision to jump. One man said, "I realized that all the problems in my life that I thought were unsolvable were actually solv-



able—except for having just jumped." To abandon individuals who have lost hope—under the guise of "respecting their autonomy"—is irresponsible.

Furthermore, completing a suicide generally requires not just intent (which typically waxes and wanes over time) but also easy access to means. People tend to fixate on one specific plan. If that particular method isn't readily available, they typically don't choose an alternative method; they choose to live. But assisted suicide increases access to a ready means to end one's life for those who are especially vulnerable due to a terminal illness.

## Doctor-Assisted Suicide Escalates Suicide

Advocates of assisted suicide claim it is a private decision, an exercise in personal autonomy that does not affect others. But there is a well-studied "social contagion" aspect to the behavior that can't be ignored.

A recent study, which controlled for other factors that could account for the rise, showed that the permissive assisted suicide laws in Oregon and Washington have caused at least a 6% rise in overall suicide rates in those states. Additional data, although limited, enhances this distressing picture. After suicide rates had declined in Oregon in the 1990s, they rose dramatically there between 2000 and 2010—the years following the legalization of assisted sui-

cide in 1997. By 2012, suicide rates in Oregon were 42% higher than the national average.

We know that suicide is among the health-related behaviors that tend to spread from person to person. When a person ends his or her life, it can affect the choices of that person's friends, as well as the choices of people at least three degrees of separation away: the friends of his or her friends' friends. Additionally, publicized cases of suicide lead to clusters of copycat cases—known in social science as the Werther Effect. A 2003 Swiss study, for example, showed evidence of suicide contagion following media reports of doctor-assisted suicide. No one is an island.

## Legalizing Doctor-Assisted Suicide Wrongly Communicates That Some Lives Are Not Worth Living

Finally, the law itself is a teacher. Our laws shape cultural attitudes toward certain behaviors and influence social norms. Laws permitting assisted suicide communicate the message that, under especially difficult circumstances, some lives are not worth living. This tragically false message will be heard not only by those with a terminal illness, but by any person struggling with the temptation to end his or her life.

**Every suicide is tragic. We don't discourage suicide by assisting suicide.**

# Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility

**We often assume parenthood happens easily after "I do," but for many married couples, it does not. For some, the joy of conception never happens. Others suffer repeated miscarriages. Still others experience secondary infertility: after giving birth to one or more children, they are unable to have another.**

The pain can become overwhelming. Social media posts of pregnancies, baby announcements, or pictures of newborns may intensify feelings of being alone in the ache for a child. Attending baby showers and being around children or pregnant women can be excruciating. If you experience difficulty bringing a child into your family, know that you are not alone. God is with you, and his Church desires to walk with you. The following suggestions may be helpful to you on this journey.



## Start with Prayer

God has a beautiful plan for your life as a married couple. Seek his guidance, and let the healing power of prayer, a conversation in which "heart speaks unto heart,"<sup>1</sup> strengthen you. Pope Francis encourages us to pray not only with commonly known prayers, "but also to pray in our own words."

## Connect with Others

A mentorship, a faith-based support group, or spiritual direction can offer comfort and provide new perspectives. Sharing your struggles with family, friends, or a therapist can also help ease the pain. Ask the saints for their intercession, and reflect upon the biblical stories of Sarah and Abraham, Hannah and Elkanah, and Elizabeth and Zechariah.

## Seek to Understand the Church's Teaching

The sexual act expresses the marital covenant, repeating over and over again, "I give myself to you entirely, unreservedly, holding nothing back." In this mutual gift of self, so all-encompassing that it includes their potential for procreation, a husband and wife are united as one, giving full expression to their love. These two aspects of sexuality, the unitive and the procreative, are intertwined and are not meant to be separated.

Suppressing the possibility of conception (i.e., con-

traceptive use) and creating life outside the marital sexual act (i.e., use of some reproductive technologies) both work against God's plan for married love and the gift of life. Pope Francis explains that "a child deserves to be born of that love" expressed between a husband and wife in intercourse, "and not by any other means, for 'he or she is not something owed ... but is a gift.'"

## Learn the Difference between Ethical and Unethical Interventions

Applying the Church's teaching means that, in short, procedures that introduce a third party into the process (such as surrogates or sperm/egg donors) are not morally acceptable. Additionally, substituting a laboratory action or anything else for intercourse, such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization (IVF), is also morally unacceptable. However, treatments that help facilitate conception through marital intercourse are morally ethical.

## Be Aware of "Treatments" That Destroy Life

Some procedures are problematic for multiple reasons. For example, beyond its unethical nature (as per the previous section), in vitro fertilization (IVF) often involves the tragic loss of human life. Children in the embryonic stage are frequently discarded—or frozen—without ever being implanted into their mother's womb. And if multiple babies are implanted, doctors may suggest performing a "fetal reduction" by killing one or more to increase the survival chances of the strongest child in utero. While a baby might eventually be born, his or her tiny siblings may be destroyed in the process.

**Find articles, documents, statements and more online at [usccb.org/LifeGivingLove](http://usccb.org/LifeGivingLove)**

## Make a Plan

Do you know there are medical options consistent with Church teaching that have statistically significantly higher rates of achieving pregnancy than IVF? Learn about these, fertility awareness practices, and other treatments that also respect your marriage and any children who may be conceived. If you have sought to bring a child into your family through ways not in keeping with God's plan for life and married love, have hope. The Lord welcomes us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where we can receive the loving mercy and forgiveness we each need. With prayer and an informed conscience, work together as a couple to create a plan that takes into consideration the desire for children along with moral principles, finances, medical realities, and your overall well-being (both individually and as a couple). Locate a trained specialist or doctor who honors your plan and has training in methods of assistance that are in keeping with Church teaching.

## Keep Your Marriage Healthy

Handling the uncertainties of infertility is a challenge for even the strongest marriages. Once engaged in treatment, it can become easy to focus more on the process than on each other. However, communication and mutual decision-making are vital. Staying intimately connected can help make it easier to manage lifestyle changes, reordering of priorities, physical discomfort, career disruption, and difficulties with insensitive people.

## Hold fast to the constant truth of God's love for you

*To couples who cannot have children of their own, St. John Paul II affirmed, you are no less loved by God; your love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others and their needs. In times of suffering, Pope Francis notes, we sense a powerful need for someone to be close and feel compassion for us. You are not alone: Jesus 'does not abandon those whom he loves.'*

Even if we ourselves do not experience difficulty bearing children, we can be channels of God's mercy for those who do. Learn how to show compassion sensitively from a short list of suggested dos and don'ts at [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife).

## Resources:

*Life-Giving Love in an Age of Technology*. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009. *Natural Family Planning Program, Reproductive Technology (Evaluation & Treatment of Infertility): Guidelines for Catholic Couples*. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009.

# Serene Attentiveness To God's Creation

RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

**When we fall in love, become parents, or enter into any significant relationship, it is not uncommon to experience a shift in worldview that shapes our actions.**

Consider parents holding their first newborn son or daughter. While there is no instruction manual for all the possible circumstances they may encounter, their guiding framework is the loving, parental relationship with their child. With his encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis invites us to understand more deeply our relationships with God, one another, and the rest of creation, and to live accordingly. *Everything is connected*, he reminds us (LS 91).

God uses creation to bring us into loving relationship with himself, most notably through the sacraments. We experience this most powerfully in the Eucharist, the true body and blood of Christ, received under the appearance of bread and wine, where *all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation* (LS 236). God invites us to embrace creation on this deeper level through our worship of himself (LS 235). Our relationship with Christ—strengthened by receiving him worthily in Holy Communion—helps us understand our relationships with one another and with creation.

Pope Francis warns against placing ourselves *at the center*, thinking we don't need God and lacking concern for other creatures (LS 122, 68-69). But he also rejects the view that *the presence of human beings on the planet should be reduced and all forms of intervention prohibited* (LS 60). The Holy Father affirms, instead, that human beings possess *a particular dignity above other creatures* and share a distinct responsibility for the world entrusted to us (LS 119, 242). When any of our relationships are out of balance—with God, one another, or the rest of creation—all our relationships suffer.

We see evidence of this imbalance on a large scale today. Building upon the teaching of his predecessors, the Holy Father discusses in great detail the disrepair apparent in creation. Our distorted relationship with God has infected our relationship with the earth, evidenced by pollution, lack of clean water, toxic waste, and immense material waste. For example, *approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and 'whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor'* (LS 50).

What the Holy Father often calls a *culture of waste* or a *throwaway culture* even goes so far as to see and treat human life as disposable. The elderly are marginalized, and the lives of persons with disabilities are deemed less worth living (LS 123). The fundamental truth that *the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development* is forgotten—leading to the destruction of unwanted babies in the womb and experimentation on embryonic children in the lab (LS 136, 123). Sometimes, even efforts to alleviate the suffering of certain populations lead to offenses against human life. Pope Francis warns, for example, against international



pressure which makes the promotion of contraception, abortion, and other harmful practices a condition for economic aid.

At times, efforts seeking to protect the environment and other creatures disregard or even attack the particular dignity of human beings. Although we are called to care for creation, the Holy Father makes clear that this approach is not only inconsistent, it *compromises the very meaning of our struggle for the sake of the environment* (LS 91). Quoting Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Charity in Truth*, Pope Francis explains further:

*Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties? "If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away"* (LS 120).

Pope Francis isn't endorsing a secular environmentalism—he has a broader idea in mind—one that echoes the sentiments of another predecessor,

Pope St. John Paul II. In his 1990 World Day of Peace message, the great saint reminded us that *no peaceful society can afford to neglect either respect for life or the fact that there is an integrity to creation*. He later addressed Catholics directly, reminding us of our *serious obligation to care for all of creation*.

If we are filled with the love of God, a culture of encounter and solidarity will begin to bloom. Pope Francis stresses, *We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next* (LS 226). With this attitude of heart, we neither treat other humans as disposable, nor neglect to care for God's creation at any level. Through a conversion of heart, repairing our relationships with God, one another, and all of creation, we can combat the many pollutants that poison our hearts and our world.

**Excerpts from *Laudato si'* (Care for Our Common Home) © 2015 and "Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace" © 1990, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Models used for illustrative purposes only. Copyright © 2016, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.**

# HUDSON FARMERS MARKET

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