



- A RESOURCE FOR ONGOING FORMATION -

Part 5: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

6. The Sanctity of Human Life—Abortion, Euthanasia & Genetic Manipulation

Moreover, they should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High' and should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship. Rule 18



1. How did Christ regard creatures?
2. Give examples of the exploitation of creation.
3. How did the concept of 'universal kinship' manifest itself in St Francis?



In effect the acknowledgement of the personal dignity of every human being demands the respect, the deference and the promotion of the right of the human person. It is a question of inherent, universal and inviolable rights. No one, no individual, no group, no authority, no State, can change—let alone eliminate—them because such rights find their source in God...the common outcry,...the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture—is false and illusory if the right to life,...is not defended...The human being is entitled to such rights, in every phase of development, from conception until natural death; and in every condition, whether healthy or sick, whole or handicapped, rich or poor. 'All offences against life itself, such as every kind of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia and wilful suicide; all violations of the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, physical and mental torture, undue psychological pressures; all offences against human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children, degrading working conditions...all these and the like are certainly criminal: they poison human society; and they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator.' (Vat II *Gaudium et Spes* 27)

John Paul II *Christifideles Laici* 38

Armstrong, Hellmann, Short *Francis of Assisi: early documents* Vol I Admonitions 5 (p 131)

Consider, O human being, in what great excellence the Lord God has placed you, for he created and formed you to the image of his beloved Son according to the body and to his likeness according to the Spirit. ..In what, then, can you boast? Even if you were so skilful and wise that you possessed all knowledge, knew how to interpret every kind of language, and to scrutinize heavenly matters with skill: you could not boast in these things...In the same way, even if you were more handsome and richer than everyone else,...all these things are contrary to you; nothing belongs to you; you can boast in none of these things. But we can boast in our weaknesses and in carrying each day the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture—



Job 10. 8-12

Your hands fashioned and made me; and now you turn and destroy me. Remember that you fashioned me like clay; and will you turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. You have granted me life and steadfast love, and your care has preserved my spirit.

John 10. 14-15

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

I Cor 12. 24b-26

But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.