

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Frank O'Donnell SM

October 2021



October is Respect Life Month in the US Catholic Church. The Church calls us to consider the sanctity of life and to oppose systems that violate human dignity.

The website of the Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) invites us to a monthly prayer vigil that is held online on the First Friday of every month for the men and women scheduled to be executed that month and for their victims. There are multiple executions scheduled during October:

Ernest Johnson, October 5, Missouri (now deceased)

Stephen Barbee, October 12, Texas (execution stayed by Federal judge)

William Smith III, October 21, Alabama

John Marion Grant, October 28, Oklahoma.

CMN has produced a Respect Life Toolkit (<https://catholicismobilizing.org/guide/respect-life-month-toolkit>) that contains some excellent resources.

The Catholic Catechism (#2267) tells us:

The Church teaches, in the light of the Gospel, the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person, and she works with determination for its abolition worldwide.

Watch a powerful video, Catholics and the Death Penalty

(<https://catholicismobilizing.org/guide/respect-life-month-toolkit/educate/videos-and-films>).

We say we are building a culture of life, while we continue to put people to death. The death penalty is only one example of how our Church calls us to work to support human dignity and respect for life. Some other examples that invite our advocacy everyday are:

-- *rights of the unborn*

-- *immigrants at our southern border*

-- *refugees in transition around the world.*

The common good, an invitation from the Gospel, impels us to respect life in all of these ways. The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative brings together the members of the Marianist Family in this work for the common good through its issue teams. These teams work to advocate, to educate, and to take action on these respect life-connected issues.

Many thanks for the witness that MSJC gives to all of us on these important respect life issues. Being advocates is a way to promote public policy that upholds the sanctity of human life and supports the common good. The Church calls us to participate in the public square and take action in whatever way that we are able.