

BACKGROUND

As Catholics we are obligated to help the less fortunate among us. This month we ask that you give consideration to this foundational call to action as it relates to one of the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching – Care of God's Creation.



In this principle we are reminded that it is important to remember all aspects of God's magnificent creation – including animals. Animals have a spark of life that is from God. They are formed from the same dust of the Earth as humans are. Playful or angry, affectionate or afraid, sad or joyful, animals feel and love just as we humans do. As part of God's creation, they deserve respect and protection.

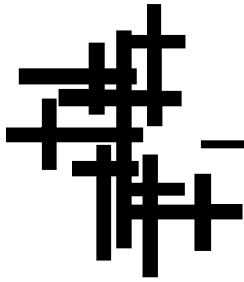
Wayne Pacelle, President of the Humane Society of the United States, shares with us:

"I feel animals, because they are powerless before us, are a test of our character...we can choose a path of cruelty and harm or kindness and mercy."

Animals, both domestic and wild, need our help. For example, over six million dogs and cats are euthanized every year. We should consider:

- Supporting educational programs which would inform our sisters and brothers that pets (and all animals) are of value.
- Raising our voices and getting involved in creating awareness about the abuse that is caused to dogs in puppy mills.
- Creating awareness programs for the public informing them why they should stop purchasing dogs from pet stores which routinely get puppies from these mills and we should promote animal humane societies and rescue groups.

Wild animals need to be helped as well. Dolphins are killed by tuna fisherman, baby seals are being slaughtered in Canada and other areas for commercial profit, wolves are being killed by riflemen in helicopters in the West, animal experimentation exists, and cockfighting continues. Sadly, the list goes on.



It is interesting to note that experts have made direct correlations between how people treat animals and how they treat people.

In summary, this quote from Albert Schweitzer, states it well:

“We must fight against the spirit of unconscious, cruelty with which we treat animals. Animals suffer as much as we do. True humanity does not allow us to impose such sufferings on them. It is our duty to make the whole world recognize it. Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace.”

ACTION



Please contact your respective legislators to encourage them to seek out and support legislation being promoted by animal rights groups.

If you are not on the internet, you can call 406-859-8683 for phone and mail contacts for your legislators.

If you are in the internet you can get detail regarding your local, state and federal representative from the following link:

<http://www.votesmart.org/>

For more specific information, here is a list of some of the major organizations in this area:

<http://www.humanesociety.org>

<http://www.aldf.org> (Animal Legal Defense Fund)

<http://www.defenders.org>

<http://www.wihumane.org> (WI Humane Society)

<http://www.aspca.org> (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals American Humane)

<http://www.wwf.org> (World Wildlife Federation)

If as part of your action you consider making a contribution, be aware that your employer could have a matching gift program so that you could double the value of your gift to the group.