

Justice, Peace and Life

June 2021

Your Voice is needed NOW

The New York State legislative session ends in just a few days.

Please make one more effort to **STAND UP** for human dignity.

Make your voice heard!

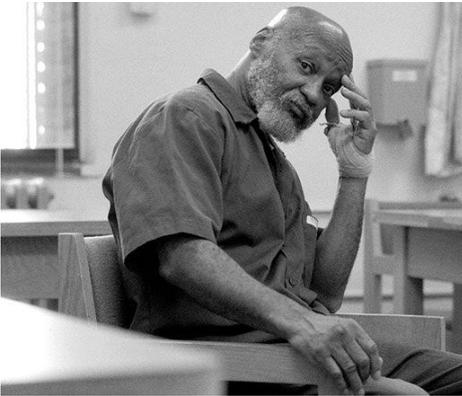


Photo: from RAPPcampaign.com
published in the New Yorker magazine

Elders in the NYS prison system are denied parole again and again, even after being incarcerated for decades. Releasing them to their families would not only save millions of tax dollars, it would give them the opportunity to serve their communities.

There's still time to convince the legislative leaders to call for a vote on the two bills we're supporting:

Fair and Timely Parole (S.1415/A.4231) and
Elder Parole (S.15/A.3475)

Please take a minute to call Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie: 518-455-3791 and

State Senate Majority Leader
Andrea Stewart Cousins:
(518) 455-2715

Ask that they allow these bills to come to the floor. **Now is the time!**



Dignity of the Human Person

From the New York State Catholic Conference:

Memorandum of Opposition

To a bill that would legalize the composting of human bodies
Re: S5535 Comrie / A382 Paulin

“The above-referenced bill seeks to add composting, or “natural organic reduction,” to the approved methods in New York State for the disposition of human remains.

The New York State Catholic Conference opposes this bill.

Like many faith traditions, the Catholic Church's reverence for the sacredness of the human body and its dignity arises out of concern for both the body's natural and supernatural properties. It is therefore essential that the body of a deceased person be treated with reverence and respect. A process whereby human remains are composted and scattered “in a designated scattering garden or area in a cemetery” (bill language) fails to sufficiently respect the dignity due the deceased.

While not everyone shares the same beliefs with regard to the reverent and respectful treatment of human remains, we believe there are a great many New Yorkers who would be uncomfortable at best with this proposed composting/fertilizing method, which is more appropriate for vegetable trimmings and eggshells than for human bodies.

The Catholic Conference believes that in approving and promoting what the sponsor's memo refers to as “environmentally sustainable” measures, the state must take care to protect and preserve basic human dignity and respect. By that measure, this bill fails. The New York State Catholic Conference opposes this legislation and urges its defeat.”

Please sign the online petition to lawmakers at
www.nyscatholic.org/action-center/

Read and sign the other action alerts there too— but this one is the most time-sensitive.



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEK

June 22—June 29, 2021

From the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“Religious freedom allows the Church, and all religious communities, to live out their faith in public and to serve the good of all. Beginning June 22, the feast of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher,* the USCCB invites Catholics to **pray, reflect, and act** to promote religious freedom.”

***St. John Fisher is our diocesan patron saint!**

Editor’s note: I’ll be honest. When I hear Christians in the U.S. bemoan attacks on their religious freedom, I roll my eyes a little. We are by far the most dominant religious group in this country, and many if not most people who hold power— in elected office and in business— identify as Christian. Compared to countries in which religious minorities are oppressed, exiled and killed, our complaints seem overexaggerated.

But... I challenge myself, and my readers, to study the materials on Religious Freedom Week at www.usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty/religious-freedom-week

There you’ll learn about a variety of issues, from conscience rights for health care workers and a disturbing uptick in church vandalism to the violent persecution of Catholics in Nicaragua and of Christians generally Iraq.

There are many issues related to religious freedom to pray about, and to be vigilant about, as well as many reasons to still be thankful for the freedoms we enjoy in this country.


RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEK

Pray that governments will respect the consciences of all people who care for the sick and vulnerable.

PRAY-REFLECT-ACT

Solidarity in Freedom

Responding to the Sin of Racism

One year after the murder of George Floyd by former police officer Derek Chauvin, we cannot stop confronting racism, and figuring how we can root it out of our own hearts and our society. Click on the links below for a few resources for your consideration.

Warning: these are challenging. Listening to the pain that systemic racism has caused African-Americans hurts. Most of us Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester are white. We haven’t had the same experiences, and it’d be easier to ignore these voices. But growth and progress can only happen by facing the evil of racism head-on.

TED Talk: [Debunking the Myth of the Lost Cause](#)

[The Catholic Anti-Racism Project:](#)
[Story of Self](#) Black Catholics share their stories

[Keynote](#) at 2021 National Assembly at Conference of Major Superiors of Men by New Orleans Auxiliary Bishop Fernand Cheri III, OFM

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