

Faith and Justice: Exploring the Crisis of Empathy
November 4, 2016
SFASU Student Center, Nacogdoches Texas
Call for Papers

Keynote Speaker: Sister Helen Prejean, Author of *Dead Man Walking*

The Organization for Faith, Education, and Community (OFEC) is organized to promote scientific research and the dissemination of information about the role faith plays in human wellbeing. OFEC is an interfaith collaboration between faith communities. Areas of emphasis include the role of faith and spirituality in:

1. Community development
2. Coping with trauma
3. Physical and emotional wellbeing
4. Environmental sustainability

The focus on this conference is justice defined as “2 a: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair, or b (1): the principle or ideal of just dealing or right action” (Merriam-Webster). The role of empathy in determining what actions are just or right is crucial for persons of all faiths. Davis (1994) referred to empathy as the process of understanding the suffering of another, and Kohn (1990) suggested empathy is best illustrated in the question, “How would I like it if someone did that to me?” (p. 112). We are interested in papers / presentations concerning the role of empathy in facilitating actions and policies that are just and equitable. Priority will be given to those that connect faith, justice, and the disposition of empathy.

Davis, M. H. (1994). *Empathy a social psychological approach*. Madison, WE: Brown and Benchmark.

Kohn, A. (1990). *The brighter side of human nature*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Conference Goal: To bring together educators, social scientists, health and social service professionals, faith leaders, public officials, civic leaders, artists and researchers to discern justice and explore the role of empathy in facilitating actions and policies that are just and equitable.

Objectives:

- Differentiate various forms of justice.
- Discuss the interaction between faith/spirituality/religious perspectives in facilitating just and equitable actions and policies.
- Develop strategies, resources, and methods for developing empathy.

The list below describes some (not necessarily all) topics that might be considered.

Environmental Issues	End of Life issues
Traumatic events	Physical or Mental Illness
Race/Ethnicity	Gender Issues
Education	Law Enforcement
Aging issues	Poverty
Substance Abuse	

Submit proposals by June 15, 2016 and include:

1. Title of presentation.
2. Outcomes or goals of the presentation.
3. Rationale that includes how the presentation relates to the conference theme.
4. A 250-word abstract.
5. Short biography of the presenter.
6. Electronic copy of Proposal.