

Conference links spirituality, sustainability

The spirituality of sustainability is the focus of a one-day conference in Baltimore on April 26.

Sister Carol Zinn, S.S.J., a non-governmental organization representative to the United Nations, will be the keynote speaker at the conference, which is sponsored by the Murphy Initiative for Peace and Justice. Sister Carol said the concept of sustainability came from the environmental movement, but its principles are those of Catholic social teaching – an emphasis on the common good, the option for the poor and a sense of global solidarity.

“It has to do not only with recycling and what light bulbs to buy, but what car I buy and how do I support the poor in my neighborhood,” she said. “Living out a sense of common good necessitates a rejection of individualism.

“The whole concept of sustainability is very much in line with the definition of common good in the new catechism,” Sister Carol said, adding that the common good allows a group of people to live a life of dignity “and to reach that more easily and quickly.”

“This language of sustainability may have come out of the environmental movement, but the concept of sustainability is right out of the Gospel,” she said.

Sustainability involves examining the relationship of people to other humans and all living species on the planet. When those relationships are wrong, when the common good is not being met, it’s because of issues such as hunger and illiteracy, Sister Carol said.

“It’s a way of understanding the relationships we have with others on the planet,” she said.

The common slogan “live simply so that others may simply live” starts to describe sustainability, but Sister Carol said the conference will put teeth in that idea.

People don't understand what their lives would look like if they did live by that, she said, adding that it's important that living their faith be part of the conversation.

Sister Carol reiterates that the sustainable world needs to be viewed in the context of faith.

"It's not only linked to the environment," she said. "As people of faith we have got to bring that larger piece to our personal life."

The conference will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Mount Providence Convent, 701 Gun Road, and costs \$25 per person. Participants should bring their own lunch and cup; beverages and dessert will be provided. To register, go to <https://www.pfmjpi.org/calendar.htm>. For more information, call 410-823-8585 ext. 244.