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## Sr. Kelly: Climate Change

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Tyler Duggan

### **Sr. Kelly: Climate Change**

Abstract: This paper includes an excerpt from an interview with Sr. Kelly, a woman religious who has worked in education for multiple decades and has been an important activist in the fight against climate change within her community.

Sister Kelly became an official woman religious of the Catholic Church in the early 1950's and has been an active member in her congregation ever since. From a very early age, Sister Kelly had a strong Catholic influence that came from both her mother and father and she attributes that influence from her parents and family as being the main reason why she became a woman religious. Although she was essentially born into Catholicism, she has always loved the values and sense of community that comes with the religion. It was such an incredible honor to have the opportunity to interview Sister Kelly and it was amazing to hear her experiences that she decided to share with me.

One of the main focal points of Sister Kelly's career has been climate change where she has served as an educator on the topic for the public in her community. Sister Kelly was responsible for bringing The Climate Project (TCP) to life. This project has served to bring awareness about climate change throughout the surrounding cities of Sr. Kelly's community. Through this project, people are educated at her congregation through educational films and speakers. Films are presented usually once a month and speakers are brought in approximately twice a year. Also, she has challenged companies and different groups of people to live extremely minimally for certain periods of time. Whether it just be a week or several months, she has been successful in influencing people to live with less. She spoke about how that has been very rewarding for her and I could tell she is immensely proud of what she has achieved through

TCP. From an educational standpoint on the topic of climate change, Sister Kelly has achieved an incredible amount and has positively touched the lives of everyone she has been in contact with.

I was very intrigued about her climate change project so I asked her if she could elaborate more on what brought her to start the project and anything else that she wished to add. She spoke about how climate change wasn't really a topic of conversation in her local area. Having been educated and passionate towards the harmful effects of climate change, Sister Kelly felt that it was her duty to educate the public. She spoke how she brought the project to her congregation and how people, both lay and women religious, would attend her educational film sessions and guest speakers. She knew that given her platform she could bring about change in her surrounding community, no matter how large or small it may be. I believe that allowing the public to come to her and attend optional educational sessions was a great strategy. It also allowed for her to combine ministry with the topic and use her platform optimally to influence the public on how they might view climate change. The project has spread throughout the community and she has been actively involved in the project and on its committee board all the while using her Catholic influence on the public since she has founded it. She feels that combining ministry with the topic of climate change has been a very effective method for dealing with the subject and she said that the Catholic Church has taken a good first step in actively speaking on how humanity should combat climate change. Ministry is yet another effective platform to speak on climate change and Sister Kelly was happy to see that it was a topic of conversation within the Roman Catholic Church.

The fight on climate change continues to be highly debated in our world today. It is extremely important that we have people such as Sr. Kelly who are taking it upon themselves to

do something and force change. It was incredibly inspiring to see her passion on the subject and to see everything that she has accomplished through TCP. Sr. Kelly is truly an amazing woman and I will reflect on the brief time that we spent together fondly.

## Works Cited

“Sr. Kelly.” In Person Interview by Tyler Duggan. January 23, 2019.