

Living Our Responsibility to God's Creation

Terms like “global warming” and “global climate change” have been heard all too often in our world today. Are these climate changes clear evidence of our lack of care for our planet, our unwillingness to take responsibility for the use of all our natural resources, and our wastefulness and over-consumption? Or are they changes that are in the natural order of things: a natural cycle repeated every so-many thousand years, for which human negligence is mistakenly blamed? Regardless of which side of the argument you may stand, the facts are clear: we are rapidly depleting our natural resources, especially for the production of fuel and energy, and we are rapidly “trashing” our beautiful planet with waste and debris which will not decompose or return to the earth for many thousands of years, if ever.

As Catholics, we are called to be good stewards of all of God's creation. To quote the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) document on Global Climate Change, “As people of faith, we are convinced that ‘the earth is the Lord's and all it holds.’ (Ps. 24: 1). Our Creator has given us the gift of creation: the air we breathe, the water that sustains life, the fruits of the land that nourish us, and the entire web of life without which human life cannot flourish” (Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good, USCCB, 2001, Par. 1).

We have an obligation to care for all the gifts of creation given to us by our Creator. God has entrusted us with this world, and we are called to do all that we can to sustain it.

Responding to the call to care for our environment and all of God's creation, the newly formed Catholic Green Initiative of Santa Clara Valley works to assist and support all people of this valley to become actively involved in its mission. Bishop Patrick J. McGrath announced the formation of this group and its purpose in a letter written on June 5, 2009 (World Environment Day). His encouragement and support of this initiative is a significant statement of the importance for all Catholics in our diocese to embrace the initiative's efforts prayerfully and actively.

This article is the beginning of a series designed to help everyone along a path of awareness and a way of life that will help to sustain our planet through prayer, care, and action. At the end of this series, on Sunday, October 4, we will ask you to join with us to take the St. Francis Pledge offered by the Catholic Coalition for Climate Change (CCCC).

Why should you take an interest in this initiative? Pope Benedict sums it up in the following way: “The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God's good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1: 4-12). The justified concern about threats to the environment present in so many parts of the world is reinforced by Christian hope, which commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. The relationship between the Eucharist and the cosmos helps us to see the unity of God's plan and to grasp the profound relationship between creation and the “new creation” inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ, the new Adam” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 92).

TAKE THE ST. FRANCIS PLEDGE!

Be the change you want to see in our world!