JPIC Corner

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Coordinator's Note Brother Warren Perrotto, MSC JPIC Coordinator Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

Care for God's Creation

We all know that there is a lot of talk about the Global Warming crisis. After several days of workshops, videos, lectures, books, articles, etc. etc. etc., hearing both sides of the story, it is still not easy to form an opinion. All of these presentations were from mostly professional scientists or Catholic Social Justice Groups. I heard some professionals affirm that we are at a critical stage of decisionmaking to save our fragile world from an ecological disaster if we don't reduce our human-made pollutants in the atmosphere. In other lectures, I heard professionals state that Global Warming is not a problem, but they admit that we are experiencing ecological change not necessarily by human means, but through nature itself. I admit that I tend to ignore multi-national corporations' hired scientists, who naturally favor the agenda of these institutions while receiving a handsome sum of money for downgrading the Global Warming Crisis.

During the 1970's there was the Global Freezing alert, where it was said that the sun would be blocked and we would freeze. The front cover of the April 8, 1977 of Time Magazine front cover has a picture of a penguin standing on a frozen mount of snow. The caption reads, "How to survive the Coming of the Ice Age." Today we are told we will die of heat exhaustion. Either way, there always seems to be a prediction of an environmental apocalypse. Where does the truth lie? And from whom do we receive the objective truth on the environment?

On the one hand, when walking through the streets of Mexico City, breathing in black smoke from the cars, and breathing in the Los Angeles smog, which



occasionally filters into San Bernardino, CA, I am convinced that we are in a Global Warming environment. On the other hand, standing on top of a California mountain on a beautiful clear day, it makes me not only thank God for the beauty, but I wonder if we really are in for an ecological disaster. By the same token, when I read about unusual weather in places, e.g. snowing for the first time in areas that were snow free, it makes me wonder if Mother Nature or Mother Earth has decided to change her appearance through a natural ecological shift.

So what should we do? Should we ignore the messages brought to us or do as one environmentally

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Did You Know?

- People in the US use more water each day by flushing the toilet than by any other activity. (Source)
- The average American uses 650 pounds of paper a year. (<u>Source</u>)
- If you recycle the all the paper you use, in just over 3 years you will save 17 trees, two barrels of oil (enough to run the average car for 1,260 miles), and 4,100 kilowatts of energy (enough power for the average home for six months). (Source)

safe hotel did by replacing the Bible with Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth in each room?

But then, I recently came across a new phrase which I never saw or heard before. The phrase is post-normal science. This word involves trading truth for influence. The environmental scientist and professor and director of the Tyndall Center for Climate Change Research, Mike Hulme has confirmed this word in an interview in 2007. He admitted that "scientists—and politicians—must trade (normal) truth for influence." Now when a scientist admits this, we are in trouble. Of course, I am far from being a scientist, but my understanding is that science discovers facts and then formulates a The picture above was taken in the Russian Arctic, between Franz theory from what it has studied. Post-normal science is a politically correct system that invents facts to manipulate opinion.

In his novel, The Whole Truth, David Balducci uses the phrase perception management. This word phrase can cover a multitude of sins. It seems that this expression is not a fantasy of fiction, but in fact is a reality in our world today. Perception management refers to "Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning as well as to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's ob-



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Josef Land and the North Pole.



Photo by Kondo Yukihiro

Above: The White Sands National Monument in New Mexico

Take the St. Francis Pledge

Visit the Catholic Climate Covenant website to take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor. There are five elements to the St. Francis Pledge: Pray; Learn; Assess; Act; Advocate.

You can take the pledge as an individual, but groups and organizations, parishes, religious orders, dioceses, and schools and universities can also take the pledge. More information and ideas for how individuals and groups can fulfill the pledge is available on the website.

Selected Resource: The Catholic Climate Covenant

The Catholic Climate Covenant is an initiative which pays special attention to the themes of "covenant, creation, and poverty." It was launched by The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change (whose participants include the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) during the Easter season in 2009.

On their website, catholicclimatecovenant.org, visitors can take the St. Francis Pledge and find information on Church teaching related to climate change, resources for ways to get involved, and links to other organizations. Check out their website and some of their resources, and consider taking the St. Francis Pledge this Earth Day.

- What You Can Do (PDF)
- How to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint (PDF)
- **Suggested Prayers**

Care for God's Creation, continued....

jectives. In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations." This makes me wonder how much truth is conveyed and how much fabrication is in the global environment discussions.

Stewardship of and Care for God's Creation is a principle of Catholic Social Teaching. God calls us to have a love-relationship with His creation because all creation is ordered to God's glory and must be treated accordingly. It encompasses the respectful use of our resources and fosters the common good. Addressing the Diplomatic Corps, Pope Benedict XVI noted, "Truly the world is dark wherever men and women no longer acknowledge their bond with the Creator and thereby endanger their relation to other creatures and to creation itself. The present moment is sadly marked by a profound disguiet and the various crises – economic, political and social – are a dramatic expression of this." With this in mind, I do have a solution for our environmental problems that we face today.

First, we cannot be prophets of doom. Second, we need to respect all of God's creation. Individuals and communities are called to love, honor, respect, and save our earthly home. I am an advocate of clean air, of recycling, of clean water, of "green" and I'm an advocate in the defense of human life and our natural environment. I oppose those self-

interest groups who often usurp our God-given resources for gain and profit, which result in contamination of God's creation. I'm not that way because it is politically correct, but because I believe that God calls humanity to be just stewards of our home and all of creation. For sure, God calls us to have a love-relationship with His creation because all of creation is ordered to God's glory. If we take this God-centered approach, we realize that it transcends all the scientific, technological, liberal vs. conservatives, politically correct, culturally correct, and economic spheres. (Read online/see sources)



"Created things belong not to the few, but to the entire human family." - US Catholic Bishops, Renewing the Earth, 1991, p. 8.

We Are Making A Difference

Like many challenges facing our society today, caring for the environment can sometimes feel overwhelming. Some of the statistics may cause us to doubt whether we can even make a difference. For instance, in 2010, Americans generated 250 million tons of trash. Even worse, the amount of trash we generate has been increasing, rising from 3.66 lbs per person per day in 1980 to about 4.43 lbs of trash per person per day in 2010.

Yet there is another side to the story: the amount we recycle has also been increasing (from less than 10% in 1980 to 34% in 2010) and these recycling efforts have a positive impact on the environment. By recycling 85 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) in 2010, we reduced carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by an amount comparable to the annual GHG emissions from over 36 million passenger vehicles.

In short, although the statistics may sometimes be disheartening, we have made some progress already. We make many decisions every day that affect our environment, from how long we spend in the shower to whether or not we recycle. Each decision is an opportunity to live our calling as good stewards, an opportunity to be part of the solution.

4 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day

#1: Form A Water-Conserving Habit This Month

Each day in the United States, we use an average of 100 gallons of water per person, making our water usage about twice that of people in Europe (who use an average of 50 gallons per person per day). This Earth Day, make a commitment (individually or as a family) to become a better steward of the earth's water. Pick one of the ideas below or check out the <u>Water Use It Wisely</u> or <u>Environmental Protection Agency</u> websites for more ideas.

- Shorten your shower by one or two minutes. This can save up to 150 gallons per month.
- Install a water-efficient shower head. Doing so can save up to 750 gallons of water a month.
- Only run the dishwasher (or do laundry) when you have a full load.
- Sweep sidewalks, porches and driveways instead of hosing them down. A hose puts out around 10 gallons of water a minute.
- Turn off the water while you are brushing your teeth.
 (The average faucet flows at a rate of 2 gallons of water per minute.)
- Check your toilet for leaks. (One way to do this is to put food coloring in the tank and see if it leaks into the toilet bowl without flushing). Fixing a leak can save up to 1,000 gallons of water a month.



"We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention to both the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations." - John Paul II



Only 2.8% of the water on earth is freshwater.

#2: Reconnect with Nature



© Tara Flake

When was the last time you went for a hike in a forest, visited your local park or even walked around your neighborhood looking at the flowers? Earth Day is a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with nature. Here are a couple of ideas:

- **Go for a walk in the park.** Is there is a National or State Park close to where you live? (If not, there may still be a local park near you.) Check out the trails with a friend or family member. Be sure to bring water, and also look up park information and policies before you go.
- Stop and smell the flowers. Spend a couple hours in the botanical gardens or in another garden in your area that is open to the public. You may also be able see a lot of flowers simply by walking around your neighborhood.
- **Exercise outside.** Use your local bike trail or park instead of the gym when walking, running or biking. Or substitute an outdoor activity like hiking or canoeing for one of your workouts.

4 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day

#3: Reduce Your Ecological Footprint

Our daily actions and choices have an impact on the environment. In other words, we leave "footprints." The term "Ecological Footprint" refers to how much of the biological capacity of the planet is required by a given human activity or population. Our Ecological Footprint is calculated by taking into consideration all of the biological materials that we consume, and all of the wastes that we generate, in a year. Here are a couple ideas for ways we can reduce our Ecological Footprint:

- Assess your current impact. Find out how many planet earths
 we'd need if everyone lived like you by using the <u>Earth Day</u>
 Network Ecological Footprint Calculator or the <u>Center for Sustainable Economy's Ecological Footprint quiz</u>.
- Drive less. When going short distances (for instance to visit friends in the area, or running errands), see if you can walk or bike instead of taking the car.
- When it's time to replace or upgrade an appliance, choose an energy-efficient replacement.
- Unplug electronic devices when you aren't using them (a power strip may make this easier).
- Recycle! Paper, glass, aluminum and many types of plastics can all be recycled. If you're replacing home furnishings, clothing, or electronic equipment that is still in good condition, donate the "old" item instead of throwing it out. Buying products made from recycled materials (or secondhand instead of new) also helps reduce our impact on the earth.



Little Things Add Up

Did you know that line drying clothing can reduce your ecological footprint? This method of drying your clothes saves 3 to 4 kilowatt hours per load, which is about 5 pounds of carbon dioxide.

#4. Help Children See Nature's Beauty

It is important to teach our children about the environment and our impact on it and to help them form good habits based on the principles of good stewardship. But it is also important to help them see how beautiful and good God's creation really is. That way, they can see the positive side to caring for the earth and her resources.

If we constantly talk about the negatives - about pollution, deforestation and climate change, we run the risk of implanting the idea that the situation is too overwhelming, that it can't be fixed. As some of us may know from personal experience, the feeling of being overwhelmed often leads to inaction rather than action. Instilling an appreciation of the earth's beauty in our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, etc. can help them develop a lifelong relationship with nature. So let's try to give them the gift of memories of spotting local birds and other animals on nature walks, of discovering a waterfall on a hike, of seeing breathtaking views from the top of a mountain or in the desert, of swimming in the ocean or canoeing on a river. Later, when they are facing the environmental challenges of their generation, these experiences may help them be able focus on something positive (i.e. preserving the earth's beauty) rather than just something negative (i.e. pollution). This healthier perspective can help keep all of us from feeling overwhelmed, making it a little easier to take the steps we can take to be part of the solution.

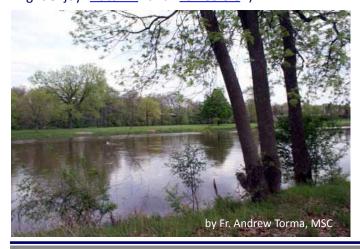
Do You See God's Beauty?

Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power; contemplation of its magnificence imparts peace and serenity. (John Paul II, 1990 World Day of Peace Message, no. 14.)

The beauty of God's creation is all around us. Yet when life gets hectic, we may not always see it. Taking a moment to notice the flowers blooming in our own yard can be refreshing, reminding us that "God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good." (Gn 1:31)

Two of our members, Br. Joe Tesar, MSC and Fr. Andrew Torma, MSC enjoy taking nature-based photographs. Here are a few of the pictures that our fans on Facebook have enjoyed. We hope you'll find in them a reflection of God's love for creation and that they lift your spirits.

For more photos, check out our photo albums: <u>Spring</u>; <u>Do You See God's Beauty?</u> and <u>Celebrating Creation</u>: <u>Flowers</u>. (Our friends on the other side of the world might enjoy "<u>Autumn</u>" and "<u>Fall Colors</u>".)





About JPIC Corner

JPIC Corner is a monthly publication of the USA Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart:

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