



Archdiocese of Cincinnati Climate Change Task Force



Overview September 2009

The leadership of the Catholic Church, from Pope Benedict XVI to our local bishops, has spoken unequivocally on the issue of climate change. The virtue of prudence calls us to take seriously the conclusions of the great majority of international scientists who warn us that human activity is indeed having an impact on the earth's climate. The cost of us not responding to this problem could result in drastic impacts on God's precious creation and on the poor and vulnerable around the world, who lack the resources to protect themselves from ensuing natural disasters and environmental degradation.

In response, in March 2009, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati helped to inaugurate the "Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor" (www.catholicclimatecovenant.org). In order to guide the Archdiocese and its affiliated entities towards fulfilling its commitment to this covenant, Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk authorized the creation of a Climate Change Task Force. This task force is formally connected to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati through its Catholic Social Action Commission and receives on-going staff support through the Archdiocesan Catholic Social Action Office. Any local Catholic is welcome to join who is interested in helping to strategize and implement efforts that empower parishes, schools, diocesan offices and other local Catholic organizations to live out the elements of the St. Francis Pledge (i.e. pray, learn, assess, act, and advocate). The Task Force meets almost monthly and currently includes parishioners, priests, deacons and religious from Cincinnati, Dayton and Springfield areas. We are also working closely with other local organizations which are leaders on this issue, including the Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) and Ohio Interfaith Power and Light. Anyone interested in joining should contact Catholic Social Action (513-421-3131 ext. 2660; csa@catholiccincinnati.org).

CURRENT FOCUS

The Task Force is interested in building a solid network of contacts in parishes and schools throughout the Archdiocese who can help promote the Church's teaching and action on climate change. We are in the process of reaching out to every parish to identify as many contacts as possible. We are offering a regional training on November 21, 2009 at Good Shepherd Church (8815 E. Kemper Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45249) to educate designated contacts about the issue of climate change; the Church's teaching; and how individuals, families, churches and schools can live out the elements of the St. Francis Pledge. All are welcomed. For more information, please contact Catholic Social Action. Once we have a stronger network in place, the task force will focus on planning future regional workshops, prayer services, and ways to help Catholic institutions assess their own carbon footprints.

PAST ACTIVITIES

Since its formation in March, the Climate Change Task Force:

- Organized a "Catholic Climate Covenant: A Symposium on Climate Change and Catholic Social Teaching" at Xavier University on April 5, 2009;
- Promoted the national Catholic Coalition on Climate Change's campaign, "Who's Under Your Carbon Footprint?", which included a resource packet mailed to every parish;
- Advocated with federal legislators for programs that help the poor and vulnerable around the world to adjust to the impacts of climate change itself as well as the political and financial ramifications of new climate change policies.