Going "Green" for the Missions

Pope Francis has written a letter addressed to every person asking us all to protect our common home, the earth. In his letter, called an encyclical, Laudato Si, he speaks about the devastating effects of not caring for our earth. And how frequently the poorest of the poor are the first to feel the impact of neglecting to care for the environment.

"Greenbacks" for THE MISSIONS

Invite young Catholics to make sacrifices, such as giving up candy or soft drinks for a time and to contribute that money ("greenbacks") to the Missions through the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA). Their offerings will help see that children everywhere have the opportunity to hear about the "Good News" of Jesus and live safely.

Discuss the elements of Catholic social teaching that call upon the faithful to uphold the dignity and sacredness of every human person , to be in solidarity with our brothers and sisters worldwide, and to care for God's creation.

Discuss how Laudato Si urges us to see how protecting the environment is a call of Christian discipleship.

Global Climate Change

According to the London-based humanitarian organization, Christian Aid, at least one billion people could be forced from their homes by 2050 as the effects of climate change deepen an already severe global migration process. In a report titled "Human Tide: The Real Migration Crisis," Christian Aid indicates that already 163 million people have been forced to leave their countries of origin because of natural disasters, or situations of conflict or war. The report also indicates that those countries least responsible for global climate change will be the most affected. In addition to global warming, vast areas of land in the Developing World are also being destroyed by rapid urbanization, deforestation and massive dam projects.

In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest" Laudato Si #48

Mission snapshot

"We thank MCA for helping us provide a home for children where they can learn and grow to become good citizens and faithful children of God," wrote Sister Mariangela Costa in a letter to the MCA.

Sister Mariangela helps to run a boarding school for children in Meherpur, Bangladesh. "We provide a home to very poor girls," she explained. "We offer food, clothing, education and medical care because their parents cannot afford to do so. The financial help that you give helps us to stretch our helping hands toward the poorest and most needy children."

Each year, the children at this boarding school attend a special MCA Mass with other children in a

nearby parish at which they offer their prayers and gifts for children of the world. Here, the children perform special dances after Mass.

Bangladesh tops the 2009 Global Climate Risk Index, a ranking of 170 countries most vulnerable to climate change compiled by Germanwatch, an international non-governmental organization that works on environment and development issues. Bangladesh is particularly at risk because of its geography and vast flood plain.

Grades K-2

Activity:

Allow students some time to look at their crayons or makers. Ask volunteers to identify their favorite colors and talk about what colors make them happy.

By rows or grouping of seats, assign students to draw various scenes (land, mountains, sky, water, birds, fish, insects, animals, rainy/sunny/snowy days, etc.). Then ask them to put away their drawings and all crayons with the exception of green, so as to direct their focus to this color.

Encourage children to identify items that are green (grass, broccoli, trees, favorite sweater or other item of clothing, shamrock, money, the vestments the priest sometimes wears at Mass, etc.). Explain through some of these examples that green can have special meaning and that for the Catholic Church green represents hope and new life.

Remind students that when they make an offering of money ("greenbacks") through the Missionary Childhood Association, they help to bring "new life" to children in the Developing World – with the hope that comes from Jesus' love for each one of them. You can also let them know that when they pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary using the green beads, they can offer a special prayer for their brothers and sisters in Africa, as that color calls to mind the green forests and grasslands on that continent. To learn more about the World Mission Rosary, visit www.worldmissionrosary.org.

Additional activity:

Watch *Laudato Si-Children's Animation* an animated video explaining the encyciical to the young. https://vimeo.com/138512519

Discuss further how they can "go green" to become better stewards of God's natural resources.

Activity:
(Grades 3-5)

Discuss: It is estimated that between 500 and 1,000 children in Ecuador, ages five through seven, are employed in collecting and handling refuse. These children are not alone. Thousands of young people in the Developing World make their homes in landfills where they collect waste for resale. For most of these little ones, each new day brings the hope of finding something of value — perhaps a toy, a glass bottle, something to eat or wear. Their treasure is what others have seen as trash. Watch Laudato Si-Children's Animation an animated video explaining the encyciical to the young. https://vimeo.com/138512519

Do: Ask students to use an assortment of recycled items to make dolls, cars, games or musical instruments. Encourage them to be as creative as possible.

Pray: Offer offer a daily prayer for children in the missions whose only toys are made from recycled items that they find at the dump or in a pile of trash.

Grades 6-8

Activity:

Do: Ask students to write a research report of no more than three pages that shows how the choices we make have both a positive and negative impact on the global environment. Encourage students to list at least two things they will do to become better stewards of God's natural resources.

For further reading:

- ***Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home)*** Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good. The bishops open a new avenue of dialogue for discussions about global warming, offering a distinctively religious and moral perspective on the need for environmental protection. No. 5-431, 28 pp. (also available in Spanish). Available at http://www.usccb.org
- Renewing the Earth. The U.S. bishops call on Catholics to respond to environmental problems. No. 468-6, 20 pp. Available at http://www.usccb.org
- Faithful Stewards of God's Creation. A Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice and Climate Change. No. C5-956. Available at http://www.usccb.org http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/climate
- Who Speaks for the Land? A warning and a vision about the land and our sacred responsibility to care for it. From the Tekakwitha Conference National Center P.O. Box 6768, Great Falls, MT 59406, 406-727-0147, tekconf@gmail.com

Mission Goes "Green"

Prayer Service

Leader

Psalm 24:10

Litany of Praise:

Leader:

For all the gifts of the earth

All: we praise You!

Leader:

For the land and the seas

All: we praise You!

Leader:

For insects, animals, birds and fish

All: we praise You!

Leader:

For summer, fall, winter and spring

All: we praise You!

Leader:

For our hearts, heads and hands

All: we praise You!

Leader:

Let us pray. God, our Creator, You called everything You made "good." Help us not to misuse our natural resources. Teach us to use all Your gifts wisely for the whole human race. Let us now join our voices in prayer for all those who have yet to hear about Your only Son, Jesus and His great love for all of us.

All: Our Father…

Reflection:

The earth's atmosphere encompasses all people, creatures and habitats. The melting of ice sheets and glaciers, the destruction of rain forests and the pollution of water in one place can have environmental impacts elsewhere. Responses to global climate change should reflect our interdependence and responsibility for the future of our planet. Individual nations must measure their own self interest against the common good and contribute equitably to global solutions. Heat waves, droughts and storms fall most heavily on the poor who do not have the resources to either adapt or ward off the expected impact of climate change.

Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Go Green at Home!

- Walk or ride your bike (donate the money you save on such transportation to MCA!)
- Turn off the water when you brush your teeth
- Replace a regular light bulb with a compact florescent light
- Turn off electrical appliances when not in use
- Use both sides of a sheet of paper; recycle school paper and newspaper
- Avoid using plastic bottles. If you do use them, recycle – and donate the proceeds to HCA!

"The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life." #23

"Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan." #164

- Pope Francis