

RESOLUTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL WARMING
2011 USCMA Annual Meeting
Miami, Florida

The protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate obliges all international leaders to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet.

--Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, no. 50

Preamble:

Whereas, the "Resolution on Global Climate Change," presented at the 2006 United States Catholic Mission Association conference, supports the United Nations conferences and others in voicing the concern for Global Warming and its effect, advocating a vision that focuses on the common good transcending nationalism, partisan politics, and interest group pressures; and whereas, the "Resolution on Reduction of Our Carbon Footprint," presented at the 2009 United States Catholic Mission Association conference voicing that each one of us must take measurable steps to reduce our congregational, community, and personal carbon footprint; because of the urgency, the US Legislature's failure to take definitive action against global warming and refusing to join the other nations of the world in combating the effects of CO2 and other pollutants causing our earth to warm at an alarming rate, the United States Catholic Mission Association, offer the following resolution.

Resolution:

Using the lens of the Sacred Scripture, the members of the United States Catholic Mission Association call for new laws from the US Legislature to protect the environment and to join global nations and organizations in combating Global Warming; to discern the cause(s) of and remedies for the destruction of our world environment; and to begin eliminating the cause(s) of Global Warming.

Rationale:

After a year of monumental snow and ice storms, a spring of catastrophic tornados, and a summer of record breaking heat, we are called on to discern the cause(s) of and remedies for these unusual natural phenomena. Our worldwide careless treatment and purposeful mistreatment of the Earth, which has been entrusted to us to protect (Gen. 2:14-20), including the issue of Global Warming, now documented by NOAA, NASA, glaciologist, National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, CO, American Geophysical Union, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, and Associations of Environmental scientists as a major reason for these heart-breaking realities.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, acidification of our world oceans (the dissolving of atmospheric carbon dioxide in sea water) has taken the ph level from 8.2 to 8.05. Each unit on the scale reflects a shift in acid concentration by a power of 10. Therefore, indicating a 30% increase in the acidity of our oceans. This is not only killing the coral reefs but the plankton which is the bottom of the food chain for sea life. Carbon dioxide is the basic agent for the increase in the Greenhouse Effect, raising the average mean temperature of earth. The atmospheric warming has affected our planet by, not only, dramatically decreasing land suitable for cultivating, but causing climate zones to sift northward; changing plant and animal habitats causing extinction of species. It is also dissolving our glaciers, including the largest: Greenland's Mittivakkat and Jakobshavn glaciers, and Antarctica's Pine Island and the Antarctica Peninsula glaciers. Because of ice dynamics, Greenland permanently loses as much ice each year as is contained in the entire Alps. The world sea levels will begin to be affected as this continues worldwide.

These changes also affect human domain and life. The developing world, third and fourth worlds in particular, are suffering disproportionately from climate change because of drought; causing death, starvation, and extreme poverty and displacement. Each change of one degree Celsius could mean up to 10% less rainfall during the Mediterranean, Southwest America, and Southern African dry seasons causing a dramatic increase in the cause and effect.

Since 1920, NASA data on global land-ocean temperature anomalies indicate that the average mean temperature has increased 0.9 degrees Celsius and has been warming at 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade for the past 30 years. This means that the slope of the average mean temperature curve on their graph is steep. This last decade the change has been dramatic. The slope of the curve is 85 degrees, straight up. From 2003 to 2005 the data from NASA's graph show a change of the average mean temperature of the earth's atmosphere to be a change of 0.49 degrees Celsius to 0.62 degree Celsius, a change of 0.13 degrees Celsius in two years.

The USCCB's Catholic Committee of Appalachia Education Resource Materials for Climate Change: Our Faith Response: Video Teleconference on Climate Change, funded by the USCCB, responds:

"For what is the oppression of the poor or still worse their abandonment, but a rejection of the God of love? And what is the destruction of the earth but another rejection of the God of love? We are at a crossroads. The April 6, 2007 UN Report relates new evidence based on observable data that clearly indicates that fossil fuel burning is drastically changing the climate, and that the survival for eco-systems, economics, and huge populations of poor people throughout the world is at stake. We are on a 'highway to extinction'."

Politics has not delivered on what science requires. The clock ticks, the time for a solution grows short. We, the members of the USCMA wish to add our cry to the countless other voices from many other organizations of varied economic, political and religious persuasions which demand that we continue to, or immediately begin to, lobby legislation to vote into law more effective laws to limit the diffusion of green house gases and to support alternative means of energy.

Pope John Paul II: "Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone." (1990)

Suggested Action:

We strongly suggest the following actions be done. It is an urgent matter.

1. Let Congress and Senate know that you want them to act now on environmental issues by contacting:
 - A. Your Congressmen or Congresswomen, www.house.gov/member_info/index.html
 - B. Your Senators www.senate.gov/general/contactinformation/senate_cfm.cfm.
2. Campaign with your circle of family and friends to do the same.