



# BOM DIA!

*“The Church with an Amazonian Face”*

**Erin Lothes, Ph.D.**  
*Laudato Si’* and the U.S. Catholic  
Church

# “The Mirror of All Humanity”



*“Through a focus on local realities and on the diversity of the region, the Church is strengthened in its opposition to the globalization of indifference” (III.12) ”*

# THE SPIRITUALITY OF LAUDATO SI'



*“It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected...”*

- Three Levels of Relationship
  - God
  - Our neighbor
  - The Earth
- The Common Good

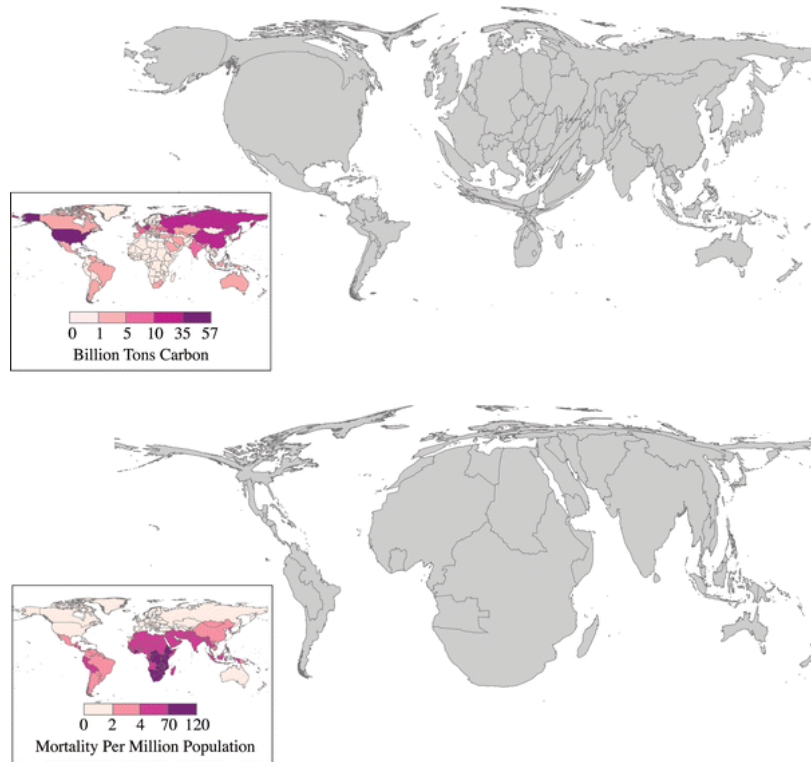
*“the sum of those conditions of social life that affect all individuals and groups, and allow individuals and groups to find their own fulfilment”...*



# RUPTURED RELATIONSHIPS



# Global Inequality and Climate Change



*“Inequity affects not only individuals but entire countries”*

Patz et al, “Climate Change and Global Health: Quantifying a Growing Ethical Crisis”. The top map is distorted to show the cumulative carbon dioxide emissions from 1950 to 2000. The second is distorted to show the health effects of malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea, and inland flood-related fatalities.

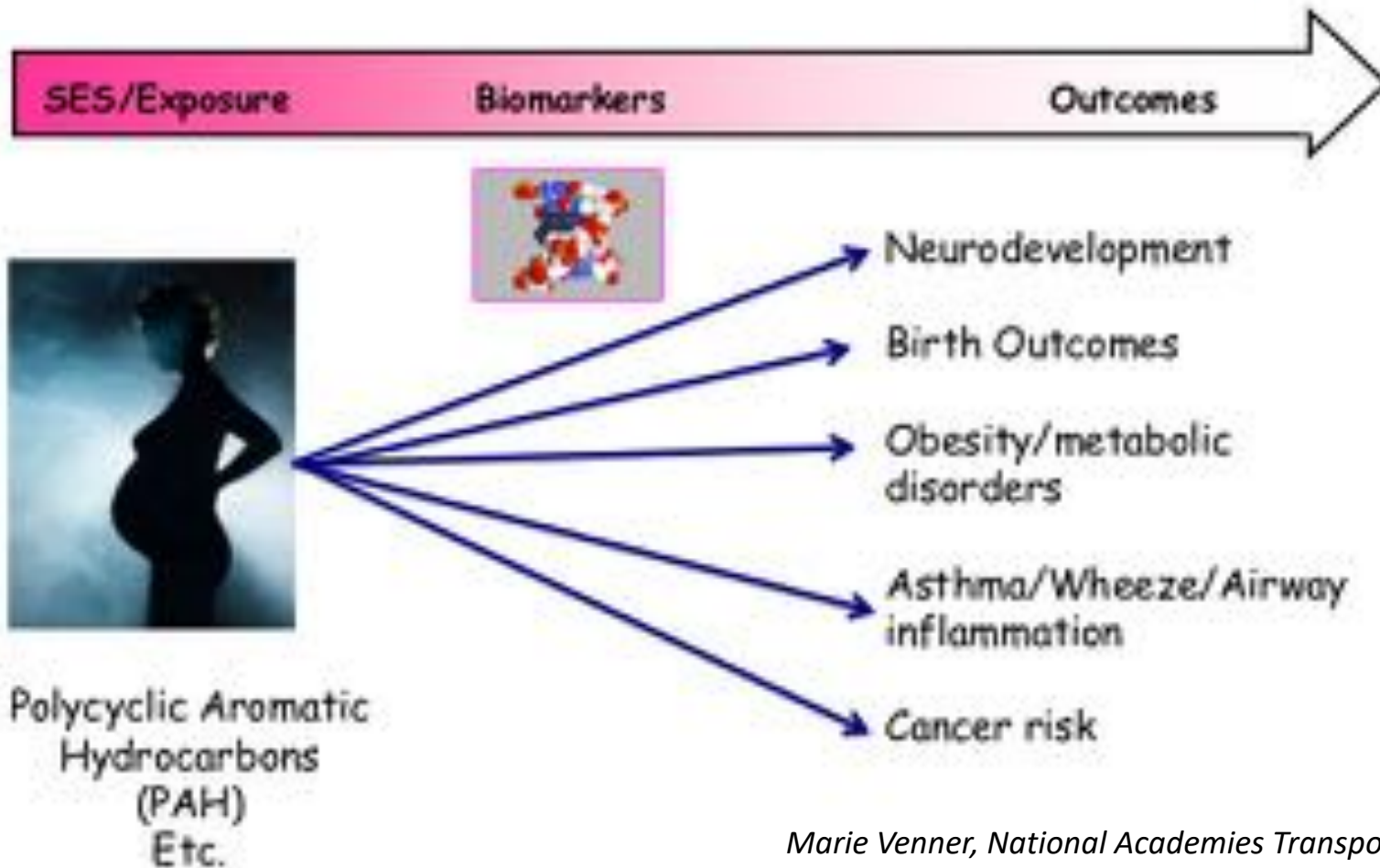
# Pollution, Exploitation, and Violence

“Vandals drain profits-out-of-marginal-fields”  
- Africa Oil & Gas Report

“Holding Oil Companies Accountable”  
- John Cardinal Onaiyekan



# Effects of Air Pollutants to due Fossil Fuel Combustion in NYC Children



*Marie Venner, National Academies Transportation Research Board, January 2017.*



# A Theological Protest: “*The Rich and Poor have Equal Dignity*”

- The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature (LS 88).
- The rich and the poor have equal dignity - and their rights must be guaranteed ( LS 94)
  
- “*Creation is of the order of love. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: “For you love all things that exist” (LS 77).*

# Magisterial Sources and Theological Foundations

- St. John Paul II's World Day of Peace Message
- Benedict XVI's *Caritas et Veritate*
- The USCCB's "A Plea for Prudence and the Common Good"
- Global Bishops' Appeals to UN at Lima and Paris
- Theological/ Ethical Writings



*On Earth as it is in Heaven,*  
A. Vonn Hartung, 1992

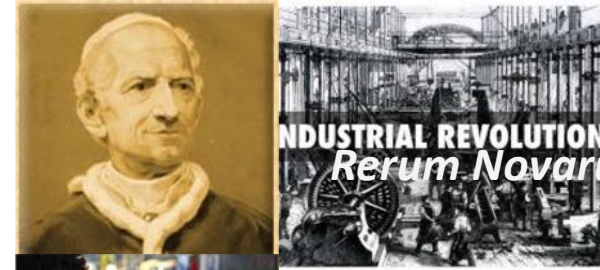
# Catholic Social Teaching

## THREE WAVES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- Industrial Age and the Worker, Just and Integral Development, Ecological Integrity

## CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's Creation



## *Laudato Si'*



# Catholic Energy Ethics: Principles from the US Bishops

1. Support human and ecosystemic well-being
2. Accept an appropriate share of responsibility for climate change
3. Seek the common good in solidarity with all
4. Promote distributive justice over inequity and luxury
5. Demonstrate a preferential option for the poor and energy access
6. Enable participation and transparency in decision-making through subsidiarity
7. Develop technological prudence

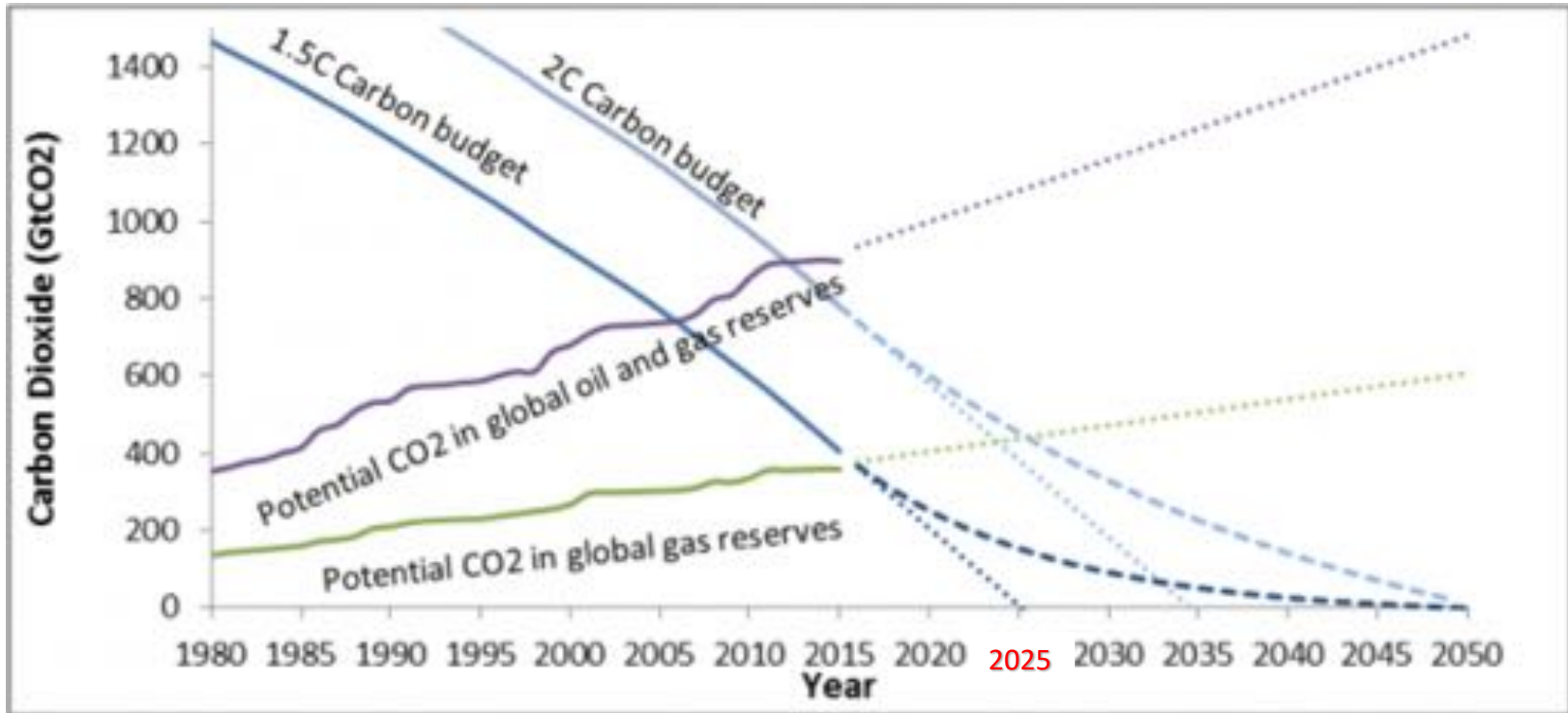
# Energy, Justice and Peace: Pontifical Academy of Justice and Peace



*Counteracting structural harm through our participation in the economy, including energy decisions, is “neither optional nor secondary,” even when impacts seem indirect or the evil is not intrinsic.*



# 1.5° Celsius Carbon Budget (50% chance)



# The Moral Mandate for Advanced Nations

- *Laudato Si'*
  - 26 - There is an urgent need to develop policies to limit emissions and substitute for fossil fuels.
  - 52 - “The developed countries ought to help pay [their ecological] debt by significantly limiting their consumption of non-renewable energy.”
- *Energy, Justice and Peace:*
  - Advanced countries have "the moral duty of developing the use of the most complex and capital-intensive energy technologies, in order to allow poor countries to feed their development."

HOPE



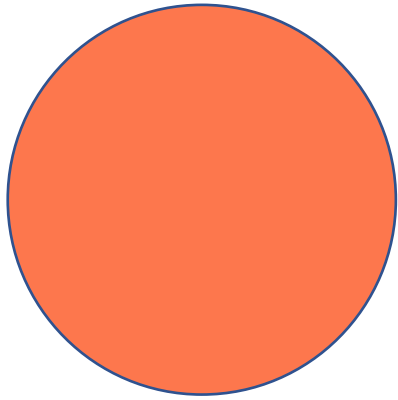


# OVERCOME THE GAPS

Green teachings are critical- yet even with doctrines and ecotheologies, *often less is done than we would like.*

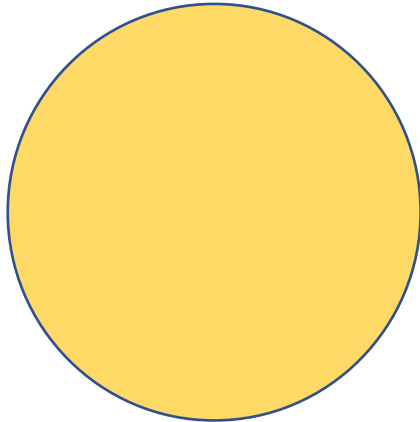
- Seven Major Motivators
  - Scientific Literacy
  - Interdependence
  - Social Justice
  - “Bigger God:” Expanding Moral Universe
  - Reverence for Creation
  - Interfaith Connections
  - Independent Thinkers





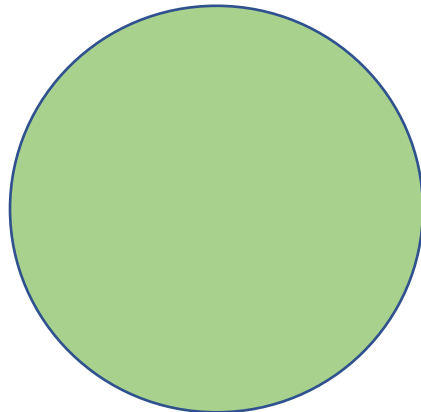
## The Knowledge Gap:

*I'm not convinced or concerned*



## The Caring Gap:

*I know, but I'm conflicted*



## The Action Gap: *I care, but...*

# The Knowledge Gap

- *Scientific Literacy Limitations*
- *Cognitive Limitations*
- *Personal Inclination (risk tolerance, politics, hobbies)*
- *Willful Ignorance as a Moral Limit to Knowledge*
  - *Pain*

# Theorizing the Knowledge Gap: Evolved Cognitive Limitations

- We're Susceptible to Framing (carbon tax or offset?)
  - So Use Neutral Language
- Preconceptions (often political) filter information
  - So use core values to bridge divides
- Resistance to long-term thinking
  - So highlight the religious long view
- Inform without overwhelming
  - Acknowledge the “finite pool of worry”
  - Acknowledge “climate ambiguity”
  - Convey relevant solutions

# For more excellent communication advice, read:

1. “Guide: Faith and Climate Change”:

<http://climateoutreach.org/resources/climate-change-faith/>

2. *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*

<http://guide.cred.columbia.edu>

3. CRED/ EcoAmerica CRED 2014 revision

For example, avoid the word “justice;” use “fair” (in the US).

# The Caring Gap: *I know, but I'm conflicted*

- *Consumerism: “onslaught, seduction”*
- *Desire to keep in step with “Progress”*
- *Distraction*
- *Disinterest*



*“Everything Must Go,” by Barry Blitt  
The New Yorker, Jan. 5, 2009*

# Leading Past the Caring Gap: Discussions Engage Core Values

- Highlight the link between climate change information and core values to re-engage core values
- How?
- Discussions explore synthesis of ecological concerns and faith identity
- Discussion in familiar groups like a parish creates safe space to explore
- Moral support is enormously important as people talk over doubts and difficulties

## The Action Gap: *I care, but...*

- *Being Busy- needing convenience*
- *Being Comfortable. . . being lazy?*
- *Being Overwhelmed*
- *Being Habituated. . . being addicted?*



# Leading Past the Action Gap: Group Action

- Group process accelerates social change
- Shared values reinforce individual motives
- Group identity promotes willingness to choose delayed benefits, sacrificial decisions
- Networks leverage individual activity
- Groups are more fun!

# OVERCOME THE CHASM OF PARTISANSHIP

*“Can half the Church take on the mission of  
the whole Church?”*

# Communicate positively . . . . . . .communicate solutions.

“Conversations with conservatives:  
Reaching across the aisle may be  
easier than we think.”



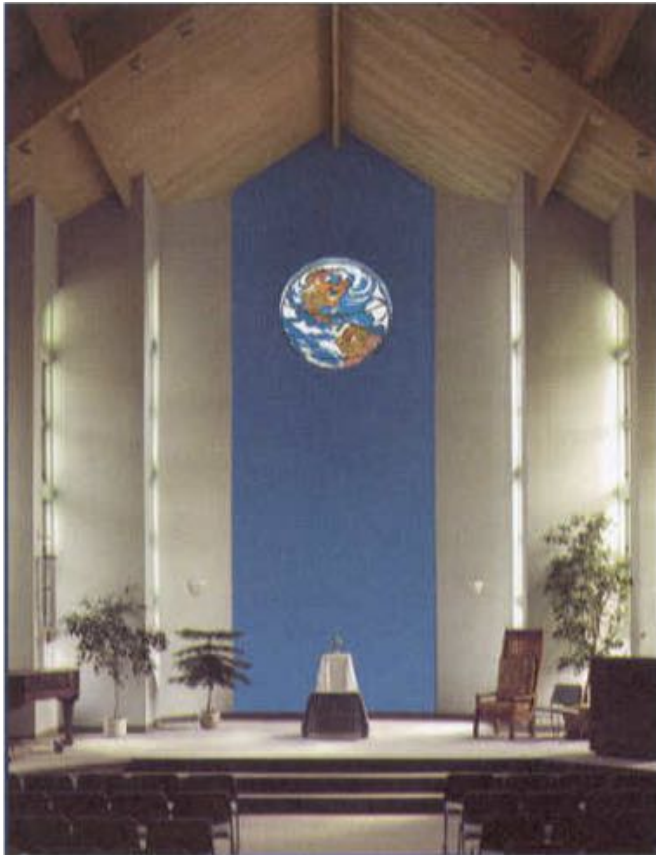
“Learning from the Left:  
Overcoming division helps  
everyone build their better world.”



BUILD BRIDGES AND A BIG  
VISION



# The “Renewable Energy” of Trusted Parish Moral Authority

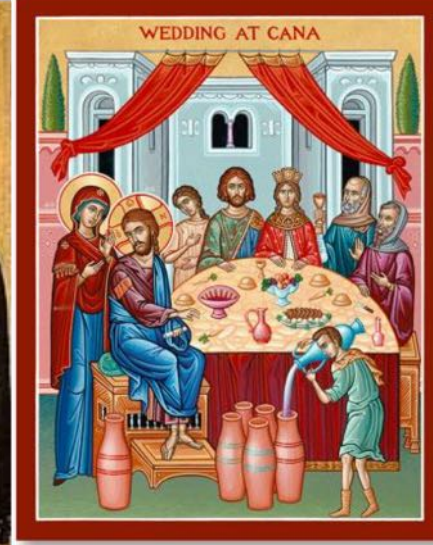


Artwork by Ralph McGeohan

- Moral orientation
- Willing to examine and change behaviors
- “Diffusion of norms”
- Companionship and encouragement of friends
- The inspiration of hope
- The virtue of persistence

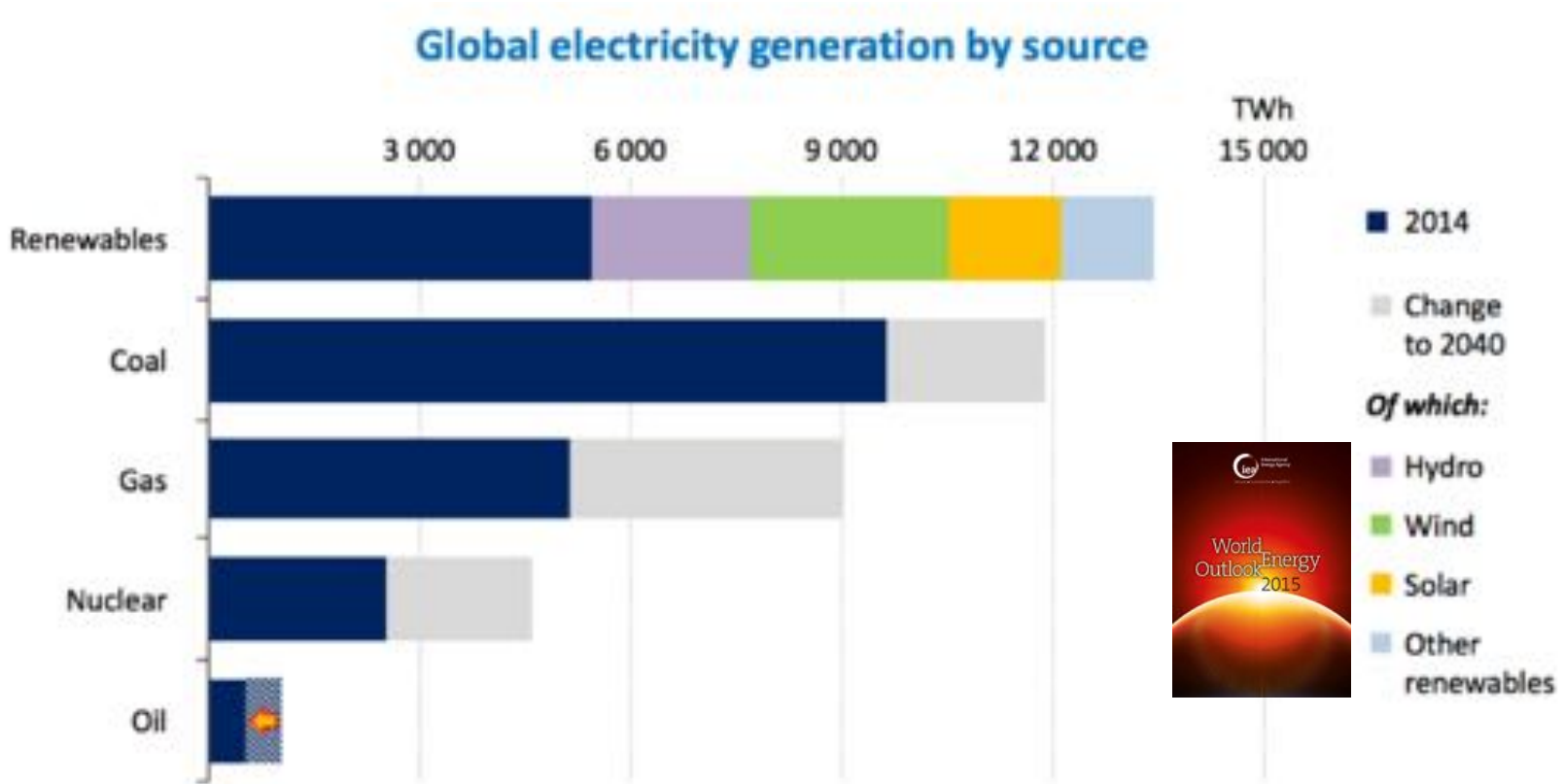
# Talk about Morality without Moralizing

- Recognize diverse personality types, economic philosophies, and levels of scientific literacy
  - See the research on the Six Americas, Yale
- Emphasize solutions
  - Jesus vs. John the Baptist!
- Celebrate shared religious visions
  - Not political polarity



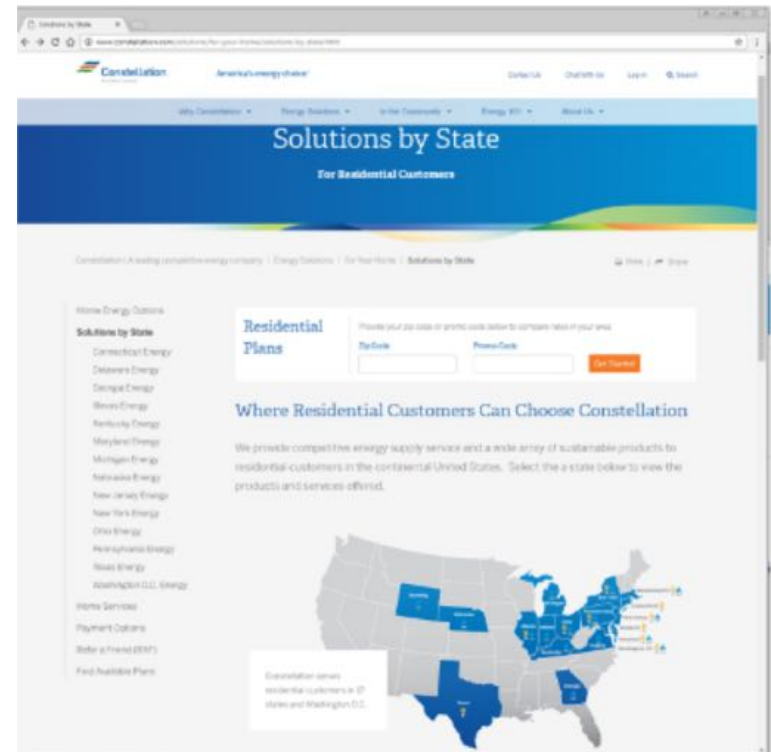
Blessed Celebrations/ Monastery Icons

# By 2030, Renewables will be the World's Primary Power Source



# Consumers

- Purchase renewable energy
- Lifestyle changes
- Citizenship:
  - Support Paris Accord
  - Green Climate Fund
  - Carbon Price
- Listening and bridging our divides





# Investors

- Must accelerate investments in renewable energy
- Press for environmental criteria in institutional investments
  - Pensions and institutions need fossil free choices
  - Wind and solar need institutional investors
- Recognize sophistication of values investing
  - Catholic Impact Investing Collaborative



*"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."*

Tom Toro, *The New Yorker*

# Divestment: \$ymbol or Sacrament?

- Risky and ineffective?

No: a pragmatic funding of new energy

- Symbolic?

Yes: a symbol of discipleship and commitment

- A sacramental “real symbol”:

*makes renewable energy a reality*



# A SPIRITUALITY OF CREATIVE SACRIFICE



# We are Finite: *“Reconciliation with Finitude”*

I am finite

I can't do  
**EVERYTHING!**

*But I have  
choices*



*We are  
the  
Church*



*Unless a grain of wheat  
falls to the ground and die,  
it remains a single grain. . .*

# Choosing Gratitude and Joy

- We need a larger vision!
- God is present to each being and creation is ongoing
- Be comforted: Christ is present to every being, surrounding and blessing it.
- Be grateful for God's loving gift  
- of Creation, and of yourself.



# Reflection Questions

1. For you, what changes feel necessary to live the energy ethics inspired by Laudato Si? What is possible? What is currently "impossible"- but hoped for?
2. Which of your personal and faith values most connect with your commitment to these actions?
3. How have you encountered and processed conflicting feelings? How have you balanced earth ministry and other important, honorable, necessary responsibilities?

# Community Reflection Questions

- What about climate change might be most disruptive to the worldviews in your community?
- How do you balance emphasis on lifestyle changes with group advocacy for scaling up social change? What are the reasons for each emphasis?
- What feels right to your community? How might you effectively suggest new approaches?
- What impact would you like to have, at what scale? What is your vision?

Thank you.





# Catholic Energy Ethics Priorities

- End coal, oil, shale gas and tar sands
- Use natural gas carefully as a bridge with an endpoint
- Examine new models of nuclear energy and care for waste
- End subsidies for fossil fuels
- Invest in R&D for renewable technologies and systems
- *Not just green, but just and green*
  - Ensure protections for vulnerable groups (health care, job skills)
  - Include workers in the transition to a green economy
  - Assure access to clean, affordable, healthy energy
  - Ensure participation in adaptation and mitigation conversations

## Carbon-Free Summary Statistics

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Strategy	Global		US	
	1/1/1997 - 12/31/2015		1/1/1988 - 12/31/2015	
	Carbon-Free	MSCI ACWI	Carbon-Free	R3000
Annualized Returns (Geometric)	6.26%	5.97%	10.40%	10.32%
Annualized Returns (Arithmetic)	7.42%	7.13%	11.02%	10.93%
Annual Standard Deviation	16.16%	16.08%	14.69%	14.57%
Beta	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00
Tracking Error	0.72%	0.00%	0.75%	0.00%
Max Down Year	-42.36%	-41.89%	-38.65%	-37.30%
Max Down Month	-20.57%	-19.81%	-18.47%	-17.73%
Sharpe Ratio (Arithmetic)	0.32	0.31	0.53	0.53
Alpha	0.26%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%

For Global simulations, the following MSCI industry was excluded: Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels.

For US simulations, the following Barra industries were excluded: Energy Reserves and Oil Refining.