

Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

April 30th, 2019

CatholicClimateCovenant.org



Catholic Climate Covenantsm

Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Control Panel >>>>

Your Participation

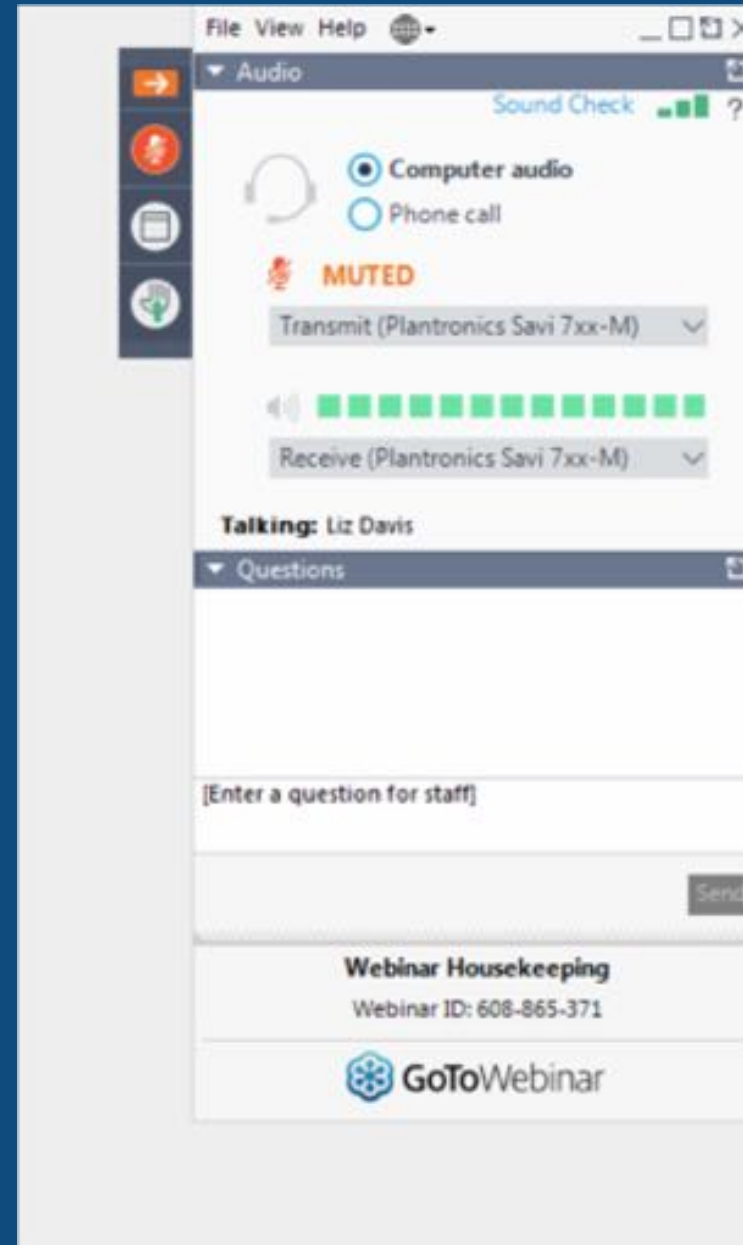
Open and close your control panel

Join audio:

- Choose **Mic & Speakers** to use VoIP
- Choose **Telephone** and dial using the information provided

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

Note: Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.



Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

An End to Waste

Let us pray for an end to the
Waste and desecration of God's creation
For access to the fruits of creation
To be shared equally among all people
And for communities and nations to find sustenance
In the fruits of the earth and the water God has given us.

Almighty God, you created the world and gave it
Into our care so that, in obedience to you,
We might serve all people:
Inspire us to use the riches of creation with wisdom,
and to ensure that their blessings are shared by all;
That, trusting in your bounty, all people may be
Empowered to seek freedom from poverty, famine, and oppression.



Source: <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/sustainability-prayers>

Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal



Marianne Comfort
Sisters of Mercy



Erin Lothes Biviano Ph.D
College of St. Elizabeth



Evan Weber
Sunrise Movement

Moderators: Dan Misleh and Paz Artaza-Regan
Catholic Climate Covenant



Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal



The Green New Deal and Catholic Social Teaching



How Should We Respond?



Erin Lothes, Ph.D.
College of St. Elizabeth

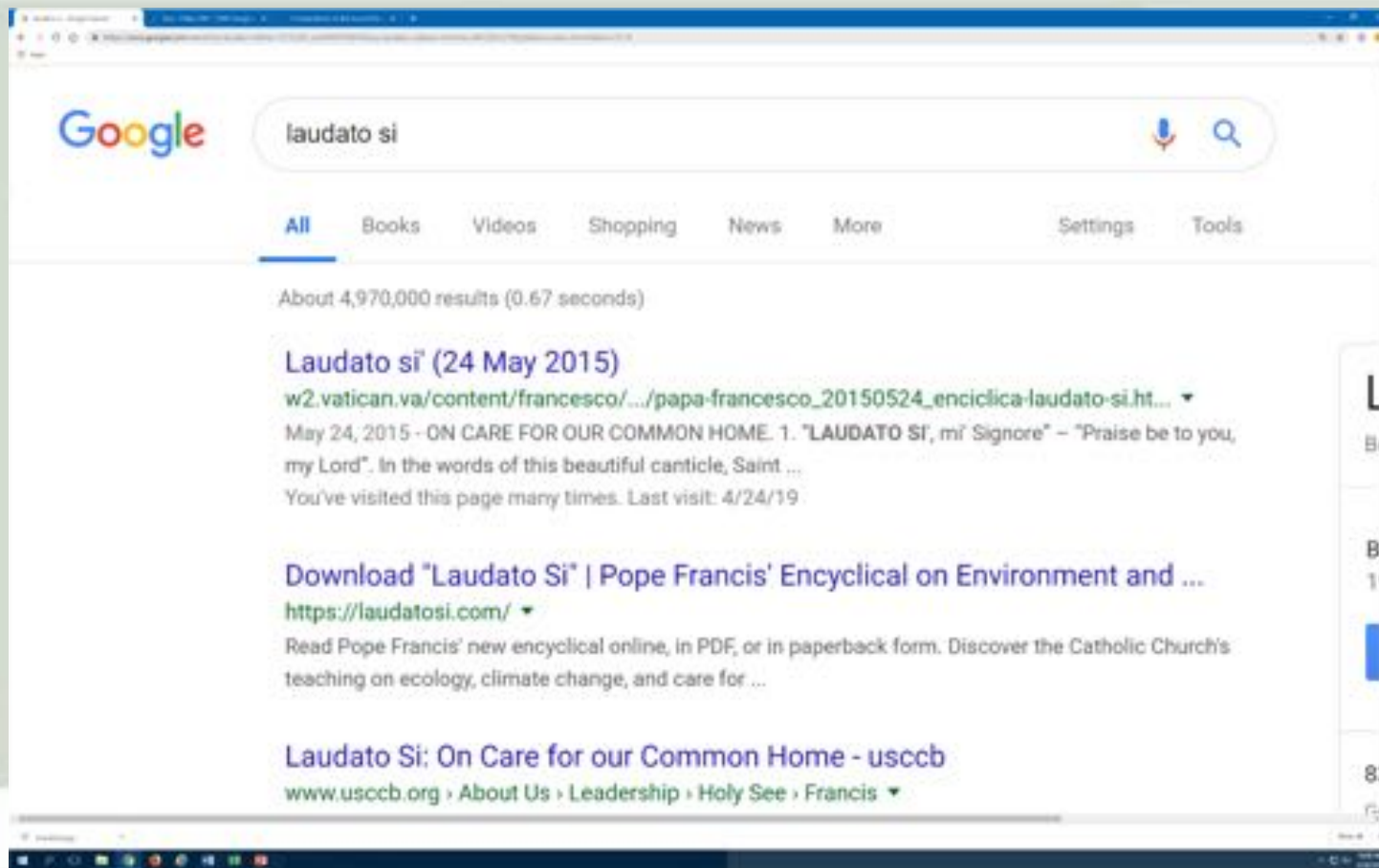
How Should We Respond?

- Positively, politically, repeatedly
- Understand the multiple yet nuanced connections with CST
- Be open to multiple legislative, policy, and market responses
- Celebrate solutions and work zealously for bipartisan language
- With Christian hope

Resolved, That (1) it is the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal—



In dialogue with Catholic Social Teaching. . .



(A) to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition

- *Laudato Si'* LS 157. Society as a whole, and the state in particular, are obliged to defend and promote the common good.
- LS 184. Risks to the environment . . . may affect the common good now and in the future
- LS 165. We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be **progressively replaced without delay**.



(B) to create millions of good, high-wage jobs and ensure prosperity and economic security

- Work is a fundamental right
- *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II) 67: “It is the duty of society to help the citizens to find sufficient employment.”
- St. John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 9:
Work “expresses [human] dignity and increases it.”



3. (H, O) guaranteeing a job, health care, housing

- These are rights, but who ensures them? The “social order” *GS 26*
- Rights go with Responsibilities
- “The duty of the State does not consist so much in directly guaranteeing the right to work of every citizen--”
 - But in promoting policies that build opportunity
 - And **overcoming systemic barriers to employment**
- “Young people should be taught to act upon their own initiative, to accept the responsibility of the risks of a fluid economy”
 - Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 290

NOT Socialist Job Creation but Crisis Leadership

- *Laborem Exercens* 18: Not “onesided centralization by the public authorities” but “a just and rational *coordination*,” safeguarding “the *initiative* of individuals, free groups and local work centres and complexes.” - John Paul II
- *Centesimus Annus* 48: “Rather, the State has a duty to sustain business activities by creating conditions which will ensure job opportunities, by stimulating those activities where they are lacking or by supporting them in moments of crisis.” - John Paul II
- See also *Centesimus Annus* 43; *Laborem Exercens* 9, 12

Wages Support Family Life and Dignity

- *Gaudium et Spes* 67: A just wage, or “remuneration for labor is to be such that man may be furnished the means to cultivate worthily his own material, social, cultural, and spiritual life and that of his dependents.”
- See also *Quadragesima Anno* 68-71, Pope Pius XI and *Laborem Exercens* 19, John Paul II



(D) to secure for all people of the United States for generations to come—

- (i) clean air and water;
- (ii) climate and community resiliency;
- (iii) healthy food;
- (iv) access to nature; and
- (v) a sustainable environment



(E) to promote justice and equity to “frontline and vulnerable communities”

- Creation in the image of God confers dignity on all persons
 - Genesis 1:27; *Gaudium et Spes* 19
- Dignity calls for equality, inclusion, and liberation
- *Environmental injustice currently impacts the poor first and worst*
 - “In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most *vulnerable* people on the planet” (LS 48).
- Preferential option for vulnerable is required by justice and love
 - Beatitudes; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*; LS 146 regarding indigenous rights

(2) the goals described should be accomplished through a 10-year national mobilization

- Not a policy prescription; a demand for equity and sustainability
- **Urgent action is demanded by the signs of the times**
 - *Gaudium et spes* 4
- Listen to scientists
 - *Laudato Si'* 23
- Young people demand change
 - *Laudato Si'* 13



(A) building resiliency by providing investments for **community-defined** projects and strategies;

- Solidarity and Participation: **community-defined**

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 44: “replace corrupt, dictatorial and authoritarian forms of government by democratic and participatory ones.” – St. John Paul II

- Subsidiarity: **need for centralized action remains**

Quadragesima Anno 80: “the State will more freely, powerfully, and effectively do all those things that belong to it alone because it alone can do them.” – Pope Pius XI

(B) repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in the United States

- Eliminating GHG, guaranteeing access to water, reducing climate risks
- Most obvious and seemingly politically acceptable spending goal for governments
- **New insistence: Do so with an equity and sustainability metric**
- “Ensure any infrastructure bill addresses climate change”
 - Yes: this criterion of the Green New Deal responds to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

(C) meeting 100 percent of the power demand through clean, renewable, and zero-emission energy sources

- Policy details not prescribed by CST, but wise
- (i) Dramatically expand and upgrade renewable power sources
- (ii) Deploy new capacity



- **Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.** *attributed to St. Francis*



(D) building or upgrading to energy-efficient, “smart” power grids, & ensuring affordable access to electricity

- Critical and transformative
- Will revolutionize energy delivery
- Happening rapidly in many places



- Resource: Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy podcast with Francesco Starace, <https://energypolicy.columbia.edu/transition-global-energy>

(E) upgrading existing and new buildings to achieve energy efficiency, water efficiency, and affordability

- Most akin to the New Deal
- Most likely to foster traditional employment (construction)
- Most ridiculed. Why?
- **Climate communication is essential**
- Build bridges, emphasize solutions
- Empower new narratives (not owls vs. people, but green jobs)
- Resist temptation to moral green zealousness
- Fight fossil fuel funding of politics and media

(F) spurring massive growth in clean manufacturing as much as is technologically feasible

- Great minds are working on this!
- Reaching net-zero carbon emissions from heavy industry and transport is technically and financially possible by mid-century
- Plans exist to decarbonize cement, steel, plastics, trucking, shipping, and aviation
- Resource: Mission Possible report of the Energy Transitions Committee

<http://www.energy-transitions.org/mission-possible>



(G) working collaboratively with farmers and ranchers to remove pollution and greenhouse gas emissions



(H) Investing in transportation to remove pollution and emissions as much as is technologically feasible

- (i) zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and manufacturing;
 - (ii) clean, affordable, and accessible public transit; and
 - (iii) high-speed rail.
-
- Good example of subsidiarity in which top-down Investment is needed.

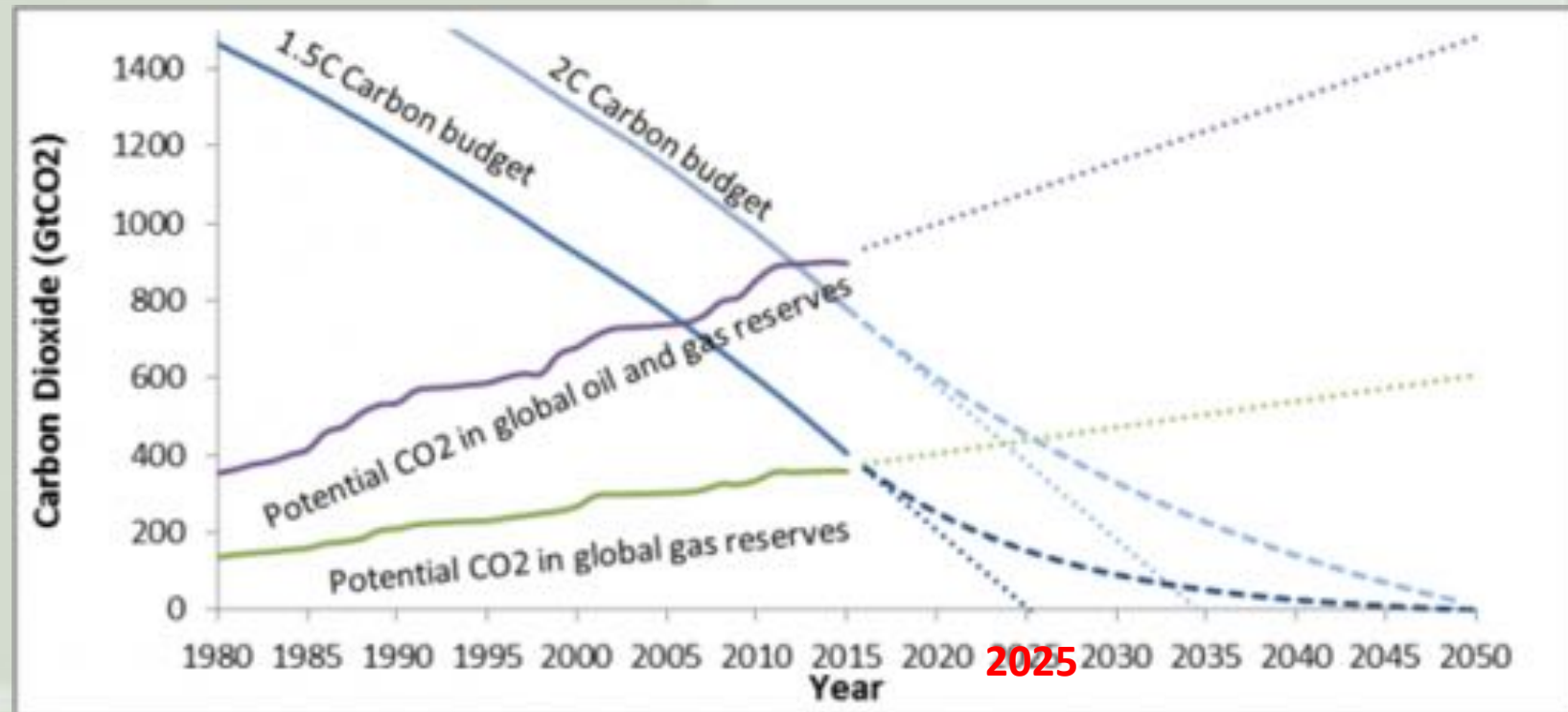


(I) mitigating the health & economic effects of pollution and climate change, by community-defined strategies



(J) removing atmospheric GH gases through low-tech soil storage: land preservation & afforestation

- ? Leave the door open for carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) through air capture (not capture meant for enhanced oil recovery)



- (K) restoring and protecting ecosystems
- (L) cleaning up existing hazardous waste and abandoned sites
- (M) removing other emission and pollution sources
- (N) promoting the international exchange of technology, expertise, products, funding, and services, with the aim of making the United States the international leader on climate action



(A) Providing adequate capital

- Cost of impacts will be greater than cost of investments

(B) Take into account complete environmental and social costs and impacts of emissions

- Essential to ensure that the “polluter pays”
- Prevents externalizing costs of climate impacts to the taxpayer
- Expose subsidies to fossil fuel companies
- Critical missing initiatives:
 - A carbon fee (widely accepted)
 - Developing policies for stranding fossil fuel assets (wildly progressive)

The Sacramental Beauty of Creation: Access and Equity

- *Laudato Si'* 44: “Neighbourhoods are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space. We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature.”
- *LS 45*: “Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called “safer” areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live.”



Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

How Sisters of Mercy are responding to Green New Deal in alignment with Catholic Social Teaching



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.



Interfaith Power & Light

A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO GLOBAL WARMING

We believe the principles outlined below are central to responding faithfully to the opportunity to achieve the goals of the Green New Deal.

Truth and science: Solutions that are in line with scientific consensus on global warming and that respond with the needed urgency and thoroughness, including emissions reductions targets consistent with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Restoration and renewal: Economic and environmental revitalization that includes job programs, skills training, education, investment in a clean energy economy and just transition for both urban and rural areas.

Compassion and fairness: Just treatment for all including workers and communities most dependent on fossil fuel energy.

Interdependence across boundaries: Sacred dialogue across political, geographic, racial and cultural boundaries, including support for vulnerable communities around the world that are on the front lines of climate impacts.

Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

How Sisters of Mercy are responding to Green New Deal in alignment with Catholic Social Teaching



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

Questions ?



Catholic Social Teaching and the Green New Deal

For more information:

info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org

