



Where Justice and Truth Meet

May 2014

“With profound gratitude and deep interior purpose, we choose to live sustainably in order to further the mission and to cultivate right relationship with all God’s creation.”

Together – Birthing Anew, Chapter 2014



Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature: Our Responsibility

Addressing a gathering of scientists and social scientists at the Vatican May 2-6, 2014, Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga spoke of the need for a "culture of sustainability" in which we see nature as an extension of ourselves who "live on this planet as our hearts live in our bodies."

The concluding [statement of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences](#) recognizes that humanity has entered a new era. "Our technological prowess has brought humanity to a crossroads....Today we have changed our natural environment to such an extent that scientists are redefining the current period as the Age of the Anthropocene, that is to say an age when human action, through the use of fossil fuels, is having a decisive impact on the planet. If current trends continue, this century will witness unprecedented climate changes and ecosystem destruction that will severely impact us all."

Yet they also see that "the technological and operational bases for a true sustainable development are available or within reach." Perhaps the greatest challenge lies in the sphere of human values. The main obstacles to achieving sustainability and human inclusion are inequality, unfairness, corruption and human trafficking. Our economies, our democracies, our societies and our cultures pay a high price for the growing gap between the rich and the poor within and between nations."

In view of the persistence of poverty, the widening of economic and social inequalities, and

the continued destruction of the environment, the world's governments called for the adoption by 2015 of new universal goals, to be called [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), to guide planetary-scale actions after 2015. To achieve these goals will require global cooperation, technological innovations that are within reach, and supportive economic and social policies at the national and regional levels, such as the taxation and regulation of environmental

abuses, limits to the enormous power of transnational corporations and a fair redistribution of wealth. It has become abundantly clear that Humanity's relationship with Nature needs to be undertaken by cooperative, collective action at all levels -- local, regional, and global."

Humanity needs urgently to redirect our relationship with nature by adopting the

Sustainable Development Goals so as to promote a sustainable pattern of economic development and social inclusion. A human ecology that is healthy in terms of ethical virtues contributes to the achievement of sustainable nature and a balanced environment. Today we need a relationship of mutual benefit: true values should permeate the economy and respect for Creation should promote human dignity and wellbeing.

Beginning the Ecozoic Era

Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff sees a promising outcome of the present crisis: the birth of a new era, the Ecozoic era. "We have lived under the myth of progress," [he writes](#). "But it was viewed in a distorted way, as human control over the non-human world for a growing GDP. The correct way is to view progress

“God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.”

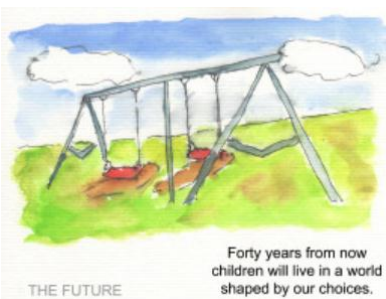
Pope Francis



in harmony with nature and measure it by the overall functioning of the Earth community. Gross Domestic Product cannot be achieved at the expense of Gross Terrestrial Product. Here is our original sin."

"The central premise of the [Ecozoic era](#) is seeing the universe as a whole network of relationships of all to all – we humans are essentially beings of extremely intricate relationships – and seeing the Earth as a living superorganism that regulates and continually renews itself. Given the productivist and consumerist onslaught of humans, this organism has been ill and unable to "digest" all the toxic elements we have produced in recent centuries. As an organism, it can't survive in a fragmented way but as a whole. Our challenge now is maintaining the integrity and vitality of the Earth. Earth's welfare is our welfare."

Climate Change Science in Haiku



Oceanographer Dr. Greg Johnson recognized that the 2000-page [Fifth Assessment Report](#) from the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* would be

too much for most people to assimilate. So he distilled the entire report into [19 illustrated haiku](#), a traditional Japanese 3-line poem based on nature. The result is poetry. It's a work of art. And it offers clear, concise talking points and a compelling visual guide.

Immigration Reform—If not now, when?

Immigration reform advocates are hopeful that the House of Representatives may act before the August recess. Several packages of legislation are pending that would address border security, interior enforcement using state and local law enforcement, some type of Dream/Kids Act that will not include parents, legalization with NO "special" pathway to citizenship, an increase in employment-based visas, and a mechanism that would reduce the family backlog.

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT!

- Join in prayer on May 29th as Catholic Bishops from across the country are in Washington to pray for immigration reform and to lobby key members on the Hill. The day will begin with a

Eucharistic Liturgy at St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill.

- Call (*Capitol switchboard 855-589-5698*) or write your Representatives asking them to call for legislation that includes a path to citizenship, preserves family unity, and employs safe and humane immigration enforcement policies.
- Join Catholics across the country for seven days of prayer, reflection and action to heal our broken immigration system. Use the *Justice for Immigrants Pentecost Prayer Resource* to reflect each day on one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a lens to explore our immigration system and a call to action.



Socially Responsible Investment Policy

Leadership and the Finance Committee recently reviewed our Socially Responsible Investment Policy with Sr. Marcelline Koch who coordinates our congregational response to shareholder issues and Steve Zielinski who represents us at the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR). Through socially responsible investments we seek to influence the ethical standards of companies regarding values and principles of Catholic social teaching, particularly regarding human dignity, the common good, preferential option for the poor and responsible stewardship of resources by

1. avoiding participation in harmful activities;
2. using the Congregation's role as shareholder for social stewardship; and
3. promoting the common good.

This year private for-profit prison corporations were added to the list of companies to be avoided. Private prisons benefit from having more inmates, demand guaranteed occupancy levels (or states must pay for empty beds), and lobby for tougher sentencing which will increase their profits. The United States already leads the world in incarcerating its residents, with nearly one in every 100 adults in prison. *Click on the map for more information.*

