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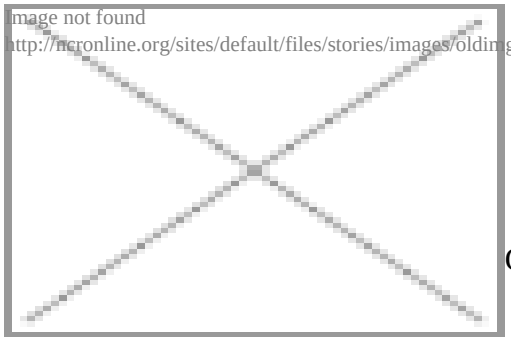
Why a green parish?

Carol Meyer | Dec. 1, 2010 Eco Catholic

To me, the answer to this question should be as obvious as, ?Why a financially healthy parish?? or ?Why a caring parish?? We all recognize that certain aspects are foundational to parish life. I contend that caring for the Earth has now become a necessity for parishes. My reasoning is: Look, everything ? including our churches ? depends on a sustainable, healthy Earth. We can?t have a long-term thriving parish without a thriving Earth.

The following story typifies how most people think. Some high school seniors were asked how things were going in society and they said poorly. When asked about their own prospects, they thought they were very good. They saw no correlation between their own destiny and that of the whole. Those kids don?t exist in a vacuum and neither do our parishes.

Our church exists to form disciples of Christ who carry out His work in the world. (Lest you doubt me on this, I attended a whole weekend workshop by the Alban Institute on this theme.) However, carrying out Christ?s work, bringing people to God, creating a just society, etc. are meaningless if life itself is threatened and the planet is going down the tubes. The situation is more serious than anything humanity has ever known, and sticking our heads in the sands of religious naivete won?t do.



God?s whole earthly enterprise is being threatened, so we communities of faith who seek to do God?s will should be outraged and in the forefront of staving this off. I?m not talking about making a few parish energy changes, but getting members motivated and mobilized to work in every possible way for the welfare of the Earth.

Environmental ministry should be high on the list of parish priorities. If a sink hole were forming beneath our church facility, you better believe everyone would put all else aside to fix it. Well, a figurative collective sink hole IS forming beneath us, so we?d better get serious about fixing it.

And if that isn?t enough motivation, how about: 1) The pope and bishops are calling for churches to be strong in Earth stewardship 2) We are supposed to be pro life, and climate change and environmental destruction threaten life of a magnitude we can hardly comprehend and 3) God LOVES creation, so how can we possibly love God without also loving and protecting it? A greater evil than the ravishing of this beautiful, awesome bio-spiritual planet I cannot imagine, and I cannot bear even the thought of it. And I hope our communities of faith can?t either.
-- Carol Meyer

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