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The world prays for success in Cancun

Rich Heffern | Dec. 3, 2010 Eco Catholic

Fr. Shay Cullen writes from the Preda Center, Olongapo City, Philippines, about the need for the Mexico Climate Change Conference to succeed. The Preda Center mission is to promote sustainable developement through fair trade and poverty alleviation.

"As the representatives of 120 nations and thousands of climate change experts and campaigners work in Cancun, Mexico, to try once again to avert the pending disaster that is coming to the world, I add my voice to those of hundreds of thousands and if not millions crying out for the conference to succeed.

It's vitally urgent for humanity that progress be made in reducing world levels of carbon dioxide, methane emissions, and deforestation. The greenhouse gasses emitted when we burn coal, oil, wood, garbage in power plants all over the world in ever increasing amounts are called that the gasses, especially co2, rise into the earth's stratosphere and form an insulation blanket that traps the earth's heat leading to an overheated planet causing the climate to be affected, violently at times. The most direct impact this has is seen in the retreating ice glaciers of the Arctic.

The once gigantic mountains of ice and snow are melting rapidly and the mirror effect they had in radiating the sun's rays back into space is greatly diminished. Scientists measure the retreating ice and warn that if the temperature of the planet increases above 2 degrees centigrade, the Greenland mass of ice will disappear. That will be a point of no return. The water unleashed by this catastrophic event will cause sea levels to rise 7 meters. Millions of coastal villages that rely on fishing will be wiped out and driven inland.

With the ice diminished, the natural reflectors gone, the sunbeams can penetrate the oceans and scorch the earth. This year alone, millions of people have suffered the consequence of the highest temperatures on record in many countries. Forest fires raged beyond control in Russia, Greece and Portugal. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of woodland has been destroyed, 18,000 hectares in Portugal alone. Such a loss of green shade adds to the rise in global warming. Moscow had temperatures that were 20C higher than normal. That was a massive climate change.

In China, Pakistan, and India, devastating floods resulted; millions were and are still homeless living on handouts. Perhaps the unusual heavy melting ice on the Himalayas was the cause and super powerful typhoons caused by the warmer oceans evaporating the sea and raining down a billion tons more water. Everything in this amazing and beautiful planet is connected and interacts. Living creatures are the most effected, that means you and me and every plant and animal. We must protect them from human greed and overdevelopment.

The conference in Cancun has persuaded the greatest emitters of greenhouse gases, China, India and the USA to cut back on emissions. If the ever rising temperature is not held below 2C, then we can expect the worst. That is the tipping point when one event triggers another and the domino effect kicks in. The permafrost marshland and bogs of Siberia and North Canada are already releasing billions of tons of methane gas, it clogs the atmosphere. Wildlife and plants that survive the cold will be greatly affected and become extinct. Drug resistant species of

giant mosquitoes will likely breed and swarm south to human populations bringing malaria and dengue.

If humanity does not change from an addicted self-destructive consumer society to a responsible sustainable society, we will pay an awful price in human hardship. Nations driven to unchained greed and global ambition for power and dominance can only lead people to self-harm, collapse of the economy and poverty.

We can all do something to make it a better and safer world. We can save electricity, drive less miles, buy locally grown foods, eat organic natural food, start a small tree planting project on waste land wherever you live and support a group campaigning for a clean and healthy environment. Preda/forest feast fair-trade sales of dried mangos pay for the planting and protection of 200 fruit tree saplings 2 meters tall done with the indigenous people for the past 6 years. So eating the right food does justice, plants trees, saves the soil, provides shade, cools the earth, conserves water, and prevents landslides. Everything is connected on this God-given planet, be a part of something really good, lets save it."

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