

What about the "Climate Cliff"?

Maureen Fiedler | Dec. 7, 2012 NCR Today

I write this from Denver, Colorado where I am part of a Loretto Community meeting. But something out the windows is distracting my attention.

I can see, as always, the magnificent Rocky Mountains. They have always been a wonder in my world... tall, majestic, reaching to the heavens.

But this time, I am sad... almost ready to cry. That's because this is December, and there is very little or no snow on the mountain peaks! I've been here plenty of Decembers, and the peaks have always been white this time of year. But the reality of climate change is shouting out its message with a visible "sign of the times" for those who have eyes to see.

Yes, I know snow may come later this winter; I hope it does. But it was 70 degrees in Denver yesterday, and it was in the 60's today. This is not normal winter weather in Colorado. And the Rockies look naked on top!

A few years ago, when I drove up into the mountains with friends during the summer, they pointed out another evidence of climate change. Pine beetles have been eating away at the evergreens, and whole hillsides were visibly brown, not green. Today, millions of trees have died on the mountains. And climate change is the culprit. These beetles are plentiful because Colorado winters have not been cold enough to kill off the larvae, as had been the case in the past.

These are just two of the manifestations of climate change I'm seeing in one state. And of course, Hurricane Sandy and other examples of erratic, life-destroying weather provide other evidence of the "climate cliff" we are facing. And yes... if it will help, let's call it a "climate cliff."

The "fiscal cliff" is minor compared with the "climate cliff" staring us in the face.

Catholics... and people of all faiths... are called to care for the earth, to treasure it, to preserve it for future generations. It's time to speak out and move this issue to the top of President Obama's and the Congress' political agenda.

Maybe we could send them some brown pine needles as a reminder.

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