

NUMBERS:

• 79% of US energy comes from fossil fuels as of 2022.

• 2023 is the warmest year on record according to the UN (1.45° C above pre-industrial levels).

• The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states that sea ice (5 years and older) have decreased to 2% from 30% based on research data taken between 1979-2018.

• 12 million hectares of land lost to desertification each year.

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Reign of the Sacred Heart

CLIMATE ISSUE

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Climate Change Skeptic

by Fr. Duy Nguyen, SCJ

I'm a climate change skeptic, not quite a complete nonbeliever, but a doubter, much like an agnostic who is neither here nor there.

I hear and read about the record-breaking temperatures, frequent and more intense natural disasters in the U.S. and other parts of the world. I've experienced record heat, frigid cold, and unusual temperatures during the seasons in places where I ministered. There is something go-

ing on.

Is there a correlation between what I and my fel-



Greenhouse gases.

low human beings are doing to contribute to global warming, thereby adversely affecting the climate? Or is climate

change part of the natural cycle of the earth, fluctuating in periods of heating and cooling?

Many climate change deniers would state that the data is fake, scientific results contorted, research funded by industry interests, or propaganda created by countries wanting to better their economy at the expense of the environmentally conscious. Pretty much, climate change is a hoax.

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Record-Breaking Temperatures

The UN declared 2023 to be the hottest year on record. The previous records were in 2020 and 2016. Last year, the average global temperature increased by 1.45° C (34.6° F), a level that is

above those of the pre-industrial era (1850-1900). New monthly records were set between June and December during 2023. The World Meteorological Organization, the climate arm

of the UN, states that 2024 may be even warmer, a likelihood that global temperatures in the coming years may increase beyond 1.45° C.

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Climate Change Skeptic Continued...



Flooding in Italy.
Photo by [Jonathan Ford](#) on [Unsplash](#)

"It has now become clear that the climate change presently taking place stems from the overheating of the planet, caused chiefly by the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere due to human activity, which in recent decades has proved unsustainable for the ecosystem. The drive to produce and possess has become an obsession, resulting in an inordinate greed that has made the environment the object of unbridled exploitation."

-Pope Francis

Melting sea ice.
Photo by [Andreas Weith](#)



What's real and not real about climate change? As Pontius Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" Like me, if you wish to be informed further, be on a journey towards truth, here are some articles provided by people who are knowledgeable about the subject.

[What is climate change? A really simple guide - BBC News](#)

[10 facts about the US environment \(usafacts.org\)](#)

[Evidence | Facts – Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet \(nasa.gov\)](#)

[26 facts that bring home the reality of climate change | National Geographic](#)

What Is The Church Saying About Climate Change?

1. Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (Care For Our Common Home) affirms the "very solid scientific consensus" that climate change is occurring as well as the evidence that human activity is the primary driver of this warming (LS 23).

Climate change is "one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day" (LS 25) but it has grown exponentially worse since the encyclical's release in 2015 according to many scientific bodies. ([Source for items 1-5](#))

2. Pope St. John Paul II taught on numerous occasions about a duty of stewardship toward nature. For example, in his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, John Paul II wrote about nature as a gift from God and the need for humans to coop-

erate with God in promoting the rightly ordered flourishing of the environment (CA 37). Further, *Centesimus Annus* outlined a connection between natural ecology and

"human ecology" (CA 38), anticipating the concept of integral ecology in *Laudato Si'*.
3. Pope Benedict echoed these same teachings during his papacy, for example, in his 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (see CV 48-52).

4. As outlined in *Laudato Si'*, its vision of an integrated approach (Integral Ecology) to concern for all people and the environment has roots in Scripture and the history of Catholic thought,

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Church and Climate Change Continued...



Playground desert.

5. Catholic scholars and activists have been outspoken on the connection between social and environmental issues for many years.



Photo by [Peter Burdon](#) on [Unsplash](#)

in particular in the tradition of Catholic Social

Teaching, tracing back to the late 19th century.

“Climate change is the biggest challenge that humanity faces.

It is affecting all of us, especially the most vulnerable.”

- Celeste Saulo (WMO Secretary -General)

What Can I Do?

“Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.” You’re all in. You’re for protecting the earth for yourself, others, and future generations, but what can you do? Maybe do nothing and wait for the second coming of Jesus. Let him fix it. He did say

he would establish a new heaven and earth, didn’t he? Click here if you want to do your part and participate in the care of God’s home.

[How to Stop Global Warming. Solutions to Prevent Climate Change \(nrdc.org\)](#)

[10 ways you can help fight the climate crisis \(unep.org\)](#)

[What can we do to slow or stop global warming? | NOAA Climate.gov](#)

Record-Breaking Temperatures continued...

There is a call to reduce greenhouse emissions and increase renewable energy sources to help stave off global warming and appeal for countries to abide by the Paris Treaty to keep the rise of global temperatures under 2°C (35.6° F).

If man-made activities are left unchecked, heatwaves, storms, drought, and floodings would intensify and be recurrent. In turn, these would affect migration, food supplies, prices of goods and services, and health.

[Read more here.](#)



2016 Boise National Park fire.
Photo by Kari Greer



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**Sint Unum
Adveniat Regnum Tuum
Ecce Venio**

The content has been developed by the US Province Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Office to educate, animate and empower SCJs, Dehonian Associates and parish leaders for action on behalf of social transformation. The [World Synod of Bishops](#) wrote in 1971 that *"Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."* No one recognized this more instinctively than did our Founder, Fr. Leo Dehon, who dreamed of "the Reign of the Sacred Heart in souls and societies" and worked tirelessly on behalf of workers and the poor and marginalized.

SCJ Response

The US Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart views climate change as an existential threat to humanity. Members of the US Province met during the 2023 Provincial Chapter and agreed to submit a proposal to the 2024 General Chapter for the administrative leaders to establish an international commission to help the global entities of the SCJ Congregation implement the Laudato Si Action Platform.

Dehonian spirituality (Welcoming the Spirit of Sint Unum, Adveniat Regnum Tuum, Ecce Venio) calls us to in-

tercede in this threat to all life. Our future as Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the future of all life as we know it necessitates, we do so in all of our life and ministry and we do so collectively, systemically, and comprehensively.

Did You Know?

In 2011, Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake (SHML) stepped towards renewable energy with the installation of a solar water heating system on the roof of

the SCJ wing. Pictured here are 16 solar panels used to heat six 110 gallon water tanks.

