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Why did you agree to serve on this committee?

Pope Francis has cast everything under the lens of evangelization, recently stating that "The Joy of the Gospel" is his most important document. Evangelization involves re-proposing the Good News of the Gospel and inviting people to experience the joy, peace and harmony it brings. Care for our earth is a natural outgrowth of our faith in addition to being an opportunity for people to encounter Christ and His plan anew.

What specific concerns do you have about the wellbeing of the earth, "our common home?"

The original harmony and stewardship between all of creation has been lost due to original sin. Over and over in "Laudato Si'" Pope Francis points this out: "The harmony between the Creator, humanity and creation as a whole was disrupted by our presuming to take the place of God.... As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature become conflictual." At the same time, Francis calls us to rediscover that balance, taught in the Christian faith and so well exemplified by saints such as Francis of Assisi, "the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.... He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace" ("Laudato Si'").

What message do you want to convey about care of the earth?

God created the world "good" (Gn 1-2). He called for us to be in harmony with creation and caretakers or stewards of it. The Christian tradition—especially as manifested in monastic communities—shows us what that can look like. Our faith compels us to better care for this world as we anticipate the new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21-22).

How can Vermont Catholics participate in the care of the earth?

The word "love" appears 62 times in "Laudato Si,'" in a variety of contexts. Certainly, there are many opportunities for concrete actions, and these are to be lauded and emulated. This committee will certainly be highlighting such actions this year. At its root, to the extent that our actions are motivated by love for the Lord, love for our neighbor and love for all of creation, we will be on the path toward a renewal of human ecology and the harmony that the Lord had planned from the beginning.

What do you say to people who do not understand/believe the seriousness of the situation of the earth?

Regardless of your particular opinions and views, no one is in favor of destroying their own "home." Pope Francis refers to earth as "our common home." On a very basic level, if we consider Earth as our home, we will be more cognizant of how we treat and preserve it.

What motivates you in your work to protect our earth?

The Lord created it and gave it to us. We do well to care for this precious treasure as we would any gift from one whom we love and who in turn loves us beyond measure. How could a Christian, in love with their Lord, feel any differently?