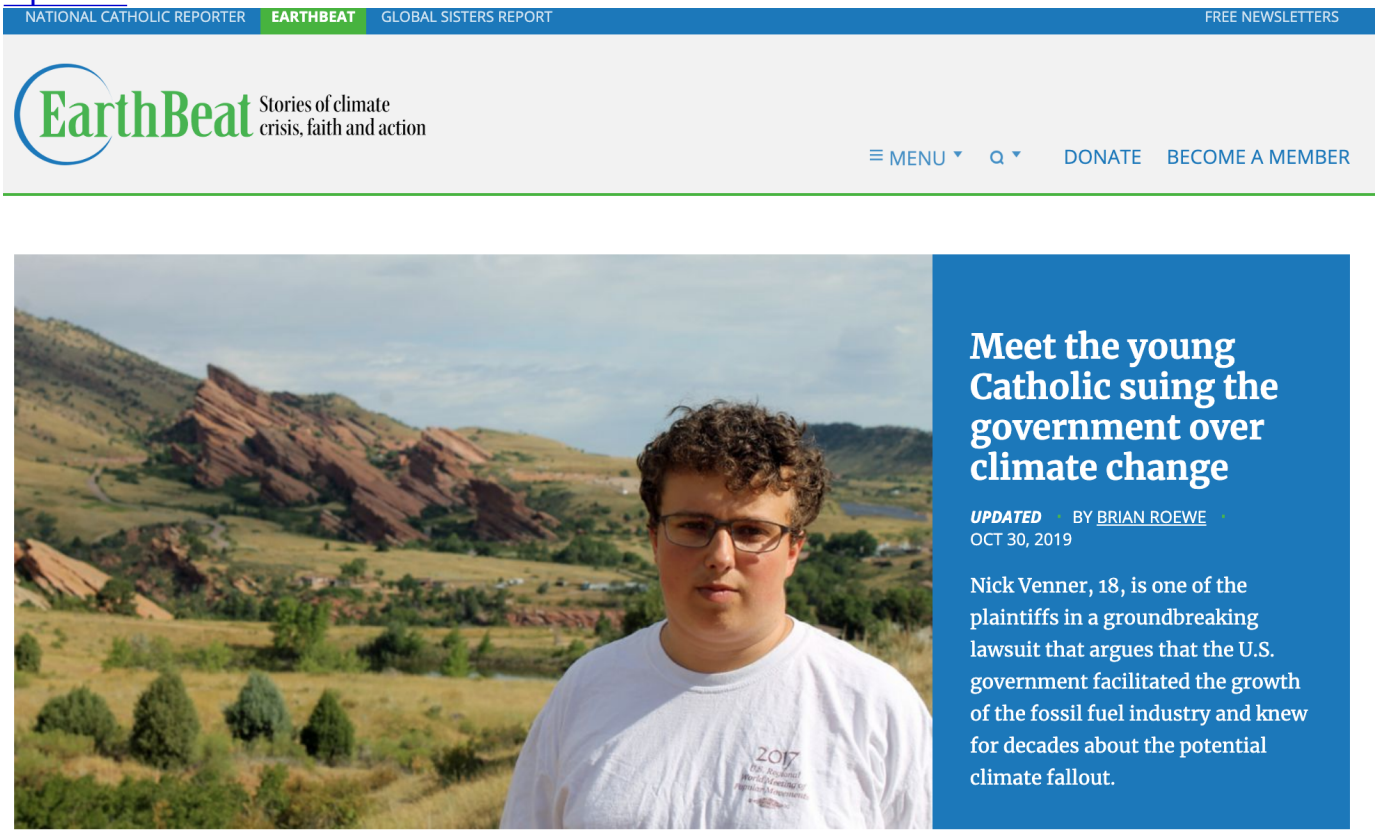
Opinion



Screenshot of the EarthBeat homepage (NCR photo)



by Thomas C. Fox

View Author Profile
tfox@ncronline.org

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

October 29, 2019
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Get ready, faithful reader.

Today, we launched our major climate change initiative, which we call EarthBeat. Its vision is to be a Catholic eco-crisis hub on our website, NCRonline.org. Our coverage will also increase in our print edition.

The reasons are only too apparent. Life on our planet is at stake. Scientists say we have a dozen years to seriously change course lest global warming accelerates beyond control.

This special NCR initiative will provide substantially increased reporting, including examples of successful initiatives and other information aimed at empowering those working to curb climate change. We have developed systems for reader feedback and have assembled a panel of environmental specialists in various fields to help us fine tune our coverage.

The scope and nature of this project is unprecedented. The times call for it, hence our coverage. Our NCR niche is spiritual and sacramental. We affirm all life is sacred. No element of life is unconnected, existing on its own. All is part of a grand sacred web that requires increasingly careful sustenance. This requires nothing less than a spiritual transformation.

We began serious coverage of the environment in the 1980s when eco-theologian Thomas Berry regularly entered NCR's pages. Many Catholics caught on. To notions of peace and justice, additional words began appearing in the Catholic lexicon: "care for the environment" and "environmental justice." Unfortunately, even as some grew conscious of our planet's limited resources, many disregarded the reality, preferring to live in apathy or outright denial.

Change is occurring. Pope Francis has raised the imminent crisis to the highest levels of church concern with his encyclical, "*Laudato Si*', On Care for Our Common Home." Tens of millions around the world, especially the young who hold the

greatest stakes in a healthy climate future, are mobilizing. The global media is awakening. We are part of this global awakening. We grow out of our Catholic sacramental perspective and will reach through inter-faith groups.

Advertisement

Our EarthBeat staff will coordinate with other NCR contributors and Global Sisters Report reporters and columnists to develop broader coverage. In sum, we plan to draw upon NCR's full design, editing, reporting, multimedia and social media talents to make this project a focused and sustained contribution to environmental education, spiritual transformation and public action.

The NCR readership is thoughtful and intelligent, so the task before us is not a matter of persuading climate change deniers to open their minds. There's growing evidence that climate apathy — not just climate denial — is the greater problem. Research indicates that the best ways to address such apathy is to make the crisis real — not with doomsday coverage but with specific, relatable stories that demonstrate both the stakes of the problem and accessible, concrete initiatives that people are taking to make a difference.

Follow EarthBeat on social media

Instagram

Facebook

Twitter

All around the world, young people are organizing and demanding action. They realize the scope and seriousness of this crisis, and understand it is they (not us) who will be dealing directly with the consequences. Our hope is to provide them with the information, resources and spiritual nourishment they need to carry on the work.

We also hope you, our longtime readers, will be tuning in. You can read EarthBeat online at NCRonline.org/EarthBeat.

[Thomas C. Fox is CEO/President of NCR. His email address is tfox@ncronline.org.]

A version of this story appeared in the **Nov 15-28, 2019** print issue under the headline: Presenting NCR's EarthBeat.