News
EarthBeat



Trinity Cooper and Abigail Gonzales from Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, Ca. speak on environmental justice on Capitol Hill. (Photo by Kelly Swan/Ignatian Solidarity Network)



by Bill Mitchell

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Editor's Note: *EarthBeat Weekly is your weekly newsletter about faith and climate change. Below is the Nov. 22 edition. To receive EarthBeat Weekly in your inbox, sign up here.*

Last week was my first visit to the Ignatian Solidarity Network event in D.C. I came away inspired.

There's nothing like 2,200 high school and college students surging through a conference venue -- all there to dig into issues of Catholic social justice -- to renew one's faith in the future. EarthBeat was well represented at an NCR booth that also included Global Sisters Report. We conducted two workshops, one for students interested in learning about our Small Earth Stories (we're hoping they'll submit some), the other a session by reporter Brian Roewe: "Five things Catholics are doing about climate change... and what you can do, too."

Brian stuck around Monday and followed some of the students as they made their way around Capitol Hill, meeting with their representatives and staffs to make their case on a variety of issues. That photo above shows students Trinity Cooper and Abigail Gonzales from Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland, Ca. speaking on environmental justice. (Thanks to Kelly Swan of Ignatian Solidarity Network for the photo). You can read Brian's account here. Columnist Tom Reese was also there, and he filed this report. Students were making climate news in several spots this week, with Boston College students urging the school to reject a donation from the Koch Foundation because of the source of the money -- the oil refining and chemical conglomerate Koch Industries. Coming up soon on EarthBeat: my report on University of Notre Dame students working with the Sunrise Movement to encourage a far more sweeping climate action plan for the city of South Bend.

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Here's what else is new on EarthBeat this week:

- My interview with University of Notre Dame President and Holy Cross Fr. John Jenkins about his work on the climate crisis.
- A related Small Earth Story by James Boyce about his book arguing for carbon dividends as a way of distributing revenue raised by taxes on carbon in a way that is fair to all concerned, especially those less able to absorb higher energy costs.
- An update on the impact of the climate crisis in Pakistan, focused on the work of Irish Fr. Liam O'Callaghan.
- News from the Vatican that Pope Francis plans to update the Catechism of the Catholic Church with sins against ecology.

In other climate-related news this week:

- Oxford Dictionaires has named "climate emergency" its word of the year.
- In a victory for the author of one of our Small Earth Stories, Daria Mark, the Town Meeting of Brookline, Ma. voted to ban the installation of oil and gas pipes in new buildings as well as extensive renovations of existing buildings.
- Climate activists are sometimes accused of overestimating the impact of climate change. A new report finds the opposite.

Last week, I asked for your thoughts about serving Thanksgiving guests of various veg, vegan and meat-eating preferences. Among the comments:

Jason Miller wrote: "Yes, we should cut down on our meat consumption, (for a multitude of reasons) but whether or not I eat turkey on Thanksgiving is going to make that much of a difference. And forcing your meat eating neighbors to eat a Tofurkey without their consent isn't going to win anyone over to the cause."

And from Cathy Poynton: "My daughter's family has been vegan for years. At Christmas-time when the whole family is together for dinner (eleven), we have tofurkey with roasted vegetables, and several veggie sides. You just have to use vegan "butter" and soy milk as substitutes in recipes. All eat the roasted veggies and sides, and we have a meat entre too. Everyone is full, and the meat-eaters usually opt to try the tofurkey as well. Happy holidays!

And speaking of holidays, here's an update on the newly eco-friendly Vatican Christmas tree.

Hope you all enjoy a Happy Thanksgiving next week. With that in mind, EarthBeat Weekly will take a break until Dec. 6.

Thanks for reading.

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