News
EarthBeat



Children in an indigenous community in Peru make the case for water as life (Juan Vilela Colchón)



by Bill Mitchell

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Eager to combine your faith and your concern about the climate crisis in a way that results in effective action? The Global Catholic Climate Movement invites you to become a Laudato Si' Animator. The deadline is March 9 and you can apply here.

There's no charge for the four-week online training course, which includes webinars, readings and collaboration among the participants. GCCM spokeswoman Reba Elliot estimates a time commitment of between 10 and 20 hours total over the four weeks, largely depending on your reading speed.

With training in climate science as well as church teachings, the program equips participants to become knowledgeable leaders of a variety of intiatives addressing the climate crisis. You'll become a "certified animator" at the point you lead some action or event. Elliot says about 1,500 graduates of the training have become certified since the program began in 2016.

"Our animators include pastors, retirees and young professional women," Elliot told me in a phone interview this week. "It's not so much about knowledge or skill as it is about commitment and willingness to take action."

Training is offered twice a year, with the next sessions beginning March 23. Apply by March 9.

Here's some of what's new on EarthBeat this week:

- Staff writer Brian Roewe reports on an initiative by the Sisters of Mercy to extend the Lenten tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays to include Mondays. The campaign is called Mercy Meatless Mondays.
- Correspondent Catherine M. Odell explores a program that converts tons of food waste from dining halls at the University of Notre Dame into green power.

- Brenna Davis of the Ignatian Solidarity Network kicks off our Lenten Daily Food Reflections with a piece encouraging you to "touch a piece of earth today." You can read it in 40 seconds.
- In his Small Earth Story, contributor Peter McLoughlin finds a way to get rid of his smelly plastic gas can and boost the planet at the same time: a battery-powered snowblower.
- Jesse Remedios answers a Burning Question from a reader, a grandmother of 11: What and where do I start to help save our planet?
- In a Catholic News Service dispatch from Kenya, Fredrick Nzwili reports on the climate-driven infestation of locusts in that country.

Here's some additional climate-related coverage:

- In the Brisbane-based Catholic Leader, Emilie Ng profiles the carbon footprint of auxillary Bishop Ken Howell, who is leading a diocesan effort to encourage Catholics to lower theirs. (He discovered some surprises in his.)
- The U.K.-based Independent Catholic News reports that Christian Climate Action and Extinction Rebellion Faith Communities have launched a 40-day Lenten vigil in London. The project encourages people to commit to one action during Lent to protect Planet Earth.
- Religion-Unplugged has an interesting piece about a debate I'd been unaware of before reading this: "Can Catholics eat fake 'meat' during Lent?"
- Reuters reports from London that the British Jesuits have decided to divest their half billion dollar portfolio from fossil fuel companies.
- Climate writer and activist Bill McKibben published the first issue of his newsletter for the New Yorker, Climate Crisis.

Upcoming event:

For Chicago-area readers, check out this March 29 Interfaith Climate Summit bringing together various faiths to address climate issues.

You'll find more events like this — virtual as well as in person — on EarthBeat's Event Calendar. And don't forget to post upcoming events that you're involved in!

Closing Beat:

The photo above was taken by Juan Vilela Colchón, a Laudato Si' animator in Peru. He sent this message along with the photo from the Awajun Indigenous Community

of Hebron, Peru: "We will continue to advocate in this part of the Peruvian Amazon, creating awareness that we Catholics are firmly committed to the defense and care of the creation of the God of Life: our Common Home, as our Pope Francis reaffirms."

We hope you'll forward this week's newsletter to anyone you believe might want to subscribe. They can do so here. And if you'd like to support EarthBeat, please join NCR Forward for as little as five bucks a month.

Thanks for reading!

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