Opinion



by NCR Staff

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

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

September 10, 2021
Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

In a recent column, Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan writes about the major report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which found that the persistent denialism and widespread inaction on the part of many nations and global corporations over decades has set in motion an irreversible sequence that will result in the planet's warming "intensifying over the next 30 years." Following are letters to the editor responding to Horan's column. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan's reflection on climate surprised me. It surprised me that he is surprised at the apathy exhibited about this critical subject.

When we have a society that now will sacrifice their children rather than listen to science, we are at the bottom of the barrel. When we are all struggling to live because there are wars over water or we need oxygen to breathe, there may be some believers but only in crisis management mode or realization that even the almighty dollar cannot buy us out of this.

God made us stewards of this beautiful earth. Is this how we say thanks?

JANE FRANCISCO

Charlotte, North Carolina



***

Unfortunately, this article does little to advance the issue of climate change, but instead carries a sanctimonious tone that is heavy on finger pointing and light on remedies.

Given the complexity and history of failed global consensus on how to stave off the earth's rising temperature, I do not agree that global climate change supersedes all other issues. Getting access to abundant fresh water in third world countries or working to end human trafficking are more immediate, dire, and achievable goals to name just a couple urgent global needs.

World governments' record of failure and corruption are easy to see, so continuing to point fingers at the lack of global political will is futile at best.

For most of us, start with yourself and your family and how you live your life. Be an example of climate awareness to others. I certainly hope that Horan himself leads a near carbon neutral life.

DAVE HICKIN

Brecksville, Ohio

***

In answer to the question Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan poses, the short response would be — empower women! Church leaders need to restore the values of the sacred feminine and begin to truthfully acknowledge that most of the crises we are now being confronted with, and are often in denial about, including climate change, are the outcome of patriarchal, power-based, male-dominated structures.

Empower women! Ordain them. Allow them to participate in leadership and decision-making processes. Allow ourselves to address these issues with the eye and wisdom of the heart women's perspectives can restore to us, and will lead us towards the pursuit of the greater good, the well-being of our neighbor and our planet.

If Pope Francis and the church at large were able to connect the dots here, model true regard for feminine presence, and act to fully elevate the status of women, healing and much needed balance for our world would ensue. Perhaps the more significant question Horan could ask us would be: What would it take for Francis and the hierarchical church to comprehend the urgency of this matter for human survival?

CLAREJULIAN CARBONE

Salt Lake City, Utah

Advertisement

***

Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan's commentary reflects several others seen or heard in the media recently, since the issue of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report. Is it so hard to imagine that, like the childhood monster under the bed, the predictions are so terrifying that the average person cannot do other than pretend that nothing is there? The mind thinks of solutions such as solar energy, wind power, etc., but for the majority of the population with little or no scientific background, there is no inkling of how to bring this about.

Instead of scolding, it may be more productive to suggest an effective way of proceeding — e.g. everyone recycles but that seems to have had little impact.

Some ideas that might bring about change could be helpful.

MARY ELLISON

Williams Lake, British Columbia

***

Franciscan Fr. Daniel P. Horan anguishes over "peoples' refusal to accept the truth of climate change." I offer this advice: Let Horan and all of us Catholics work to bring around our own. There are so many resources from Popes St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and of course, Pope Francis, to the international Laudato Si' Movement and the Catholic Climate Covenant, together with the leadership of certain Catholic universities.

However, I've been drawing on these resources at least since the 1990 "World Day of Peace" message of John Paul, only to find they that all these papal warnings are ignored.

Today, as I write this, I was told by a man coming out of Sunday Mass: "I don't need to hear about climate change. I have all I need right here in my parish bulletin." That bulletin, along with information from the pastoral center, never offers information about climate change.

Bishops of my diocese, and many other U.S. dioceses are culpable. Please go after them, Fr. Horan. I'll send my bishop a copy of that column of yours.

(Fr.) BERNARD SURVIL

Olean, New York

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts and ideas, reactions and responses to letters@ncronline.org. The editor will collect them, curate them and publish a sampling in Letters to the Editor online or in our print edition.

We cannot publish everything. We will do our best to represent the full range of letters received. Here are the rules:

- Letters to the editor should be submitted to letters@ncronline.org.
- Letters to the editor should be limited to 250 words.
- Letters must include your name, street address, city, state and zip code. We will publish your name and city, state, but not your full address.
- If the letter refers to a specific article published at ncronline.org, please send in the headline or the link of the article.
- Please include a daytime telephone number where we can reach you. We will not publish your phone number. It may be used for verification.
- We can't guarantee publication of all letters, but you can be assured that your submission will receive careful consideration.
- Published letters may be edited for length and style.
- Letters containing misinformation or misleading content without correct sourcing will not be published.

This story appears in the **Your thoughts** feature series. View the full series.