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With updates, bishops' 1981 message on energy could have renewed impact

Our Environment 2014

It was 1981.

Only two years separated the United States from its second oil crisis in a decade. In 1979, Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini had slashed oil shipments to the U.S. to fewer than 500,000 barrels a day. Prices at the pump had soared and gas lines lengthened.

In this context, the Committee on Social Development and World Peace of the U.S. Catholic Conference drafted "Reflections on the Energy Crisis," a statement addressing energy policy.

Though never endorsed by the full assembly, it remains, 33 years later, the most comprehensive engagement by U.S. bishops into the moral implications of energy decisions.

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