



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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GREAT LENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: **Metropolitan Constantine**, Patriarch Pavle, Archimandrite Raphael, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, **Father Paul Stoll**, Father Igor Soroka, Father Deacon Joseph Bulkanowa, Frank & Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Joe Karas, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Angela Wesolosky, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Terry Reinhart, Bernie O'Masta, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Amy, Nigel Daniel, & Daniel Pocura, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 3-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 10-month old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Cindy Rita, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Jeff, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Sophia Grace, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [6th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Peter Paul & Louise May Sprock, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Claudia [Horvath] Gradicheck, Alberta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Tony Notaro, John Holupka, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Denny Doran, Pete Special, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Elisabeth Arasin, and Homer Paul Kline.** We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Our ANNUAL PARISH MEETING will be on Sunday, April 22, after the Obednitsa and Parastas! See John Paouncic if you have anything to add to the agenda.

Please remember ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fourth Grade and Matt’s Second Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Thursday, March 22	Slickville Ecumenical Service First Presbyterian Church—Rev. Linda Steward Speaking	7:00 PM
Sunday, March 25	Divine Liturgy—Saint Basil the Great FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT MARY OF EGYPT VENERABLE THEPHANES THE CONFESSOR OF SIGRAINAE, RIGHTEOUS PHIEAS-GRANDSON OF AARON, SAINT GREGORY DIALOGUS-POPE OF ROME, VENERABLE SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN Tone 8 Hebrews 9:11-14 Mark 10:32-45	10:30 AM
Thursday, March 29	Slickville Ecumenical Service Holy Ghost Orthodox Church—Rev. Carl Jones Speaking	7:00 PM
Saturday, March 31	Obednitsa LAZARUS SATURDAY	10:30 AM
Sunday, April 1	Divine Liturgy—Saint John Chrysostom PALM SUNDAY—ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM MARTYRS CHRYSANTHUS & DARIA & THOSE WITH THEM AT ROME: CLAUDIUS THE TRIBUTE, HIS WIFE HILARIA, SONS JASON & MAURICE, PRESBYTER DIODORU, DEACON MARIANUS, MARTYR PANCHARIUS AT NICODEMIA BLESSING OF PALMS AND PUSSY WILLOWS Philippians: 4:4-9 John 12:1-18	10:30 AM
Wednesday, April 4	HOLY UNCTION	6:00 PM
Thursday, April 5	12 PASSION GOSPELS	6:00 PM
Friday, April 6	PLASCHENYTSIA	7:00 PM
Saturday, April 7	ANNUNCIATION/ANTICIPATION OBEDNTIZA	10:30 AM

PASCHAL NOCTURNES & MATINS

7:00 PM

Sunday, April 8

PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY

10:30 AM

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

Acts 1:1-8

John 1:1-17

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 25 MARCH 2007

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT—SAINT MARY OF EGYPT
VENERABLE THEPHANES THE CONFESSOR OF SIGRAINAE,
RIGHTEOUS PHIEAS-GRANDSON OF AARON, SAINT GREGORY
DIALOGUS-POPE OF ROME, VENERABLE SYMEON THE NEW
THEOLOGIAN**

TROPARION—TONE 8

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O mother,
For you took up the Cross and followed Christ.
By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away;
But to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal.
Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Mary,
Rejoices with the angels.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 3

Having been a sinful woman,
You became, through repentance, a Bride of Christ.
Having attained angelic life,
You defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross!
Therefore, O most glorious Mary,
You are a Bride of the Kingdom!

PROKEIMENON—TONES 4 AND 8

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

PEOPLE: **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

READER: In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!

PEOPLE: **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

READER: God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel!

PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

READER: Pray and make your vows.

PEOPLE: Before the Lord our God!

The Elevation of the Cross and the Veneration of the Holy Cross

On September 14th, for centuries, when the feast of the Elevation of the Cross was celebrated in cathedrals, the bishop would take his place in the center of the church and, surrounded by a great assembly of clergy, would majestically raise the cross high over the crowd and bless the worshippers on all four sides of the church while the choir thundered in response, "Lord have mercy!" This was the celebration of Christian empire, an empire born under the sign of the Cross on that day when Emperor Constantine saw a vision of the Cross high in the sky and heard the words "In this sign conquer..." This is the feast of Christianity's triumph over kingdoms, cultures and civilizations, the feast of that Christian world which now lies in ruins, still crumbling before our very eyes.

Yes, the solemn, ancient rite will once again be celebrated this year. The choir will still be joyfully singing that "the Cross is the strength of kings, the Cross is the beauty of the universe." But today, the tumultuous metropolis surrounding the church does not participate in that hidden triumph and is completely unconnected to it. Its millions of inhabitants will go on with their normal lives and their usual ups and downs, interests, joys, and sorrows, with no reference whatsoever to the goings-on within the church building. Why then do we keep repeating words about universal triumph, and singing over and over again that the Cross is unconquerable? Sadly, we have to admit that many, many Christians are unable to answer this question. They are accustomed to seeing the church in exile and on the margins of life, exiled from culture, life, schools and from everywhere. Many Christians are content and undisturbed when the authorities contemptuously allow them to 'observe their rites" as long as they are quiet and obedient, and do not interfere in the building of a world where there is no Christ, no faith, and no prayer. Those tired Christians have almost forgotten what Christ said on the night he went to the Cross: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

It seems to me that we continue to celebrate the Elevation of the Cross and repeat ancient words of victory not simply to commemorate an old battle that was won, or to recall a past that no longer exists, but in order to reflect more deeply on the meaning of the word "victory" for Christian faith. It may be that only now, stripped as we are of outward power and glory, government support, untold wealth, and of all apparent

symbols of victory, are we capable of understanding that all of this was, perhaps, not genuine victory. Yes, the cross raised above the crowds was in those days covered with gold and silver and adorned with precious stones. Yet neither gold, nor silver, nor precious stones can erase the original meaning of the Cross as an instrument of humiliation, torture, and execution on which a man was nailed, a man rejected by all, gasping from pain and thirst. Do we have the courage to ask ourselves: if all those Christian kingdoms and cultures died, if victory was replaced by defeat, was it not because we Christians became blind to the ultimate meaning and genuine content of Christianity's most important symbol? We decided that gold and silver would be allowed to eclipse this meaning. And we decided as well that God desires our worship of the past.

To honor the Cross, to raise it up, to sing of Christ's victory: does this not mean, above all, to believe in the Crucified One and to believe that the Cross is a sign of staggering defeat? For only because it is a defeat, and only to the measure it is accepted as defeat, does the Cross become victory and triumph. No, Christ did not enter the world to win outward victories. He was offered a kingdom, but refused. And at the very moment of his betrayal to death, He said: "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Mt 26:53). Yet, Christ was never more a king than when He walked to Golgotha carrying his own cross on his shoulders while the hate-filled and mocking crowd surrounded him. His kingship and power were never more obvious than when Pilate brought him before the crowd, dressed in purple, condemned to a criminal's death, a crown of thorns on his head, and Pilate telling the raging mob: "Behold your king." Only here can the whole mystery of Christianity be seen, for Christianity's victory resides within the joyful faith that here, through this rejected, crucified and condemned man, God's love began to illumine the world and a Kingdom was opened which no one has power to shut.

Each of us, however, must accept Christ and receive him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our hope. Otherwise, outward victories are all meaningless. Perhaps we needed this outward defeat of the Christian world. Perhaps we needed poverty and rejection to purge our faith of its earthly pride and of its trust in outward power and victory, to purify our vision of the Cross of Christ, which is raised high above us even when neither we nor the world can see it. In spite of everything, the Cross is still elevated, exalted and triumphant. "The Cross is the beauty of the universe." For in whatever darkness people find themselves, and however great the outward triumph of evil in this world, the heart still knows and hears the words, "Take courage, I have overcome the world."

[Taken from, "Celebration of Faith" Sermons, Vol. 2, "The Church Year" by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann, 1994. Available at: 800-204-book.]

Jerusalem patriarch is defiant--06-Mar-07—Kathimerini

Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem will not negotiate with the Israeli government over its apparent refusal to officially recognize him, Patriarchate sources told Kathimerini yesterday.

Theophilos was elected as the head of the Orthodox Church in Jerusalem in August 2005 but Israel has yet to recognize him. Last month, Israel asked its Supreme Court for a two-month extension after the Patriarch took legal action against the government.

Sources claimed that the Israeli government has asked Theophilos to approve the transfer by his predecessor, Irenaios, of Patriarchate property in Jerusalem to Jewish investors before Tel Aviv approves his election.

Orthodox clerics ousted Irenaios in May 2005 after reports of deals for several prime buildings in Jerusalem's Old City. Theophilos has made it clear he does not back the deal to lease the Church's land.

Jordan and the Palestinian Authority have approved Theophilos's appointment but Israel's nod is also needed so he can be legally recognized as the patriarch.

WCC to launch new effort for peace as Palestinians and Israelis mark 40 years of occupation—09-Mar-07—WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is launching an international, inter-church advocacy initiative for peace in Israel and Palestine – the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum - at a conference June 17-21, 2007, in Jordan.

The initiative is a major step toward WCC's goal of mobilizing churches around the world for peace with justice in the Middle East. Its launch will take place during this year's observances of 40 years under occupation for Palestinians. The plan was approved by the WCC Executive Committee in early March.

WCC member churches and related organizations from different regions of the world and especially churches from the Middle East will take part in the inaugural conference. The forum they launch will coordinate existing church advocacy work and promote new joint efforts for peace.

Middle Eastern churches at the meeting will lay out their expectations of a just peace and their experiences of conflict. Churches from other regions will share lessons learned during other deeply rooted conflicts, for example, in South Africa, Sudan or Sri Lanka. The churches together will launch the new ecumenical advocacy forum for peace in Israel and Palestine.

At the time of the conference churches and civil society groups around the world will be marking the start of the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and

the 40 years of suffering, dislocation and loss that ensued. The occupation and its violence have also caused massive emigration, destabilized the region, generated strife in distant places and kept Israel from achieving security through peace.

Although their living roots in the region go back to Bible times, WCC member churches in the Middle East increasingly link their prospects for a continuing presence and witness in the region today to a just and lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The 'greening' of institutional Christianity

By John L Allen Jr --Weekly Created Dec 15 2006 - 07:57

All Things Catholic by John L. Allen, Jr.

Friday, Dec. 15, 2006 - Vol. 6, No. 15

When Pope Benedict XVI and Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople met recently, the encounter was spun in a variety of ways: As an effort to reunite Eastern and Western Christianity; As an attempt to forge a united Christian front vis-à-vis Islam; Even as a bid to pool resources to combat runaway secularism in Europe.

What the meeting was not generally seen as -- though it easily could have been -- was an encounter between two outspoken environmentalists, struggling to stir the conscience of the world about a mounting ecological crisis.

While environmentalism has long been a cause more associated with the secular left, the increasingly intense engagement of both the patriarch and the pope, who cannot by any stretch of the imagination be seen as avant garde figures, suggests a broad "greening" of institutional Christianity.

Bartholomew I has become known as "the Green Patriarch" for his environmental leadership. More than a decade ago, Bartholomew first announced on an island in the Aegean Sea that pollution and other attacks on the environment should be considered sins.

In a widely-quoted Venice address in 2002, Bartholomew I urged Christians "to act as priests of creation in order to reverse the descending spiral of ecological degradation." Towards that end, he did not mince words.

"We are to practice a voluntary self-limitation in our consumption of food and natural resources," Bartholomew said bluntly. "Each of us is called to make the crucial distinction between what we want and what we need. Only through such self-denial, through our willingness sometimes to forgo and to say, 'no' or 'enough,' will we rediscover our true human place in the universe."

Less noticed, but arguably even more consequential in the long run, is the fashion in which Benedict XVI has likewise been finding his voice.

In July, Benedict sent a message to Bartholomew, in which the pope urged a new awareness of "the intrinsic link between development, human needs and the safeguarding of creation."

During a Sunday Angelus address last August, ahead of the Catholic church's "Defense of Creation" day, the pope's rhetoric became even sharper. Slamming problems such as smog, pollution, deforestation and the greenhouse effect, Benedict said such environmental degradation is unsustainable, and takes a special toll on "the poor of the earth."

"In dialogue with Christians of different denominations, we should commit ourselves to taking care of creation, without depleting its resources and sharing them in solidarity," the pope said.

Picking up the new tone, *L'Osservatore Romano*, the official Vatican newspaper, carried an editorial which asserted that ecological crises pose "a bigger global threat than terrorism."

"Unless effective action is taken, the Earth will inexorably head towards death," *L'Osservatore* warned, adding that "thousands of people are already dying each day" because of environmental problems such as unhygienic living conditions and a widespread lack of drinking water.

Just this week, the Vatican released Benedict XVI's message for the World Day of Peace, marked each year on Jan. 1. Environmental concerns figured prominently.

"Humanity, if it truly desires peace, must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology," Benedict wrote. "Experience shows that disregard for the environment always harms human coexistence, and vice versa."

Benedict went on to warn that "the destruction of the environment, its improper or selfish use, and the violent hoarding of the earth's resources cause grievances, conflicts and wars, precisely because they are the consequences of an inhumane concept of development."

Benedict pointed to growing tensions surrounding energy supplies, worrying that without an equitable solution, developing nations will be even more tempted to overtax their natural resources.

Given this growing convergence between pope and patriarch, it's no surprise that the two men addressed environmental concerns in their Nov. 30 Common Declaration in Istanbul.

"In the face of the great threats to the natural environment, we want to express our concern at the negative consequences for humanity and for the whole of creation which can result from economic and technological progress that does not know its limits," Benedict and Bartholomew said.

"As religious leaders, we consider it one of our duties to encourage and to support all efforts made to protect God's creation, and to bequeath to future generations a world in which they will be able to live."

Of course, neither man arrived at these convictions *ex nihilo* they build upon the teachings of their predecessors and traditions with deep roots in their churches, which in turn reflect the clear Biblical mandate to be good stewards of creation.

Yet not so long ago, Christian theologians and ministers working on ecological issues were looked upon with a certain suspicion. People worried, on the one hand, about a creeping divinization of nature (think Teilhard de Chardin), on the other about a denial of the unique status of the human person in the order of creation (think Peter Singer). More generally, there was a cultural gap between the Birkenstocks-wearing, anarchy-inclined ethos of the environmental movement, and anything that passed for conventional Christianity.

Today, things are different, with senior churchmen openly speaking the language of environmental activism. At the 2005 Synod of Bishops in Rome, for example, the link between the Eucharist and ecological concern surfaced with surprising frequency. "Climactic change presents a serious threat to world peace. It is an authentic 'sign of the times' that demands of us an 'ecological conversion,'" said Archbishop Pedro Ricardo Barreto Jimeno of Huancayo, Peru, on Oct. 4.

"As 'fruit of the earth', the bread and the wine represent the creation which is entrusted to us by our Creator," Barreto Jimeno said. "In Huancayo, the air, the ground and the basin of the river Mantaro are seriously affected by contamination. The Eucharist commits us to working so that the bread and wine be fruit of 'a fertile, pure and uncontaminated land.'"

Bishop Gabriel Peñate Rodríguez, apostolic vicar of Izabal in Guatemala, invoked precisely the same image.

"Guatemala is a country menaced by mineral exploitation," Peñate Rodríguez said. "We also hope that the bread that is converted in the body of the Lord and the wine which is converted into his blood may be fruit of a fertile, pure and uncontaminated land."

The leadership of Benedict and Bartholomew, who guide the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics and 250 million Orthodox, suggests in the clearest possible fashion that such environmental awareness has entered the Christian mainstream. To employ an ecological metaphor, the question now is whether such ideas will trickle down to the grass-roots, mobilizing a potentially vast corps of spiritually motivated activists to change the global calculus.

If so, Bartholomew and Benedict may well wind up as catalysts in a Christian version of the "Green Revolution."

Ecology makes the Catholic mega-trend list

All Things Catholic by John L. Allen, Jr.

Friday, Mar. 2, 2007 - Vol. 6, No. 26

Perhaps the week in which Al Gore turned green into gold by winning an Oscar for "An Inconvenient Truth" offers an appropriate moment to say that I've finally been persuaded to include "Ecology and Natural Resources" in my list of the top ten "Mega-Trends" shaping global Catholicism.

The original plan for my forthcoming book, which I rolled out in columns in December (See Dec. 22, [Ten mega-trends shaping the Catholic church](#). and Dec. 29, [The top five 'missing mega-trends' shaping Catholicism](#)), was to treat environmental concerns under the broader rubric of globalization. It's worth recalling that the idea is to identify those forces which today *really are* most important in shaping the church's future, not those which *should be* most important.

At that level, I was already aware of several good arguments in favor of singling out the environment, including: 1) a growing "green streak" in official church teaching, including John Paul II's 2001 call for "ecological conversion"; 2) mounting scientific data about the seriousness of environmental threats; 3) the likelihood that water shortages may prove among the most geopolitically destabilizing forces in the 21st century; 4) the prospect that liberal Catholic energies increasingly will be diverted away from efforts to reform the structures or teachings of the church, which will bear little fruit in a period of strong emphasis on Catholic identity, towards *ad extra* matters such as environmental justice.

But I hesitated, in part because I didn't yet see evidence of systematic Catholic activism or official leadership on the environment on a scale that bears comparison with the energies coursing today around Islam, or bioethics. One could make a better case for the environment as a mega-trend in Orthodoxy, it seemed to me, given the way Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople has thrown himself into the cause, including highly publicized boat trips with the media down rivers in Europe and South America. For his efforts, Bartholomew has been dubbed the "Green Patriarch." It's hard to find an analog on the Catholic side.

I spoke this week with Walt Grazer, who manages the Environmental Justice Program for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and who conceded that the questions raised by Islam and bioethics have an immediacy for Catholics that environmental debates sometimes lack. He also candidly acknowledged that he doesn't yet see the front-burner concern among the U.S. bishops on the environment that other issues often elicit. (That notwithstanding, Grazer strongly believes the "greening" of the church is a mega-trend; more on that in a moment.)

Moreover, I was impressed by a couple of obvious "natural limits" to the extent to which Catholicism is every likely to embrace the modern environmental movement.

One is philosophical and theological. Some environmental gurus soften the distinction between humanity and nature to an extent that can be difficult to reconcile with Christian orthodoxy; controversies surrounding the former Dominican Matthew Fox's "Creation Spirituality," for example, illustrate that problem.

The other natural limit is political. It's a fact of life that many secular environmentalists embrace positions on other issues, such as population control, that are at odds with Catholic teaching. This has not escaped the attention of Catholic critics of the "greens."

To take one example, Italian journalist Antonio Gaspari, who directs a master's program in environmental sciences at the Legionaries of Christ-sponsored Regina Apostolorum in Rome, has co-authored a two-volume work called *The Lies of the Environmentalists*. Its basic argument is that things are much better than commonly described by environmental alarmists, and that their "catastrophism" serves as a smokescreen for radical philosophical notions such as those propounded by the utilitarian philosopher and animal rights activist Peter Singer.

In the United States, a body called the Interfaith Council for Environmental Stewardship put out its "Cornwall Declaration" in 1999, following a meeting in West Cornwall, Conn. Catholic signatories included Fr. Richard John Neuhaus, Robert Royal, Fr. Robert Sirico, and Fr. J. Michael Beers. Though affirming the legitimacy of environmental concern, the statement flagged several core issues for environmentalists, including global warming, overpopulation, and rampant species loss, as "unfounded or undue concerns." More broadly, it warned of setting economic development in opposition to good stewardship, describing that as a false dichotomy which would, in their view, keep the poor in misery.

Just as one more illustration, on Feb. 18, Cardinal George Pell of Sydney, Australia, published a column in the Australian *Sunday Telegraph* arguing that on matters of climate change, "some zealots have been presenting extreme scenarios to frighten us," and that "the science is more complicated than the propaganda." Pell cites a laundry-list of data suggesting that the evidence for global warming is not clear-cut, or that its dangers have been exaggerated. Pell does not link this to any broader political agenda, but he leaves little doubt that he's not persuaded of environmentalism as a "mega-trend."

Since Gaspari, Neuhaus and Pell represent important constituencies within Catholicism, it's not unreasonable to be wary about how far the church may go down this road.

Then why elevate ecology as a "mega-trend"? What put it over the top for me is not so much anything happening in church circles, but rather recent developments in American secular politics.

On Feb. 13, Sen. John McCain co-authored an op/ed piece in *The Boston Globe* with Senator Joseph Lieberman. The two men wrote: "There is now a broad consensus in this country, and indeed in the world, that global warming is happening, that it is a serious problem, and that humans are causing it. The recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ... puts the final nail in denial's coffin about the problem of global warming."

One day before, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani appeared at a press conference in Simi Valley, Calif., where reporters asked him about "An Inconvenient Truth." His surprising response was that he didn't care for the movie -- not because it went too far, but because it didn't go far enough.

"I do believe there is global warming," Giuliani said. "The overwhelming majority of scientists believe there's significant human cause that's making it more difficult, making it worse."

In that regard, Giuliani said, Gore's movie should have spent more time treating potential solutions, such as carbon sequestration, the use of "clean coal," and ethanol. The reason it didn't, Giuliani implied, is because those steps are opposed by "special interests" such as the oil industry.

"I didn't detect the same zeal to take on those special interests as in explaining the problem," he said of the Gore movie.

Given that any Democrat who might win in 2008 is likely to pursue a much more ambitious environmental program than the Bush administration, these declarations from the leading Republicans make it almost a near-certainty that 2008 will mark a transition in American policy. Since the United States is the leading producer of greenhouse gases, and since its policies, for better or worse, often set the global tone, this means that the world is likely poised for a new period of political activism.

What this implies, it seems to me, is that today's ecological sensitivity within Catholicism, however nascent it remains, will soon encounter a political climate which encourages its rapid development. It's one thing to work on issues with no meaningful possibility of doing anything about them in the broader culture, but when a strong political wave crests, it stimulates even inchoate movements to go "mass market." That was the case with Catholic anti-nuclear activism in the early 1980s, for example, which was energized by the "nuclear freeze" movement, and which influenced, among other things, the 1983 pastoral letter of the U.S. bishops, "The Challenge of Peace."

In a 1983 lecture at Fordham University, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin acknowledged that part of the groundwork for the pastoral had been laid by a "new moment" in American political debate, in which nuclear policy was "open to reassessment and redirection." The bishops, Bernardin said, both helped to shape that "new moment," and had been in turn influenced by it.

Grazer told me that he sees much the same landscape today on ecological questions.

"When I started doing this in 1993, I was pretty lonely," he recalled, referring to the launch of the Environmental Justice Program at the USCCB. "No one else worldwide seemed to be doing this stuff. I knew pretty much everything that was going on."

Today, Grazer said, Catholic activism on environmental issues has grown to such an extent -- at the diocesan and parish levels and especially within religious orders -- that he simply can't keep track of it all. He pointed to efforts

among women's congregations, for example, to "green" their facilities. At the official level, he cited a recent environmental network developed by the church in New Jersey, a pastoral letter on emissions from the bishops of New York, and another pastoral from bishops in the Northwest on the Columbia River.

I happened to talk to Grazer the morning after he had addressed a crowd of 250 young people at the University of Notre Dame. He said that he finds a special zeal for the environment among the young, and not just among the usual liberal activist suspects. At the bishops' conference, Grazer also works on relations with Evangelical Christians, and told me he's been surprised at how ecologically-minded conservative Evangelical youth often are.

In part, Grazer said, this activism is being driven by the changing political climate. He called it a "moment of evangelization."

Grazer is hardly blind to the fact that some sectors of the environmental movement operate out of a worldview alien to Catholic thought, if not actively hostile to it. For him, however, that's all the more reason to work alongside them.

"We have to be in this debate," he said, "because if we're not, somebody else is going to define it. We have to have our oar in the water."

Grazer said he believes common cause is possible, at least on specific issues such as combating greenhouse gases. The key, he said, is to "chunk things down," putting broader philosophical disagreements to the side.

Grazer also said he's aware some constituencies within the church may resist that "chunking down," especially when it comes to choices that seem to pit environmental protection against economic development. But he's convinced that "historical forces" as well as the "physical reality of the world" mean "the train has already left the station."

Whether Grazer's optimism is entirely on the mark remains to be seen, but the stars do seem aligned for a "boom cycle" for the church's green wing, and that by itself probably adds up to a mega-trend

One year during winter, Gregorios, the orderly of Lavra (on Mt. Athos), together with one of the brothers, put in a knapsack some bread, wine, and other food supplies and headed for the cell of the holy Maximos. It had snowed heavily and all the paths were covered. There were no human footprints anywhere to be seen. The holy one was sitting in his hut, which was made of sticks and dry brush. He was totally isolated and no one knew how long he had been without food.

When with great difficulty they reached the hut, they entered and, to their astonishment saw something entirely unexpected: a loaf of bread still hot and smelling as if it had just come from the oven. They looked around with curiosity to see if there was any fire. There was nothing. This bread had come from heaven, a heavenly consolation to the Kafsokalyvitan, that "bird of the air."

In great reverence they gathered around the mysterious bread, full of wonder at this manna for some ascetics in the inconsolable desert, and then fell on their knees before the holy one, begging him to give them a small piece for a blessing.

"I will give you some," he said, "but under this agreement: that you will not say anything of what you have seen to anybody until I die."

from An Athonite Gerontikon

Abba Theodoulos said to me: "One day I went up from the monastery to the Holy City (Jerusalem) to venerate the Holy Cross. After I had performed my devotions, as I was coming out of the ante-chamber of the church of the Holy Cross, I saw a brother standing at the door, neither going in nor coming out. I also saw two ugly crows flying in his face and brushing their wings against his eyes, effectively preventing him from entering the shrine. Knowing them to be demons, I said to him, "Tell me, brother, why do you hesitate in the doorway itself and not go in?" He said, "Forgive me, abba. I have conflicting emotions, sir. One urges me to enter and to venerate the honorable Cross, but the other says, "No, make an excuse and make your devotions some other time." When I heard this, I took him by the hand and led him into the shrine; the crows immediately fled from him. I got him to venerate the Holy Cross and the Holy Sepulchre of Christ our God, then I dismissed him in peace." Abba Theodoulos said these things to me because he could see that I was much distracted by my duties and he perceived that I was neglecting my prayers.

John Moschus, Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow) 105

Fasting is wonderful because it tramples our sins like a dirty weed, while it cultivates and raises truth like a flower. St. John Chrysostom

Another of the old men questioned Amma Theodora saying, "At the resurrection of the dead, how shall we rise?" She replied, "As pledge, example, and as prototype we have Him who died for us and is risen, Christ our God."

The Triple Bar Cross of The Orthodox Church



- *The top bar is the title-board which Pilate ordered hung over Christ's head on the Cross. This board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.*
- *The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed.
The slanted bar is the foot-rest.*
- *The angle of the slant represents how the thief on Christ's left sank into hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the wise thief on his right, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance.*
- *For more information on The Orthodox Church : <http://www.antiochian.org>
<http://www.fatheralexander.org> <http://www.oca.org> <http://www.orthodoxinfo.com>*