

RE home learning task 2-

Pope for the day

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Task: prepare a papal statement that explains what the Church has to say about the issue. Their statement should include:

- a description of the problem and some of its causes
- how the problem affects people's lives, especially the poorest
- what our attitude should be to this problem and to those affected
- a quote from a Gospel story that backs up their argument (suggest a story of Jesus talking to/helping non-Jews, a story of Jesus feeding the hungry, Jesus speaking about love, or a story Jesus told about the end of time)
- a sentence summarising their message and a call to action.

This is a cry out to all my brothers and sisters in the eyes of God. We have become blind toward our home dying before our eyes, our world is screaming in pain, screaming out for help, for change and yet we ignore it – we have allowed climate change and global warming to unravel in front of us and we have stood by and let it get increasingly worse. We have caused this; our selfishness and carelessness, if we continue like this, we will burn our fossil fuels until we burn the earth to the ground, we will cut down the trees until they seem like a distant memory – turning the earth into nothing but an ugly ghost of what it used to be.

The truth is, we can continue to ignore this for as long as we want but that does not mean it is going to stop and it is going to continue to affect us whilst we “put the problem to one side”. Climate change affects us in many ways, but one way is it affects our health- the fossil fuels we insist on burning are uncleanly and they can lead to respiratory diseases like asthma in children and adults; air pollution kills an estimation of seven million people across the world every year. We trap heat into our planet and those carbon emissions damage the body and mind in other ways – warmer temperatures are linked to a 2% increase in mental health issues.

In addition to this, climate change affects our homes, many living coastal communities are at more and more risk of flooding due to rising sea levels. The added volume of water creeping up coastlines slowly swallows land and homes. Lastly, the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is changing the composition of fruits and vegetables that we eat – causing them to be less nutritious. Harvard researchers are saying if we do not reduce our carbon emissions, this could mean big problems for our diet.

These affects are affecting people who having everything they need in life but what about those that live in poverty? How does it affect them?

Natural disasters are becoming increasingly frequent and destructive, the damages caused can be nearly impossible for families living in poverty to overcome. With climate events worsening, people are also threatened by more gradual changes like climbing temperatures and decreasing rainfall – droughts alone have affected more than one billion people in the last decade and it has caused great damage in the agricultural industry – which is the main/primary source of food and income in many countries. With situations growing more and more severe, food shortages could mean that families are forced to leave their homes and migrate to other countries.

As Catholics, we have a duty to take care of the world that God has created for us and so our attitude should reflect that duty. It is our responsibility to fix the world we have broken. If we really love and respect our God, we will do just that. In Catholic social teaching, the principle of Stewardship by definition, is imploring us to protect our world against ourselves, to make decisions that benefit it instead of destroying it, so why aren't we doing that? Why aren't we deciding to protect the earth for God? Essentially, it's the same as someone giving you a delicate birthday present; you wouldn't destroy it before the person that gave you it's eyes – so why are we doing that to God? God gave us a birthday present (the world from the day we were born) so why are we destroying it as he watches from above?

Not only do we have a duty to protect the world, but we also have a duty to respect, protect and aid each other. We are all equal and we must help those who have been affected by the world's selfishness – in Catholic social teaching, the principle of subsidiarity is telling us to do just that, to help others; not to the point where they are suffocated but to the point that they are supported enough, and not just left to “fix their own problems.”

In the Bible, Jeremiah 12:4 reads: How long will the land mourn and the grass of every field wither? For the evil of those who dwell in it the beasts and the birds are swept away, because they said, “He will not see our latter end.” This represents our very state of mind – we stand by and let the land, the world around us die. Yes - we should have faith in our God, but we should not rely on him to fix our problems because that's just being lazy. Sometimes we have to fix our own problems; we have to fix our mistakes of poisoning the world, polluting it not God.

We must fix our environment, we must; not anyone else - us.

