

## Why I Am Catholic

Our care and concern for the environment.

Put simply, if we don't take care of our air and water and other natural resources, we will not live well and eventually will perish.

"Subduing and exercising dominion do not mean abusing the earth. Rather, as the second creation story explains, God settled humankind upon earth to be its steward—to cultivate and care for it." (Gn 2:15) (*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*) "As Pope John Paul II says, 'simplicity, moderation, and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few.'"

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) started the Environmental Justice Program in 1993. "EJP seeks to **educate** and **motivate** Catholics to a deeper reverence and respect for God's creation, and to **engage** parishes and dioceses in activities aimed at dealing with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor. . . Its distinctively Catholic foundation lies in Pope John Paul II's 1990 *World Day of Peace* message and the U.S. Catholic bishops' statement, *Renewing the Earth*, issued in 1991."

"Sustainable economic policies, that is, practices that reduce current stresses on natural systems and are consistent with sound environmental policy in the long term, must be put into effect. At the same time, the world economy must come to include hundreds of millions of poor families who live at the edge of survival. . . Nature is not, in Catholic teaching, merely a field to exploit at will or a museum piece to be preserved at all costs. We are not gods, but stewards of the earth." (*USCCB*)

We at St. Clement's can do many things to make a difference. When we updated our bathrooms last year, we put in low-flush toilets that reduce our impact on the environment and are more cost-effective. This year we will be starting a parish recycling program.

Locally, there are many recycling opportunities: trash pickup companies, local schools, the County Landfill, the recycling center near Calhoun High School, and recycling companies. We can recycle white paper, newspaper, glass, aluminum, plastic, rubber tires, etc.

I still remember the T.V. commercial in the seventies of the Native American Indian looking over an area of trash with tears running down his face. Let's do our part to keep our land, air, and water as God would want it.