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Care for God's Creation

News from the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project

Valley air pollution worst in years

By Alex Breitler, Stockton Record, December 29, 2011: A surge in air pollution across the San Joaquin Valley [made] this a December to remember for air quality officials - or, perhaps, one they would rather forget.

One federal pollution standard had been shattered across various Valley locations for 25 days in a row as of [December 28]. That's the longest streak since late 2002, according to state air quality data... This month alone, San Joaquin County residents have been prohibited from lighting up their fireplaces on 15 days. Compare that to last year, when the ban was in place only seven days over the entire winter...

"We haven't seen this spell of stagnant dry weather since 2000, and we haven't seen air quality levels as poor in years," [said Jaime Holt, San Joaquin air district spokeswoman]. The air district says it's trying to protect public health. When inhaled, the tiny particles contained in wood smoke might embed in your lungs, or enter your blood stream, worsening asthma or other respiratory problems. At worst, they can cause premature death. More at:

http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20111229/A_NEWS/112290312/-1/a_news14

Opportunities in the New Year

Catholic Charities seeks a half-time bilingual Spanish speaking outreach coordinator for the Environmental Justice Project. To view job description, go to www.ccstockton.org and click the Environmental Justice tab.

Mono Lake Committee has various paid summer positions available for interns, bookstore assistants and outdoor educators. Go to: <http://www.monolake.org/mlc/jobs>

St. Mary's High School Band Boosters will help your parish or school organize and publicize an e-waste recycling fundraiser with local, environmentally conscious Onsite Electronics Recycling. Contact Elisa Moberly for details: ermoberly@sjgov.org or 209-468-3066.

We receive the light,
then we impart it.
Thus we repair the
world.

- Kabbalah

In this issue:

- San Joaquin air pollution worst in years
- New opportunities
- Bishop Blaire praises EPA's new rules on mercury
- Lent 4.5
- Spirituality + Science equals Care for Creation



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Brighter Future for Cleaner Air

US Conference of Catholic Bishops' website, Dec. 21, 2011:

"A new national standard to reduce mercury and toxic air pollution from power plants is an important step forward to protect the health of all people, especially unborn babies and young children, from harmful exposure to dangerous air pollutants," said the U.S. bishops' domestic policy chairman [and Stockton Diocese Bishop Stephen Blaire] in response to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) announcement of a new rule limiting hazardous air pollution.

Recently finalized Mercury and Air Toxics Standards will reduce toxic air pollution from coal- and oil-fired power plants that are the largest source of mercury pollution in the United States. Many of these pollutants are linked to health problems, particularly in children before and after birth, the poor and the elderly.

"The bishops welcome this important move by the Administration to adopt long-awaited standards to reduce hazardous air pollution and protect children's health," said Bishop Blaire. "In the end it just makes good sense to want to have clean air for our children and families to breathe and for future generations." Read Bishop Blaire's statement: <http://www.usccb.org/news/2011/11-247.cfm>

Christian Simplicity: Planning for Lent 4.5

Passionist Earth & Spirit Center announces its Lenten program resource: "Lent 4.5: Christian Simplicity." The materials encourage participants to pray and learn about ways to protect God's creation, embrace Gospel justice, and nurture their own spirituality. Check out the website and see the video explaining the seven-week program at: <http://www.earthandspiritcenter.org/lent45/>

Spirituality + Science = Care for God's Creation

If you missed "Spirituality + Science = Care for Creation, Retrieving a Franciscan Cosmology for Climate Conservation," a webinar by Brother Keith Warner, OFM, it is now available on the Franciscan Action Network website: www.franciscanaction.org and Brother Keith's website at Santa Clara University: <http://webpages.scu.edu/ftp/kwarner/franciscan.htm>

About the Stockton Diocese Environmental Justice Project...

Since 2005, the Environmental Justice Project has worked "to educate and motivate Catholics to a deeper reverence and respect for God's creation, and to engage local parishes in activities aimed at dealing with environmental problems, particularly as they affect the poor." The Project brings a unique Catholic voice to the public policy debate in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

Websites to Care for Creation:

**Catholic Charities, Stockton
Diocese:** www.ccstockton.org

**National Catholic Rural Life
Conference:** www.ncrlc.com

Catholic Climate Covenant:
www.catholicclimatecovenant.org
