

Laurie Gagne, of South Burlington, is Adjunct Professor of Peace and Justice at St. Michael's College in Colchester (Formerly Director of the Edmundite Center for Peace and Justice at St. Michael's). She earned a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Pomona College and a doctoral degree in systematic theology from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana.

Why did you agree to serve on this committee?

Ever since reading *Laudato Si*, the Pope's encyclical on the environment, I have considered caring for the earth to be integral to Christian discipleship. Serving on the Year of Creation Committee is one way that I can fulfill that responsibility.

What specific concerns do you have about the wellbeing of the earth, "our common home?"

As someone who has taught about war and peace for many years, I am particularly concerned about the environmental disaster that nuclear war would be. Americans have become complacent about the nuclear threat, but the risk of nuclear war is greater today than it has been since the height of the Cold War. The "nuclear winter" caused by such an exchange would cause famine in many parts of the world.

What message do you want to convey about care of the earth?

I want to convey the idea that we live interdependently with the earth. What contributes to its preservation and renewal benefits us, because, as the Sesame Street song goes, "We are all earthlings." We are here to enjoy the earth and use it respectfully, not exploit it for profit.

How can Vermont Catholics participate in the care of the earth?

I think parishes could be much more intentional about re-cycling, using renewable energy sources, when possible, and incorporating an environmental ethic into their religious education programs.

What do you say to people who do not understand/believe the seriousness of the situation of the earth?

I would encourage them to watch Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*. It vividly illustrates the consequences of climate change in many parts of the world already and drives home the message that caring for the environment is necessary to our survival as a civilization.

What motivates you in your work to protect our earth?

As a mother and grandmother, I want to prevent climate change for the sake of the younger generation. I want to help foster in them an ethos of caring--for the human community and for the earth--instead of consumerism.