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Why did you agree to serve on this committee?

I am long a student and proponent of the Church's 125-year tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. "Laudato Si'" builds upon the themes of solidarity, stewardship, common good, preferential attention to the poor and human dignity in the context of care for our Earth home. I am eager to make this social justice tradition more widely available to the Vermont Catholic community for our collective reflection and spiritual growth.

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

I have had the privilege of spending extended time with impoverished persons who live in inner cities of the United States as well as in Latin American communities. The poor live closer to the environmental degradation of the planet than the rest of us. They experience the impacts of pollution, over-consumption, technological growth and a lack of clean water nearly every day. We are largely insulated from the immediate, detrimental impacts though that trend is changing.

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

As Catholic Christians committed to the values of Jesus, we have a responsibility to ensure that our marginalized brothers and sisters experience their full human dignity and do not live at the mercy of our consumerism and unconscious choices.

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

Carpool with others to events; use only non-toxic cleaners and detergents in your home and insist upon their use at the office; declutter so you have fewer material possessions to maintain; connect children and grandchildren to the realities of their store purchases. One of my son's school assignments was to select his favorite T-shirt, read the label to see where it was made, and then research the factory working conditions in that country; it was quite an eye-opening experience for him.

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

This is a challenging exercise. I know and love others who downplay global warming, climate change and the subsequent impacts to the planet earth. It can be difficult to change hearts and minds through conversations that devolve into opposing stances. My approach is to stand for my values through everyday actions and to collaborate with others who share my priorities about caring for creation. I am reminded of St. Francis' words to this effect: "Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary, use words."

What motivates you in your work to protect our earth? Young people! They get it and they're ready to act. We elders could learn much from them about effective environmental stewardship and use of the web/social media to begin and sustain activist movements. Likewise, our Gospel

underpinnings and Catholic social teaching tradition can add much weight and spiritual depth to these considerations. Multi-generational movements are the order of the day; we need one another.