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## Some Wisdom Points for Climate Change Response

Well, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report from the United Nations-convened Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been published now.

Part 3 actually expresses confidence that we CAN slow the damaging effects of climate change—if we start acting strongly now to slow the rapid global warming.

The final section came out May 4. The 3-part report this year presents (1) the best take on what is going on; (2) very likely consequences if current practice continues; and (3) recommendations for action.

This Assessment Report represents the earnest work of some 6,000-7,500 scientists from around the world and from varied sciences. Representatives from 120 (of 192 United Nations Member States) countries also participated in generating consensus on each of the 3 sections.

We have been blessed by the wisdom of United Nations leaders who in 1988 established the IPCC, asking for periodic reports on what is happening with climate patterns around the world.

There are good media reports available summarizing this third and all three 2007 reports. If anyone wants a reading list and/or article copies, please let me know.

What I wish to highlight here is a succinct summary of points of wisdom that can assist us all in this matter. These points, these values strengthen my courage and hope as we move into a very challenging future. These values are from religious leaders from various faith communities.

This deals with the future of God's creation and the **one human family**.

The **moral and human dimensions** must be presented to our government leaders. This isn't just a political, economic, scientific or ideological matter.

- ◆ Be very **prudent**, act wisely.
- ◆ Pursue the **common good** rather than the demands of narrow interests.
- ◆ Give **priority to what this can mean for people who are poor** and bear the greatest burdens of the consequences and costs of climate change.

If we humans are part of the problem, we must be part

of the solution.

*Quotes below are from Archbishop Migliore's April 14, 2007 speech in Columbus, Ohio.*

- ◆ "...there is a **mutually dependent relationship** between environment and economy, between environmental sustainability and development."
- ◆ "...theology can contribute to the debate by deepening and enhancing the **relationship of creation to God...**"
- ◆ We need **ecological conversion and repentance** that leads to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.
- ◆ "The **universal destination of goods** entails obligations on how goods are to be used by their legitimate owners."
- ◆ A corollary of this universal destination of goods: "The **right to a safe and decent environment** that translate[s] into a concern of governments, international institutions, groups and individuals for social and civil rights, social and material goods."
- ◆ "...the principle of **subsidiarity**...requires governments and international organizations and corporations to provide a solid framework for security and welfare, while keeping them from acting in total disregard of or even against the interests of local societies."
- ◆ "**Solidarity**...will create the machinery of **dialogue and cooperation** that is needed to tackle the environmental issue."

There is a school of thought among us that says we should not interfere with what is happening to our planetary environment—it is God's will, signaling the end of the world. Now clearly the end of the world gets closer each day. However, if creation is first of all God's gift, reflects aspects of God's wisdom, power and love, how can it be God's hope that we abuse creation and/or let it be abused?

Our needed conversion of heart about all this will come out of our prayer where we strive to see all this as God does. God is hoping we will see, judge and act together wisely and generously! But then if we don't, punishment seems built in.

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*The Catholic Conference of Kentucky (CCK) is an agency of the Catholic Bishops of Kentucky, established in 1968. It speaks for the Church in matters of public policy, serves as liaison to government and the legislature, and coordinates communications and activities between the church and secular agencies. There are 406,000 Catholics in the Commonwealth. The Bishops of the four dioceses of KY constitute CCK's Board of Directors.*