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## Climate Change—How Are We Responding?

In mid September I spent three hours with two groups of concerned people at “Climate Change Coffees,” one in Bardstown; the other, in Lebanon.

It was that—a conversation, sponsored by Siena Center for Adult Faith Formation—not a presentation. Beforehand, persons who had responded to an invitation had been provided with an outline of an overview of the issue, and an article, but once together, we just talked.

The people who gathered have been paying attention to what is happening, are somewhat confused by mixed signals from various sectors of society, and committed and impatient to respond meaningfully.

Some of their wisdom points:

- There are gaps among U.S. government and some business leaders, other business leaders and several states, and across people in general about what is going on and especially why.
- “Global warming” seems to be a more polarizing term than “climate change.”
- Those who are skeptical about all this so often have points that need addressing; our values govern our responses to those points.
- Whatever is going on, the rate of change seems to be much faster than heretofore. Antarctic ice cores indicate the same thing.
- Whether we are getting into deeply systemic trouble or not, cleaning up Earth would be a terrific help!
- The disconnect from a strong sense of community makes helpful responses difficult.
- Some leaders seem to believe we the people cannot take a call to sacrifice.
- A reminder about the call of our religious leaders about three key values in making our response: take special care about what it all means for poor people; protect the COMMON good; be very careful and prudent.
- It is a lie that we are powerless. One can list any is-

sue of concern and there are organizations working hard on it and welcoming others to join in the effort.

- Each of us has significant “circles of influence”: family, friends, the communities where we worship, schools where our children are educated, Kids Voting, national organizations we have joined, professional groups and working companions.
- The way I treat myself and others is often mirrored in how I treat Earth.
- People power always needs numbers of us.
- Some businesses are paying to keep us confused.
- “Progress” is a powerful drive but is still the fruit of a lot of human decisions. We still have choices about where things are going.
- Kentucky’s ground is dry to a depth of 8 inches or more now.
- The food chain in the oceans is breaking down. Consequences of that?
- We are very concerned about what all this means for our children, grandchildren and well beyond.
- Business’ good or bad practices coordinate with our wants and demands.
- The environmental pull of what we eat: water, grain and land demands.
- “Eating an elephant is done one bite at a time!”
- Change is needed on many levels. Small steps really do add up to big things.
- We don’t know what we can do together to make things better—until we try.
- A spectrum of actions is needed—from changing our mindset and attitude to changing public policy to changing my personal actions and lifestyle.

When good people get together, we do sing to each other’s hearts!

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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.*