

Nov 8th, 3:30 PM

# Drawing Upon Our Roots and Charism to Address Climate Change and Build Bridges of Dialogue in Addressing Human Rights and Achieving an Integral Ecology

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Jablonski, Leanne M., "Drawing Upon Our Roots and Charism to Address Climate Change and Build Bridges of Dialogue in Addressing Human Rights and Achieving an Integral Ecology" (2017). *The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy*. 1.

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# The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

2017 Conference of the University of Dayton Human Rights Center

Nov. 8-10, 2017, Dayton, Ohio

For the archive of the conference, see [http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human\\_rights/2017/](http://ecommons.udayton.edu/human_rights/2017/)

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**Research Panel:** Roundtable – Building Institutional Strength to Address Climate Change: Connecting Sustainability and Human Rights

**Presenter:** Leanne M. Jablonski, F.M.I., University of Dayton

**Title:** Drawing Upon Our Roots and Charism to Address Climate Change and Build Bridges of Dialogue in Addressing Human Rights and Achieving an Integral Ecology

**Abstract:**

Although sustainability and human rights are interconnected expressions of Catholic social teaching, the fields and praxis have developed independently. Human rights and other justice issues are rooted in the humanities and social sciences. The idea of sustainability has roots in the humanities and social sciences, but also in natural science and engineering. While sustainability research by scientists and engineers receives support, it is lacking for consideration of human rights and justice concerns, largely because these are viewed as advocacy. More recently, the intersection of these areas, particularly in the examination of the impacts of global climate change, has provided an opportunity for unification, especially when human stories lend empathy to observations, provide motivation to action, and allow technical expertise to help alleviate injustice.

Faith-based organizations are positioned to be bridge-builders by inviting the expertise of environmental scientists in educational programs. Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* received warm reception by numerous scientific organizations, and its call for all fields to work towards an integral ecology through dialogue is an impetus for interconnection. The longstanding tradition of Catholic institutions in addressing social concerns and the integration inherent in Catholic intellectual tradition invite opportunities for the integration of divergent fields of knowledge in the practices of sustainability and human rights.

As a Catholic and Marianist institution, the University of Dayton draws on its founding charism by seeing all as members of one global family and by extending the concept of community from people to ecosystems. We offer opportunities to engage in dialogues among expert panelists, a diverse campus, and the local community to explore justice issues like hunger, environmental racism, and peace. Applying the spiritualities, vision, and behavior of the founders of our religious institutions to today's needs can help us to educate, act, and advocate for an integral ecological future together.

**About the presenter:**

Leanne M. Jablonski, F.M.I., PhD, is Scholar for Faith and Environment in the Hanley Sustainability Institute at the University of Dayton and director of the Marianist Environmental Education Center. She is a plant ecologist, educator, and pastoral minister engaged in climate science and faith and environmental justice (EJ) outreach regionally and nationally. She directs the 100-acre Marianist Environmental Education Center, the aim of which is "restoring communities of land and people." At the University of Dayton, she is the Scholar for Faith and Environment with the Hanley Sustainability Institute; coordinates

the Sustainability, Energy, and the Environment learning-living community, and teaches in the Department of Religious Studies. A Marianist sister, she has held leadership positions in the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative and many Marianist Family projects. A native of Winnipeg, Canada, she earned her bachelor's degree in botany at the University of Manitoba and holds master's degrees in biology and religious studies from UD. Her PhD in plant physiological ecology and global climate change is from McGill University. Her dissertation and post-doctoral work focused on plant reproductive responses to elevated carbon dioxide. Jablonski is past chair of the Ecological Society of America's EJ Section and has worked on science, justice, and energy policy concerns with the Catholic Climate Covenant, the Ohio Council of Churches, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Her scholarship includes plant reproductive responses to elevated carbon dioxide; restoration ecology; energy education; environmental justice; and science and faith community partnerships.