

A Climate for Change ?

World
Diocesan Environment Sunday

World
Day
2007

MELTING ICE - A HOT TOPIC?



The topic of Climate Change has become very topical and although some of its significance is being overshadowed by political expediency, it is good to see this issue being debated almost incessantly.

Irrespective of how we might judge the scientific basis for explaining the increases in temperature and greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere coupled with unprecedented acidification of the ocean, the reality is that our climate is changing and we must develop ways of adapting to the changes and consequences that will inevitably result in our lifetime.

The probable introduction of some form of carbon based tax will go some way to reducing the rate of increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the long term. Increased use of renewable and more efficient technologies for power generation, more efficient use of energy, alternative fuels and recovery of greenhouse gases will make a contribution in the short term. However current levels, and consequences, of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will persist for many years.

As individuals and as a Diocese we have an unique opportunity to make a distinctive contribution to the current debate and demonstrate our commitment to accepting a responsibility to care for God's creation in a practical way. We should also not lose track of the fact that whilst climate change is perhaps one of the most pressing issues facing our planet, we need to recognize that our actions ought to be part of an holistic approach caring for the environment.

As in previous years, to coincide with the United Nations **World Environment Day** (5th June) we have chosen Sunday 3 June as **Diocesan Environment Sunday**. On this day we have invited all parishes to reflect on our responsibility for the environment as a focus in the Sunday services and to identify a project that can be adopted over the coming year to affirm our concern and demonstrate our preparedness to take some positive action. The world Environment Day theme of **Melting ice-a Hot Topic?** is inextricably linked to the effects of climate change and so a parish project aimed at reducing our greenhouse gas generation in the coming year would be appropriate (see www.unep.org/wed/). We would love to hear about your project.

**A few key points about the
World Environment Day Theme
Melting Ice: a Hot Topic?**

- * the arctic is warming twice as fast as the global average
- * the area of the Arctic Ocean covered by ice each year has been shrinking
- * more heat is absorbed by the sea than ice, resulting in further melting
- * since 1980, 20-30% of sea ice in the European Arctic has been lost
- * some climate models project an almost complete loss of summer sea-ice in the arctic before the end of the century
- * in China, highland glaciers are shrinking yearly by an amount equivalent to all the water in the Yellow River
- * the Greenland Ice Sheet is melting faster than new ice is being formed
- * in December 2005, a small community in the Pacific became the first to be moved as a result of climate change
- * the oceans have absorbed half of the carbon dioxide produced in the past 200 years, acidifying the surface water
- * in 1995, global wind power generated 4,800MW-at the end of 2005 this had reached 59,000MW

source: www.unep.org/wed/ - see for many more facts and information

*Geoff Rigby
on behalf of the Diocesan Environment*