

**RTC**  
THE RIVERTOWN COALITION  
FOR CLEAN AIR AND  
CLEAN WATER

# RIVERTOWN COALITION

## FOR CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER

by Pat Marrin | Jun. 16, 2015



### From Francis I *Laudato Si*, On Care for Our Common Home

#### Why is the encyclical important?

People all over the world have been waiting for Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment. On June 18th "*Laudato Si*", on [Care for Our Common Home](#)" was released. It has developed such importance because it pulls together many ecological themes from multiple considerations. He stresses "everything is interconnected and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others." (70) Pope Francis has an ability to communicate in simple language that average people can understand. The church is not interested in settling scientific questions or replacing politics, but does wish to offer the voice of the Church to the other voices entering the discussions about the environment. As an authoritative message by one of the world's great religious leaders it will stimulate homilies and discussions in parishes around the world and create more ideas for activists, preachers, teachers, theologians and authors. Even those who are not Catholic are seeing this document as a way to bring the environmental issues into the mainstream conversation.



#### What are some of the main points?

- **Chapter One** (17-61) the pope begins with looking at the facts of what we have been doing to the earth and then argues that how we treat the earth and how we respond to climate change are moral questions.
- **Chapter Two** (62-100) he lays out the Judeo-Christian foundation for the intrinsic value of each aspect of creation; the human call to lead all creatures back to their Creator; our interconnectedness; and the sacred in nature.
- **Chapter Three** (101-136) addresses the human roots of the ecological crisis. That our modification of nature has not been based in wisdom, values and responsibility but in concerns of utility, security and power. Technological products are not neutral, but are in reality decisions about the kind of society we want to build. Technology severed from ethics will not easily be able, by itself to limit its own power.
- **Chapter Four** (137-162) addresses the absolute interconnectedness of everything and calls for an Integral Ecology that combats poverty, restores dignity to the underprivileged, protects nature and works for the common good.
- **Chapter Five** (163-201) addresses the need for dialogue and inclusion at every level of human interaction from global, to faith and science. The importance of the common good demands our full participation.
- **Chapter 6** (202-246) addresses the personal ecological conversion each person is called to, which leads to joy.

### Volume 4 Issue 3

#### Coming events

July 8 5:30 pm The Advocate's Toolkit: Resources for Tracking the Harms of Fracking (webinar) by Next Generation Air Monitoring <http://www2.epa.gov/air-research/next-generation-air-measuring>

Sept 13 2pm Rev. Dr. Leah Schade book launch and signing at Barnes and Noble in Lewisburg.

April 23, 2016 Rivertown Coalition Annual Symposium

#### What impact will the encyclical have?

The pope is calling the world to a conversion that will have a huge impact on how we live, how our economy works and how governments operate. It will require an extraordinary change in human vision and behavior to accomplish this peaceful revolution. It will require sacrifice from everyone, especially those who are enjoying the fruits of the status quo. He emphasizes love as the motivating force for this change. The encyclical is the beginning of a process that will go on for years. It calls us to enlist for the long haul.

**AN INTERVIEW WITH CHUCK STEININGER**

Thursday, June 18, 2015

By Mary Peterhaensel

Steininger's Cleaners was established in 1955 in one location providing only shirt and laundry service. Now after 50 years of quality service their laundry and dry cleaning services have expanded to three full-service locations and a large variety of drop-off locations.



Meeting with Chuck at his Old Trail/Commerce

St., location, I asked him the question, "Since you are a forerunner in using solar energy in your business, how did you make the decision to go solar and when?"

Chuck said that in the fall of 2011, he decided to take advantage of a government grant and install solar tubes to heat the hot water for his laundry business. He stressed that this is strictly for heating hot water. He mentioned that it was the USDA grant that made the project feasible and affordable. Having long been a proponent of recycling (he recycles the plastic bags and other items used by his business) and interested and involved in other environmental concerns and wanting also to save money, he made the move. He said that he knows of a large system in Chicago, but said that there are no other laundromats in Pennsylvania that use solar energy in their business. He remarked

that it took Lenape Solar about two weeks to install the system of tubes, and that the project paid for itself in two years. He recognizes a savings of 20% per year.

Chuck noted that he thinks it is important for businesses to do what they can for the environment and feels that they should look into the feasibility of using solar in their businesses, especially since the cost of installing solar systems is coming down and because the components of these systems are made in the U.S.A., providing employment for American workers. Chuck's next step: to look into the possibility of using solar in his dry cleaning plant.

I asked him to comment on the article "Utilities see threat from solar boom" that appeared in *The Daily Item* on March 9, 2015, about the campaign by the utility companies (the country's government-regulated electric monopolies) to extract fees from solar users because the fossil fuel industry is losing money to the home-solar insurgency. His thought was that the utility companies should branch out into the renewable energy field to expand their businesses.



At the Selinsgrove Steininger location, the hot water is shared at a Self-Service Dog Grooming in the K 9000 self-service dog cleaning apparatus- a cooperative effort with Enzo

**If you are thinking of going Solar, remember that the Federal Tax Credits will expire in December 2016**

**Wind and Solar costs are getting competitive.** Right now a new solar photovoltaic (PV) system gets installed in the US every 4 minutes; that's about 130,000 per year. The reason is that the cost of a PV panel has dropped 63% since 2010. Residential PV systems cost about one-third less than they did only three years ago. Wind Power has also seen a drop in costs. In the past three years turbine costs have dropped 40% and nine states have installed enough turbines to supply at least 12 % of their electricity from wind. *Mother Earth News April/May 2015*

## Renewable Energy Has a Bright Future

By Mark Heuer

I recently attended a conference in Denver sponsored by the American Clean Energy Agenda. I came away realizing how realistic it is for many homeowners to use solar now because of how rapidly costs have dropped.

The keynote speaker was **Ned Harvey of the Rocky Mountain Institutes**, started many years ago by Amory Lovins. Harvey's speech was entitled "*The Accelerating Energy Revolution*". Here are some key points:

+We need to change the narrative that "renewable energy is a joke and cannot work." The energy revolution is a large, macro event. When you shift from macro scale (like Utility Companies) to nanoscale, (like solar energy based on photovoltaic cells and Lithium ion batteries), it is a game changer.

+We need to democratize energy by getting support at the community level. This creates interest from the demand side, as well as the supply side.

+Examples of change

- ◆ **LED lighting** is an example of supply (manufacturers) and demand side (customers) working together to achieve a scale in consumption to reduce energy consumption and the price of the technology. This is supply/demand in action.
- ◆ It is possible to design a **home today without a furnace**.
- ◆ **Transportation** prices continue to drop. As battery prices come down it is likely car companies will be able to build an electric powered vehicle for a lower price than a gas powered vehicle *plus* have lower fuel prices over the life of the vehicle.
- ◆ **Planning new power plants** needs to take into account future technologies or else power plants will have too much capacity for actual demand. The investment problems in power plants now experienced in Europe is likely to happen in the U.S. as well.

+Technology is the driver. The sum of the gains in new energy products is greater than traditional sources, so disruptive change is occurring. This is a very significant market signal about the future.

+Business needs to view energy productivity as something to consider as basic as technology advances or productivity. Currently, some business models seem stuck in an old view of energy production. The energy transition if understood correctly can be seen as part of a vibrant economy providing good jobs.

+One book worth reading is ***Reinventing Fire*** by the Rocky Mountain Institute.

## Changing Viewpoints on Climate Change and Clean Energy

In forty years of sharing "energy saving tips" I remain clueless about what will motivate a person to actually make a change in their home and behavior. Even with a rebate, only a small number of our contacts may actually make the effort to reduce their energy use and carbon impact.

Helping people make sound energy choices has been my mission in life, but I'm trying to focus on how to achieve real results. In reviewing what other groups have learned about energy behaviors, here are a few concepts that seem to make more impact.

1. People pay more attention to someone they know and respect. Community networks or meetings where you know people can be a good place to share. One outreach program used hairdressers as a way to distribute energy tips.
2. Seeing the results in person works better than just reading about it, so house tours or a sharing your own project with a few neighbors is a good model.
3. Try not to overwhelm people with too many options or information. Focus on a few steps that someone can take to start, and then share more ideas once they have taken some actions.
4. Frame the ideas in terms of a home problem the person has identified, such as being uncomfortable, poor air quality or health. Many people don't think their energy bills are too high, but they do want to solve a problem or improve their surroundings.
5. Portray an energy project as an **investment**, not just something to reduce costs. Offering an easy link to financing for an energy project is key. The PA Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is now considering on-bill financing for utilities.
6. Finally, apply all the good communication and marketing skills you know, especially **listening** to what the other person is interested in.

A good resource is a Linked In group called *Behavior Energy and Climate Change*, which is free for the basic service. <http://www.linkedin.com> Info from an annual conference with the same name can be found at <http://beccconference.org/>. The keynote speaker for 2015 will talk on "The Emerging Alliance of Religion and Ecology".

Hope this provides some "food for thought".

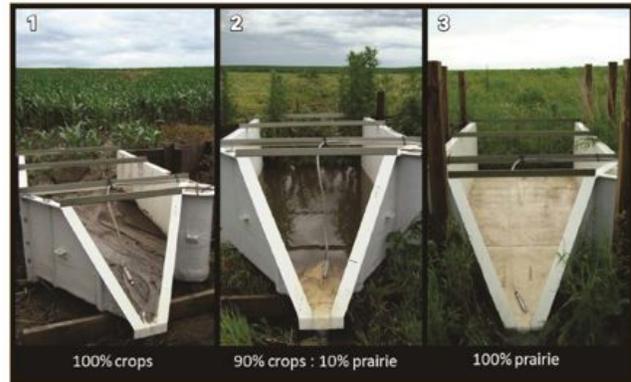
-Gloria Fultz, **The Energy Gleaner**

## Native Prairie Strips Benefit Farming.

From *Mother Earth News* April/May 2015

The Iowa State University has been doing field research for seven years on a new farming technique for conventional crop production in a program called STRIPS for Science-Based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips ([www.PrairieStrips.org](http://www.PrairieStrips.org)) in which highly diverse patches of native perennial plants are strategically woven through crop fields. Their research has shown that if just 10 percent of a field is converted to prairie strips, nitrogen loss will be reduced by 80 percent, phosphorus loss will be cut by 90 percent and sediment loss will drop by 95 percent. A PDF of Frequently asked Questions and Answers is available at

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/pubs-and-papers/2015-05-prairie-strips-my-land-frequently-asked-questions.pdf>



These flumes measure surface water movement and soil, nitrogen and phosphorus export from field experiment plots at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. Compare the transport of these resources from:

1) A 100% no-till, corn-soybean crop field 2) A field treated with a 10% prairie strip 3) A 100% prairie

**In the news:** There was an explosion on a 24-inch gas pipeline in Lairdsville, PA on June 9. One resident said it sounded like 100 jets passing by...but for 45 minutes. Even when the safety valve is closed, it takes time to expel the gas accumulated between valves. Residents had no idea what was happening. Shrapnel from the explosion traveled past the ½ mile suggested impact zone. There was no ignition or personal injury. It is difficult to find information on follow-up. *The Williamsport Sun Gazette* covered the story. The following website has a video summary of all spills in the US since 1989 / [http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/americas\\_dangerous\\_pipelines/](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/americas_dangerous_pipelines/)

National Farmers Union (NFU) President Roger Johnson called the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee cuts to mandatory spending for farm bill energy programs in its FY2016 appropriations bill, “short-sighted,”

“**Family farmers are among the first to suffer the negative impacts of climate change,**” said Johnson. “Farmers want to help build climate resiliency, but cutting mandatory spending for energy programs denies us the policy support we need in order to do our part. NFU urges the Senate to ensure mandatory spending on these programs is in line with the president’s budget.”

Johnson noted the cuts include a \$15 million reduction to the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and a \$13 million reduction in spending for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP), programs that help farmers mitigate climate change.

These mandatory spending levels were set through painstaking bipartisan collaborations during the extended debates over the 2014 Farm Bill,” said Johnson. “Tinkering with mandatory funding is both unfortunate and short-sighted, and it could upset the careful balances set by Congress just last year. Posted June 22 at <http://www.morningagclips.com>

**Book Launch Party** for *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit* (Chalice Press, 2015) by local author, pastor and activist **The Rev. Dr. Leah Schade**. Join us for an afternoon of light refreshments, a brief presentation by the author about her new book, and a chance to get your own signed copy. **Sunday, Sept. 13, 2 p.m.**, Barnes and Noble Bookstore, 400 Market St., Lewisburg. Click this link to learn more about the book. : <http://www.chalicepress.com/Creation-Crisis-Preaching-P1550.aspx>.

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