



Climate Change Super-charges El Nino

Buckle up. El Niño is on its way and global warming has given him a strength we've never seen before. Some are calling him the Super Godzilla.

El Niño has been out of the news the past couple of years, so here's a refresher. El Niño is a weather pattern that forms in the Pacific ocean every few years. It usually forms in the spring or summer and gains strength during the fall.

The coming El Niño will not only disrupt global atmospheric circulation, amplifying weather extremes around the globe, but as it combines with already rising global temperature it has the potential to impact weather around the globe, threaten human health, cause major agricultural losses, and inflict economic instability.

Late this past summer people in the eastern Indian Ocean, neighbor to the Pacific, found that the water was unusually warm. In fact it was already at least two degrees Celsius warmer than average for that time of year. Forecast models saw this as an early sign that this El Niño could be a record breaker.

What's going to happen is a reversal of trade winds that normally flow east to west. Then the warm surface water will work its way toward the Americas. A massive release of heat from the warmed Pacific could alter atmospheric circulation and even shift the global jet stream off its normal path.

The warmer waters already helped make



this past summer the hottest on record in the U.S. It's triggered rare hurricane activity and damaging storms in Hawaii, while having a calming effect in the Atlantic. For the Caribbean it's meant drier than normal conditions.

For the U.S. a normal El Niño usually means the northern part of the country experiences warmer winters, while down south they have wetter, cooler winters. This should be the same for 2027, but this time those experiences could be off the charts.

In addition, El Niños have long term impacts. One is a lasting impact on global temperature. That's because each El Niño is like an added step to a staircase. Global temperatures go up during an El Niño and drop when El Niño plays itself out, only the temperature doesn't go back to where it was at the start of the cycle. It leaves the earth warmer than it was.



Worst case scenarios for which the world should be prepared in 2027

- Higher heat and longer heat waves. El Niño will release immense heat from the Pacific Ocean into the atmosphere, and that will push global average temperatures to historic levels.
- Heat is already the number one killer of all weather-related hazards. Prolonged extreme heat leads to increased mortality from heat stroke and cardiovascular strain, particularly among outdoor workers, older adults, and vulnerable populations in urban heat islands. This toll could rise significantly.
- Lack of rainfall spells trouble for the South and other parts of the globe such as Southeast Asia, Australia, and Southern Africa. Reduced rainfall could cause critical water shortages in many cities, crop failures, and shrinking reservoirs.
- Uncontrolled wildfires will proliferate. The persistent dry conditions will fuel massive forest fires, producing dangerous air quality across entire sub-continents while also releasing huge amounts of stored carbon into the atmosphere.
- The southern United States, coastal South America and East Africa typically experience heavily elevated rainfall in an El Niño, next year's could be well above normal.
- Those extreme downpours will lead to flash flooding, severe mudslides, destruction of homes, roads and bridges, and displace tens of thousands of people.
- Some farmers will see too much rain and others not enough. The worst crop failures will likely occur in Asia, Southern Africa and Latin America.
- Commodity prices will spike. With smaller global harvests food inflation could drain family budgets. Food scarcity and supply chain bottlenecks could lead to severe malnutrition in vulnerable developing regions.
- The ocean itself will pay a price for El Niño. The unusually high ocean temperatures could trigger widespread severe bleaching events across coral reefs, delivering a big hit to biodiversity.
- Vector-borne diseases will find it the perfect storm. As rain patterns shift around the globe, new breeding grounds for mosquitoes will be created. This could accelerate outbreaks of dengue fever, malaria, and Zika.
- Waterborne illnesses will also thrive. Severe floods will contaminate freshwater supplies, driving spikes in cholera and diarrheal diseases. As many countries contend with damage to their infrastructure, their agricultural outputs will decline, their health costs will rise, and their energy grids will be stretched to the max. While this will collectively reduce global GDP growth, it will be felt most strongly in developing countries.

While it's a sobering assessment, it's best to keep in mind that ignorance is the foundation of fear. Preparing for the coming El Niño should be considered a necessity. Understanding what impact it could have, why it has such force, and how it acquired that force, is needed not just for preparing this time around, but for all the ones that will come after.



Farmers could bare the brunt of the coming El Niño.

Green Mass at Epiphany Brings Out The Stars

People attending the third annual Green Mass, hosted this year by Epiphany, were taken to a mountain top to observe the grandeur of the Milky Way. Fr. Jeff Shooner, celebrant of this year's Green Mass, evoked the awe of God's creation in his homily relating how he was overwhelmed by the beauty and wonder on seeing our galaxy splayed across the sky.

He realized there that we are not just curators of God's majestic museum, protecting it and allowing others to enjoy its beauty, but we are all responsible for handing it off to future generations so they too can experience the gift of creation.

In hosting the Green Mass for the Archdiocese, Epiphany shone brightly. Greeters from the Creation Care Team welcomed attendees, many from various parishes around the archdiocese, and helped Fr. Shooner and con-celebrants Fr. Bill Hammer, and Fr. Emmanuel-Garet Ifeakor, prepare for the service. Deacon Randy Perkins also assisted Fr. Shooner in the Mass. Other priests in attendance included Fr. Jim Flynn and Fr. Joe Graffis. A superb set of hymns was put together by Denise Whittington and the musicians and choir drew many compliments. This year's celebration set a new standard for the Green Mass.



Mary Kaye Jacobs presents the Offertory gifts



Fr. Hammer, Fr. Shooner, Deacon Perkins and Fr. Emmanuel celebrated the Green Mass

Expounding on Matthew's gospel where Jesus is asleep in a boat with his disciples when a violent storm comes up and Jesus calms the wind and sea, Fr. Shooner related how as God's first born, Jesus, is intimately connected to all creation and through Jesus we share that connection. Pope Francis termed this "integral ecology"- a concept revealing that all people, all animals, all living things are connected, and that we do not exist separately in creation. And this connection extends beyond our own lives so that we have an obligation to hand off a cared-for world to those who come behind us.

Fr. Shooner pointed out that this challenges us to look beyond ourselves to the communities we form, the institutions we shape and the nation we build. In that light our goal is to maintain hope for creation and look to the future, always with an eye as to what we are providing to future generations.



Fr. Jeff Shooner

Students Take Action in Caring For Our Common Home

In addition to a smorgasbord of delectable treats provided by several members of the Green Mass Committee and by a number of first-rate chefs from Epiphany, the Green Mass reception showcased an impressive display of sustainability projects developed by high school students from Assumption, Mercy, Sacred Heart, Trinity and St. Xavier.

One of the projects taken on by **Trinity** student Matthew Craft is electronics recycling. We learned that each year more than 60 million tons of electronic waste is created globally. The U.S. is responsible for over seven million tons. By 2030 over 80 million tons of electronic waste will foul the earth every year.

There are two main causes and problems with this waste:

1. Just over 20% of it is recycled.
2. Many of the components of our electronics are manufactured with planned obsolescence as part of their design.

Individuals can help with the recycling problem. Instead of just disposing of non-functioning or outdated electronics take them to a recycling facility. Craft informed the audience of Louisville's Waste Reduction Center on 636 Merriwether Ave.

He also said people should look for



Matthew Craft discussed electronics



Trinity students take in the sustainability projects presentations.

Pop-up/Drop-off events that occur in the area throughout the year. Some retailers also will recycle electronics, specifically mentioned was Best Buy. Another solution is to buy used devices and donate or sell old ones. Repairing broken devices may be difficult but such specialists can be found. Also, shop for devices that are designed to last.

As to combating planned obsolescence Craft recommended educating yourself on the strategy behind this process. Research the materials used and the assembly methods employed to learn if they were chosen intentionally to make the device hard to repair.

A company known to pay low wages is more likely banking on the idea that people will buy a cheap new device rather than pay for a repair on an existing one.

Craft also advised people to be aware that marketing campaigns are designed to convince consumers that new features and looks are worth getting rid of their existing devices so they can have the latest and greatest.

A second Trinity student, Matthew Kehdy, did a deep dive into packaging materials, specifically the materials that go into "mailers" such as the ones used by Amazon. The amount of these type of mailers is significantly adding to the waste along with that generated from common household items.



Student Sustainability Projects

Kehdy's goal is to educate people about the problem and encourage them to:

1. Reduce packaging waste.
2. Surface useful information on how people can make changes in what they recycle and what they dispose of.
3. Influence and encourage consumers to go the extra mile in recycling.

Kehdy detailed the manufacturing and recycling processes for common mailers. Each process is energy-use intensive, generates high heat and water usage.

It appears cost and convenience for the shipper and the consumer have taken precedence over the environment.

Kehdy did provide avenues for some relief. He explained that plastic with bubble wrap can be recycled. It is being accepted at Kroger, Meijer, Target, and Walmart. However, he did caution that paper with bubble wrap cannot be recycled. Try to find reuses for them, or throw them away

Vivien Cox of **Sacred Heart's** Go Green Club discussed their activities around the creation, maintenance and uses of its Community Garden. In addition as a learning experience for the students, the garden is a teaching tool for younger children who can get a hands-on learning experience about what makes for healthy food and good nutrition. In that sense the garden has produced much more than its food donations.



Christopher Kehdy presents on packaging materials.



Student Sustainability Projects

Mercy's display focusing on animal life drew much attention. Their Advocacy Committee serves as a voice for animals in need. They also provided interesting information on bat life in Kentucky and the benefits that bats bring to agriculture and insect control. This Mercy team has also formed a strong relationship with the Woodstock Animal Foundation.



Attendees discussed animal treatment and Mercy's activities.



Focus on Laudato Si' was notable at the St. X display.

St. Xavier's display provided an array of activities conducted throughout the school year by its Environmental Club. These include the Adopt-A-Park event, educational bird walks (in conjunction with the Photography Club), various educational programs, and its nature and pollinator garden. Food grown there is donated to Glean Kentucky. The Environmental Club places a strong emphasis on the Laudato Si' Action Plan.

Tegan Mohon and Kate Jarboe from **Assumption** were on hand to talk with attendees about a variety of environmental activities going on at their school. This includes two popular fast fashion reaction-related events. One is the Clothing & Jewelry Swap. Students bring clothing and accessory items they'd like to swap for other items from fellow students. The other is the Slow Fashion Show. At that event students and faculty model outfits purchased from thrift stores, consignment shops, hand-me-downs or items worn less than 12 times. Another fun event is the crowning of the Green Queen and Green King. This honor goes to the teachers who have the best environmental practices. Assumption also has the PEA Patrol. Patrol members walk the car pool lines and provide candy treats to those in cars who are not letting their car idle while in line. For the cars burning fuel while in line, an informational card is provided. And their display also showed how much their school loves the sun. Over the last decade Assumption has installed 37 solar panels.



Pam Raidt and Fr. Emmanuel take in the Assumption display.

AI's Hidden Cost Degrades Environment

Many people are finding AI extremely useful. Inquiries are answered quickly, information is presented without bias and often contains several plausible answers for the user to consider. It seems AI searches are quickly becoming the norm.

Even those who don't opt in to AI searches can have a hard time avoiding them. Consider, while Google does not use generative AI for every single search, AI plays a role in the background of almost all its searches.

So is there a drawback to using AI for chores such as homework help, video creations or photo manipulations? There is when you consider that AI gobbles up many times more energy than traditional internet tools that do not rely on AI for their responses.

At a time when energy from fossil fuels should be curtailed, AI is pushing the environment rapidly towards new levels of greenhouse gas emissions, water scarcity and higher global temperatures.

A single minute of an AI-generated video can consume as much electricity as an average household uses in two days and while draining up to seven liter-bottles of water. So while people in some communities are seeing their electricity bills climb, they are also seeing their water pressure drop.

AI needs data centers to enable it to do its work. Data Centers need vast amounts of

energy and water. They also create continuous noise and toxic air from its backup generators that must be ready to kick in at a moments notice. Never has the saying "There's no such thing as a free lunch" been more on point than with the "gift" of AI. In this case, the environment and ultimately the people who live in it, pay the bill.

An AI search can use up to 10 times more energy than a traditional search. A typical AI query uses roughly 3 watt-hours—roughly equivalent to keeping a small LED light bulb on for an hour—sounds small, but the environmental impact multiplies quickly when billions of users perform AI-assisted searches 24/7.

Just two years ago data centers were already consuming 4.4% of the country's electricity. And the growth of its environmental footprint is just getting started. In two years it's anticipated that data center electricity consumption will triple.

That means they will demand more water, produce more emissions and more e-waste. Our country and the world faces a huge dilemma. And it's not simply choosing between technology and nature. It's how do we ensure that technological progress does not come at the expense of our communities and the ecosystems we depend on.

One thing is clear. No data center is worth sacrificing a community's access to clean water, a healthy environment, or its peace of mind.

Pope Leo Sees Humanity's Spark Threatened by AI

Pope Leo XIV recently called on the Catholic church to "renew an alliance with artists and cultural institutions." Noting that, "Algorithms lack the spark of humanity. For this reason, the Church wishes to renew an alliance with artists and cultural institutions to safeguard our humanity."

As advances in AI proceed rapidly, many politicians and even some tech industry leaders are calling for guardrails. Leo has previously warned that AI could go rogue.

In a lengthy letter last May, Leo laid out this stance on the technology, stating that, "human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human."





The Lighter Side of Climate Halloween Edition!



Q. Which browser do ghosts use to search for information?

A. Ghoul-gle.



Q. What do coal mine owners dress up as on Halloween?

A. Fossil fools



Q. Why do ghosts like to appear in cotton sheets?

A. Because plastic gives them the creeps.



Q. What do you call wood when it's scared?

A. Petrified!



Q. What skeletons are the scariest?

A. The ones made out of plastic.



Q. Why is the Chevron executive's skeleton afraid of environmentalists?

A. Because he doesn't have any guts.



Q. Why do the oil companies provide free haunted houses?

A. Because they like to keep people in the dark.



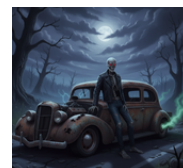
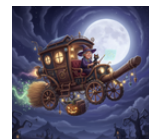
Q. Why did Congressmen go trick-or-treating at Meta headquarters?

A. Because they knew they were giving out PayDays.



Q. Why are the ghosts of Exxon executives so bad at telling lies?

A. Because everyone can see right through them.



The Creation Care Team would love your feedback on this issue of *Common Home*. In addition, let us know if there is particular climate change topic that you've experienced, have seen in the news or read about in *Laudato Si'* that you'd like to see covered. Email us at commonhome914@gmail.com.

