

Care for the Environment and All Creation

Care for God's creation involves recognizing our interrelatedness with the earth and all living creatures, and honoring God by valuing and respecting all creation. The earth and its goods are gifts from God, intended for the benefit of all people. Human persons have been entrusted with caring for creation, not simply using and consuming God's gifts. Protecting the health of people and our planet is a moral imperative and key requirement of our faith.

(Catholic Social Teaching)

SPIRITUALITY AND INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

- Marked by wholeness and the coming together of science and spirituality
- The environment is on loan to each generation, ... (Laudato Si, 159)
- I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet (Laudato Si, 13, 14)
- Religion cannot be done apart from basic insights of modern science.
- A radical transformation and a new story are required (Teilhard)
- The Old Story
- The New Story

Integral Ecology

- Interconnected range of factors - the interaction of human beings with each other and the natural world
- Essential concerns:
 - The natural world – pollution, water, habitat, species extinction, resource depletion, global warming
 - The human world – income and wealth inequality, exploitation of people, poverty, migration, refugees, governance
 - The perils of sustaining the economic, political, cultural and religious status quo
 - **Climate change** – affects everything else and our focus

Climate Change

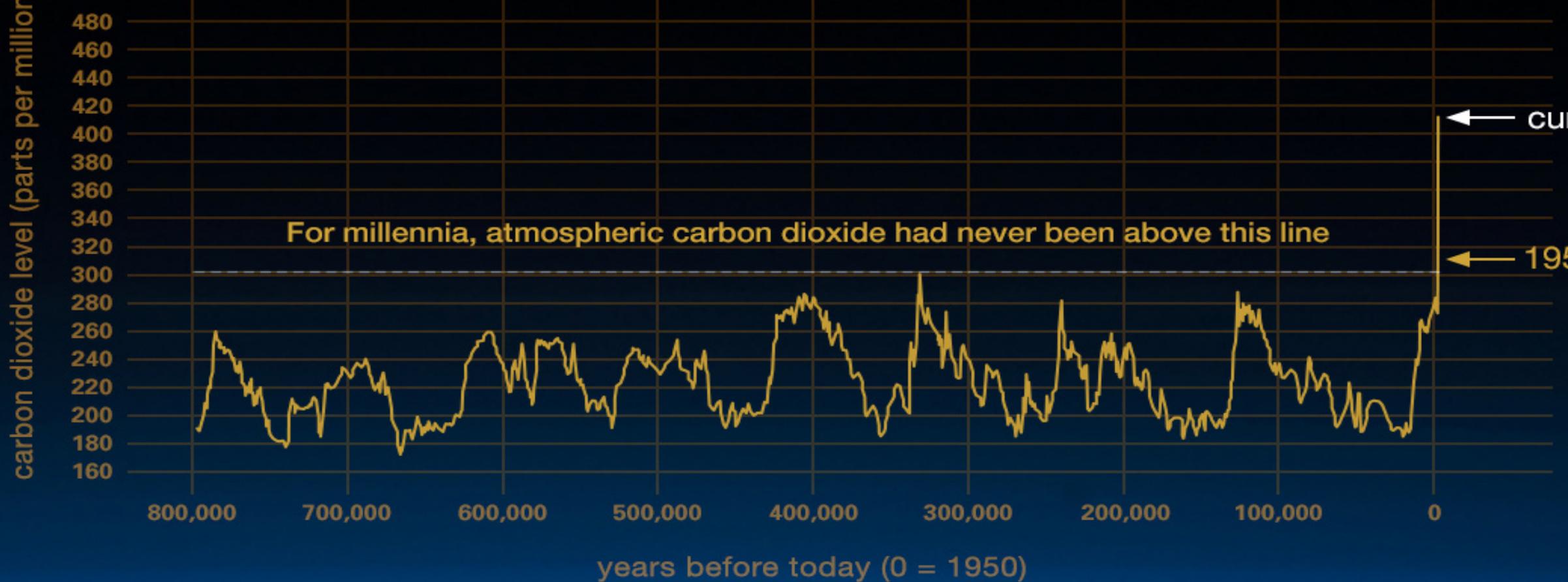
- Climate and weather are not the same
- Climate change is climate warming
 - Accelerating since the industrial age, dramatically since the mid-20th century
 - Human activity is expanding the Greenhouse Effect (greenhouse gases trap and keep heat in the atmosphere)
- A threat to life as we know it - It's an urgent and open question, will we be able to avert the catastrophic consequences of climate change?
- "The most important life issue today"
(National Catholic Reporter, September 2019)

How Do We Know?

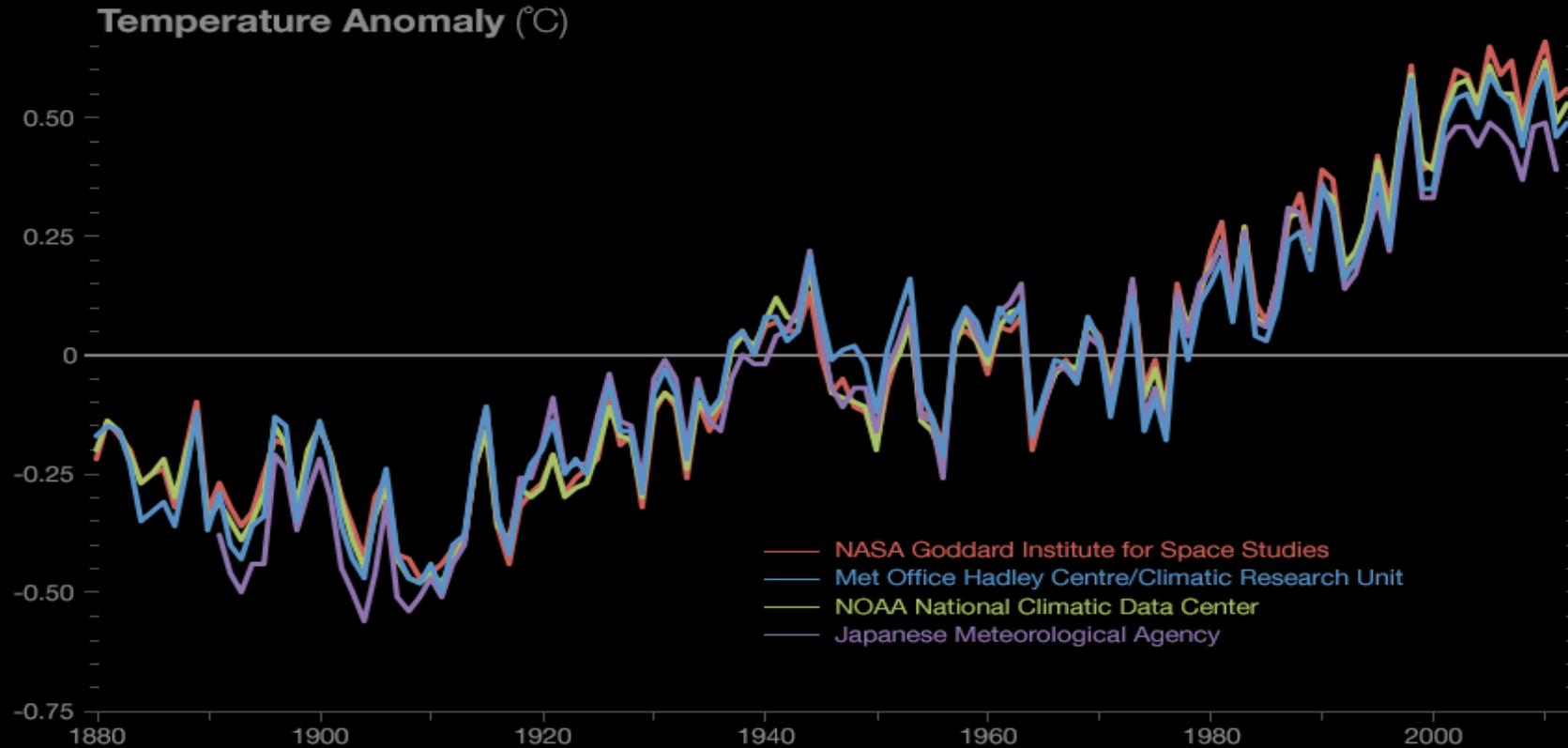
- Climate and ecosystem patterns are in disarray
- Atmospheric warming is unequivocal, global temperatures are rising, most in the last 35 years, last 5 years are the hottest on record
- Oceans, a buffer to atmospheric warming, absorbing heat and warming themselves, now at record highs - becoming more acidic, less oxygen-rich, proliferating pathogens, threatening life
- Shrinking ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, lost 280 and 120 billion tons of ice in 25 years
- Declining Arctic sea ice
- Glacial retreat (Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rockies)

How Do We Know?

- Extreme weather events (paradoxically, intense storms and drought – Australia is burning; Indonesia is flooding)
- Decreased snow cover, earlier melting
- All effects are accelerating since mid 20th century, reinforcing processes, e.g., melting permafrost releases high levels of carbon
- Scientific consensus - 97 percent probability warming is accelerating and it's the result of human activity – primarily burning fossil fuels to produce energy



Some say scientists can't agree on Earth's temperature changes.



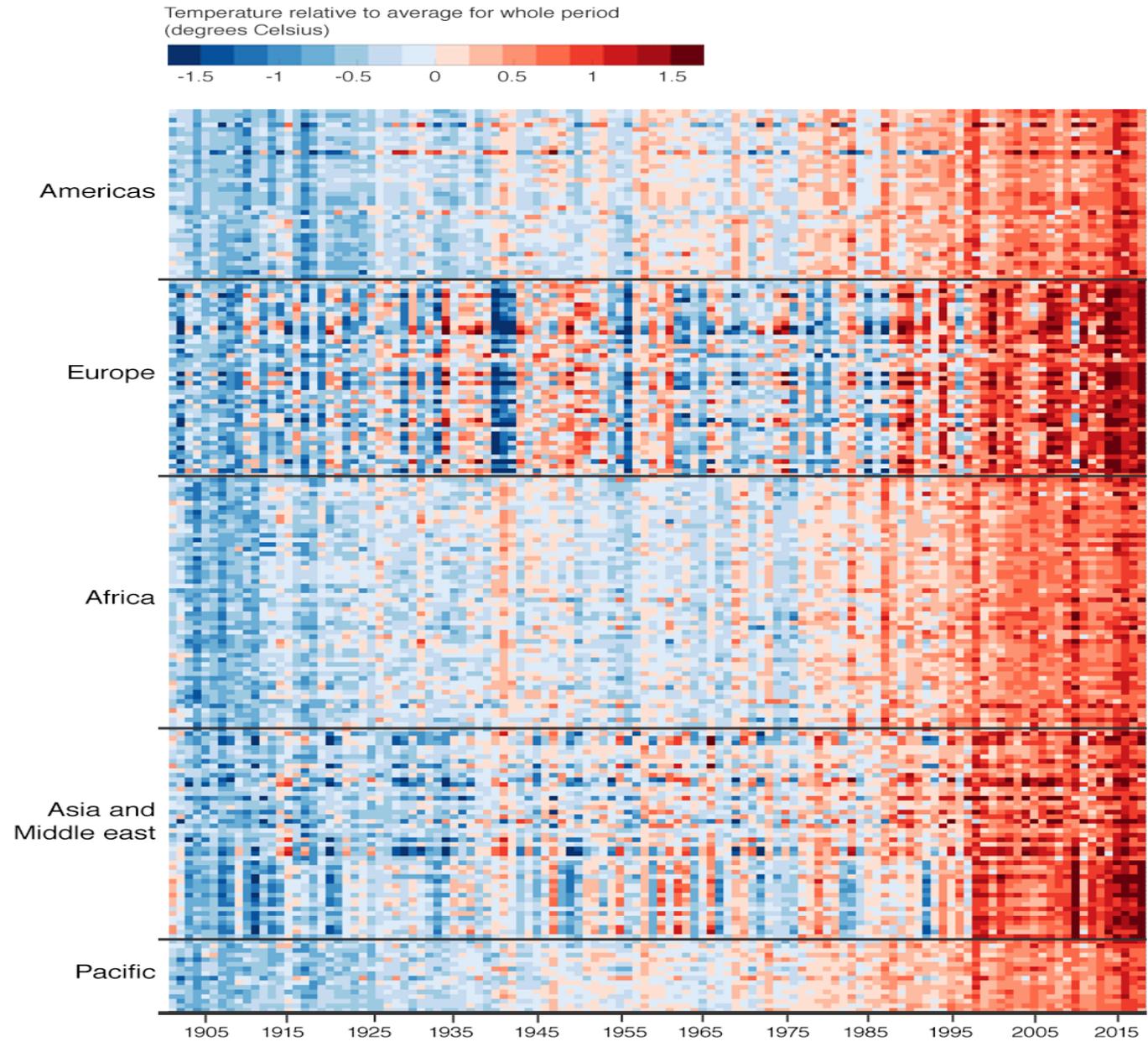
Here's what "disagreement" looks like.



CLIMATE 365

climate365.tumblr.com | go.nasa.gov/climate365

Temperature changes around the world (1901-2018)



Consequences of Unabated Climate Change

- Scarcity of food and water (desertification, sea level rise, acidic oceans, disappearance of glaciers)
- Inundated cities (New York, Amsterdam, Shanghai, Venice, Houston...(sea level rise)
- Extreme weather events (accelerating intensity of hurricanes, rainfall, drought), (3 500-year floods in 3 years)
- Environmental refugees (150 million by 2050)
- Extinction of species, loss of biodiversity (1 million species by 2050)

Consequences of Unabated Climate Change

- Increased extreme poverty – 100 million by 2050 (greatest effects on poor and marginalized people, people of color, children)
- Wars over water, arable land, refugees
- Spread of infectious disease
- Eco-fascism (“climate barbarism”, racist reactions to immigration and movement of refugees)
- Extreme loss of life due to malnutrition, heat stress, disease, extreme weather, disruption of health services

What Can We Do?

- Be aware and get involved
- Personal and community action (how we consume, how we live)
- But, the problem is systemic, and political - where do local and national candidates stand on climate change? – elect the right people to enact and enforce the right laws
- “The culture of consumerism prioritizes short-term gain and private interest...”.
“Today, in view of the common good, there is an urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”
Laudato Si, 184 and 189