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NEWS

Sister Paula González

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...nt, retired teacher at Mount St. Joseph
Change Task Force. *The Enquirer/Cameron*

Knight

Sister Paula González hasn't worn a habit in a long time. Then again, she breaks the mold in a lot of ways.

Her more frequent attire for the last 40 years has been an Earth T-shirt.

Her first shirt, bought in the early '70s, displayed the words "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." Today's adds the words "Restore" and "Replenish," a sign of progress, said the 82-year-old.

"This indicates we know (the earth) is damaged," says the equally intense and jovial woman with short white hair and a doctorate in cell physiology.

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Her message: We need to "make it rich again."

González has lived by those "Rs" since she saw the first photograph of earth taken from space.

The image "grabbed me by the hair of the head and said, 'Paula, you're a planetary citizen,' " González said. "Ever since, that's the way I've lived."

González, once called the "Patron Saint of Scavenging" by the National Catholic Reporter, has been a crusader for the Holy Spirit and the planet, traveling around the country and to other parts of the world to talk about climate change and sustainable living.

She co-founded the Ohio chapter of Ohio Interfaith Power and Light (a religious response to global warming), pushed for \$1.4 million in energy-efficient projects at the city's parishes and Catholic schools as a volunteer for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Catholic Climate Change Task Force and turned an old chicken barn into her passive-solar home, made almost entirely from recycled materials.

The retired Seton High School and Mount St. Joseph University teacher has done little resting in her retirement, chalking up some 1,800 lectures to churches, schools, and other community groups.

"Most of the so-called environmental questions are not principally scientific questions. They are principally moral questions," González said.

MORE ABOUT PAULA

Birthplace: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Current residence: Delhi Township

Family: She has taken vows to God and the Earth

Education: Bachelor's in Biology at Mount St. Joseph University, Master's in General Physiology and a Doctorate in Cell Physiology from the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C.

Occupation: Sister of Charity, retired teacher, freelance lecturer

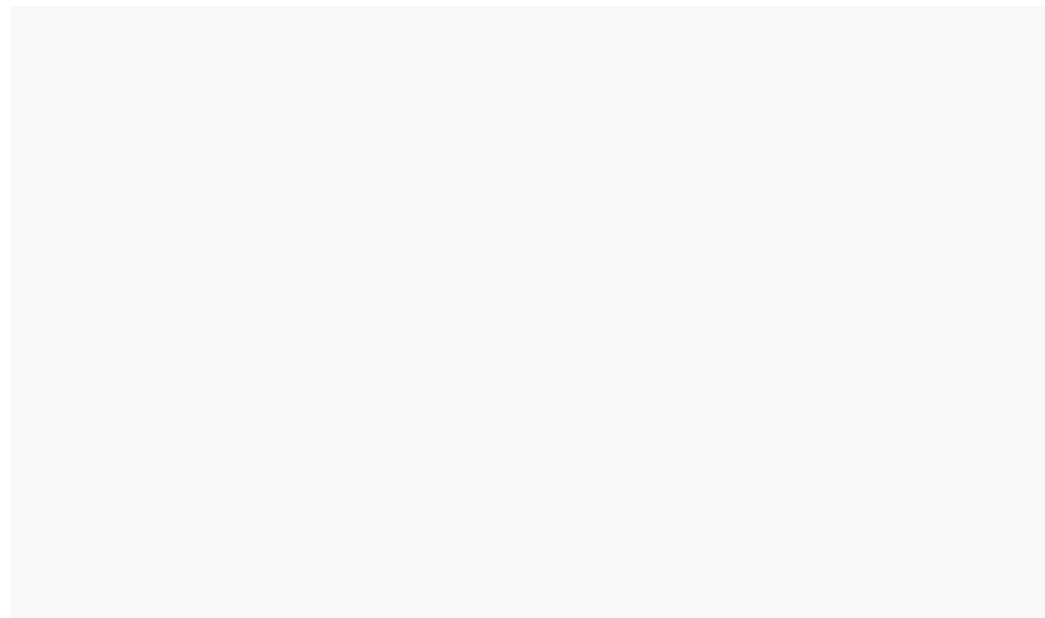
What she says

Being an influential leader: You have to model what you are trying to teach or lead. You have to be it. You've got to do it. Don't talk about it. Don't write books about it. Do it.

Climate change: More and more, the religious traditions are beginning to recognize climate change is causing some of the devastating things that have been happening to our planet. ... Fundamentally, it is the bottom-line problem for all the rest of them. We're going to have massive famines on this planet in the next few years unless we do (something) very quickly. I don't see that happening. I'm not a pessimist. I'm just a realist of the first order.

Creation and evolution: God could have surely chosen an evolutionary mode of creating. Many people have the notion that evolution and Darwin are in opposition

to anything spiritual or religious. Darwin said this happened naturally, so there is no need for God. Ultimately, it's really a big mystery. There is a deep spirituality embedded in many people, and that is not just expressed in a religion. It is not problematic to think that this divine creator may have decided to (create heaven and earth) in an evolutionary mode. The scientific evidence is so overwhelming that this is the way it has happened. If you follow the six days of creation in Genesis, what you'll find is the evolution of these according to scientific information and the order of creation is almost totally identical. They are not opposed to one another.



How to play your part: First of all people have to wake up and face the facts. It is our lifestyle that is causing climate change. Lower your carbon dioxide production. We don't have to use coal, oil and gas. ... A lifestyle change is what we're looking for. Every day: How much electricity do you use? How much water? Do you use cloth napkins or paper napkins? Our planet is in serious trouble. But I don't want people to despair. I believe in the creativity of people and that people will wake up.

Quote: "Are we going to let (carbon dioxide levels) continue to rise? What we have to say now is 'no.' A lifestyle change is what we're looking for. ... Every day: How much electricity do you use? How much water? Do you use cloth napkins or paper napkins? Our planet is in serious trouble. But I don't want people to despair. I believe in the creativity of people and that people will wake up."





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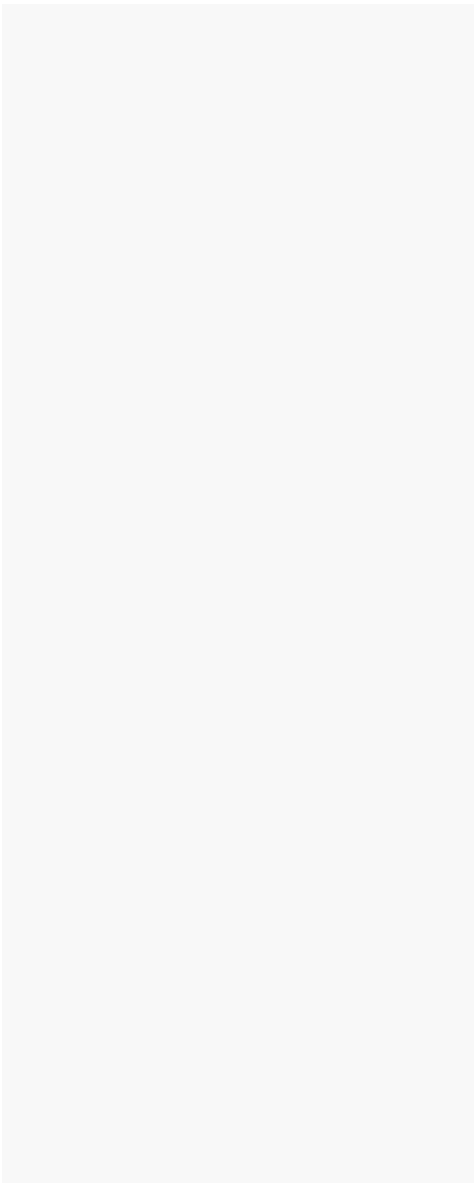
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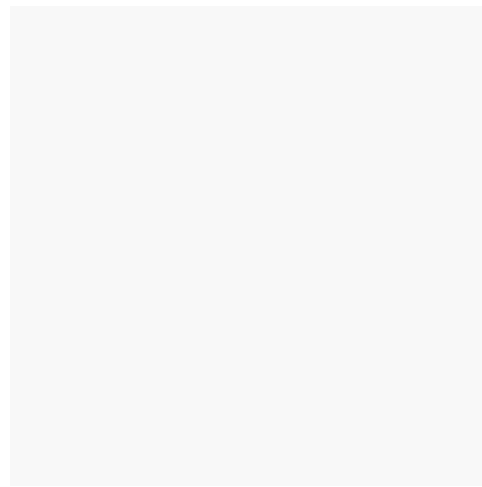
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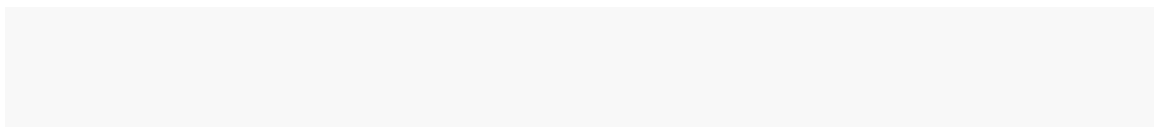
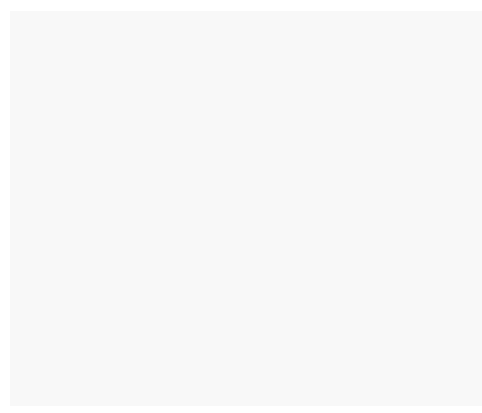


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