NUCLEAR ENERGY
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

We have faced serious nuclear power plant accidents in recent years, including the Fukushima disaster (2011), the Chernobyl disaster (1986) and the Three Mile Island Accident (1979).

As we move away from fossil fuels it is critical that we implement alternatives that demonstrate care for all life on earth. Recent writings and statements of Pope Francis call into serious question the use of nuclear energy which according to the Bishops of Japan should be abolished.

Below is a summary of information related to the Fukushima nuclear disaster and the words of our Holy Father and the Bishops of Japan as it relates to the use of nuclear energy.

CURRENT UPDATE RE: FUKUSHIMA
An update (January 19, 2016) regarding concerns associated with the Fukushima nuclear disaster as well as current efforts to deal with the ongoing problems may be found at this website:

CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF JAPAN
Also, I noted that the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan wishes to have nuclear plants abolished:
“We as members of the human race, have responsibilities to protect all life and nature as God’s creation, and to pass on a safer and more secure environment to future generations. In order to protect life, which is so precious, and beautiful nature, we must not focus on economic growth by placing priority on profitability and efficiency, but decide at once to abolish nuclear plants”

POPE FRANCIS – MEETING WITH BISHOPS OF JAPAN
As reported in Zentrum-Oekumene, Pope Francis makes a very clear criticism of the “civil use’ of nuclear power at his meeting with the bishops of Japan: http://www.zentrum-oekumene.de/fileadmin/content/Japan/Pope_Francis_calls_Nuclear_Power_Plants_2.pdf

POPE FRANCIS: LAUDATO SI’ – ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME
Pope Francis also has brought forward the issue of nuclear energy in Laudato Si’ – On Care for Our Common Home:
“Account must also be taken of the pollution produced by residue, including dangerous waste present in different areas. Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive, from homes and businesses, from construction and demolition sites, from clinical, electronic and industrial sources” (§ 21).
“Humanity has entered a new era in which our technical prowess has brought us to a crossroads (§102)…. It must also be recognized that nuclear energy, biotechnology, information technology, knowledge of our DNA, and many other abilities which we have acquired, have given us tremendous power. More precisely, they have given those with the knowledge, and especially the economic resources to use them, an impressive dominance over the whole of humanity and the entire world.
Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used” (§104).

“Some projects, if insufficiently studied, can profoundly affect the quality of life of an area due to very different factors such as unforeseen noise pollution, the shrinking of visual horizons, the loss of cultural values, or the effects of nuclear energy use. The culture of consumerism, which prioritizes short-term gain and private interest, can make it easy to rubber-stamp authorizations or to conceal information” (§184).

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Also, this statement from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* provides a moral context that applies to nuclear energy:

“Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things which would be in contempt of the Creator and would bring disastrous consequences for human beings and their environment” (§ 337).