Transcript of an Interview with Cardinal Turkson at the III International Congress on the Care of Creation: “Youth for the Common House” Ecological Conversion in Action. Sunday, January 19, 2019

**What is your message or advice to the young people gathering in Panama for World Youth Day for how they can live out the message of Laudato si’ during the event?**

I myself arrived in Panama only last night, so I have not seen much of the city […] the one thing about such big meetings is the way we handle plastics. This is going to be the biggest challenge for the World Youth Day. They just give me a bottle of water, it is plastic, so managing plastics, dealing with this can be a big challenge. So the invitation would be for the young people to help not to liter with plastic. Panama has the sea on both sides so every plastic that we liter may end up in the ocean. And the ocean already has a big problem with plastic infection from micro plastics where the fish ingest and then ultimately pass on to us when we eat the fish. …so one of the big things I want to say all the young people is be careful of your use of plastics, be careful of how you dispose of plastics, and ensure that you do not leave Panama littered with plastics all over.

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**What message to you want them to bring back from World Youth Day about how they can impact their communities?**

Thing is that if the Pope and scientists are raising an alarm about the state of our earth then it is something to look at. Recently […] last month in Katowice in Poland there was cap 24 and everybody was saying that after cap 21 three years ago the temperature is not changing rather it is even increasing. It means we are not taking seriously the challenges to the atmosphere and the air so the biggest appeal we need to make is please lets reduce temperature rise and reduce temperature rise means that let us control our…Here in Panama for young people you have energy. Wherever you can go with the bike do that and leave the car. That is a concrete way of reducing pollution. Every car that burns fuel contributes to green[house] gas. So wherever we can walk or we can use a bicycle, let us do that and reduce our carbon footprint by not using too many cars or burning so [much] fuel.

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**Can you give some suggestions for how young people can spread this message?**

I say to young people the big thing that is easy do is to form a club, to come together, to create association. Let them create such an association, any association they can say all the members of the association campus will use a bike, and not use a car. This can be a very noble type of thing that can encourage other students.

When you use a bike you exercise, it’s gymnastics, it’s physical exercise, and you also reduce your carbon footprint. So, a club in a university can now have […] such an objective and do accordingly.

Secondly, the use of water. The use of water is so very easy. […] When you go to the bathroom, you turn on the tap, you put Pepsodent on your toothbrush and while you are brushing, the water is still running. Why don’t you turn on the water when you need it?

So our use of water is also very important, recognizing that one of the biggest challenges in the world is now water. I received an ambassador, from Australia, who tells me that the water they are using in Australia now was kept under the ground two million years ago, so why are we using water from two million years back? It’s because we are overusing, consumerism, is the name that you give to all of these things. So we can control a little bit all of that.

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**Can you talk a little bit about some young people who have inspired you with their actions?**

When Laudato Si’ was first published, the first university in the United States that invited me was Ohio State, ok? And when I got to Ohio State, the first thing to welcome was an electric car, that the science students, engineer students had put together. And so they gave me a ride around campus in their electric car.

So that’s their response to fossil fuel. To develop an electric car, something that reduces whatever. Then they had a mounted exhibition about different forms of agriculture and all of that to propose […], you know. So young people already have the talents to do all of things, and we just need to encourage them.