

...as a matter of equalith, your abundance at his present time should supply their needs...

Paul's words to the Corinthians are timely, for Pope Francis uses similar language in his letter to the world: *Laudato Si*.

"A true *ecological debt* exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate uses of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time..." #51

So is there a connection between what Paul is saying to the Corinthians and what Pope Francis is saying to the world?

YES.

The reason Walmart can sell so cheap is because so many of their goods are produced by underpaid workers in third world countries! We owe them a debt in justice!

Japan can import wood from forests stripped and denuded in the Amazon.

And as far as energy is concerned, we splurge while the poorest countries languish.

20 percent of the world's richest countries consume 76.6 of the world's energy while the world's middle 60% consume 21.9%

Using a metaphor based on today's Gospel Jesus is saying to the young 12 year old

girl: "Get up!" Francis is saying to the EXPIRING third world: "Get up!" and to us: "Help the expiring nations of the third world to walk and take their place among the nations on some kind of level playing field."

And Paul ends his exhortation to the Corinthians:

"Whoever had much did not have more, and whoever had little, did not have less."

Both Paul and Francis are talking about some kind of balance, and Francis is saying we are way out of balance ecologically, financially, and spiritually.

Pope Francis is shining a light into a reality we would just as soon ignore. He is calling us to conversion just as Jesus called the young girl in today's Gospel from death to life!

From such tiny things as abandoning plastic water bottles, which clog our oceans, or taking renewable shopping bags, his letter is meant to touch our daily lives.

He calls us to an ecological conversion, and his letter is so pertinent and rich in thought, it will take patient effort, study, and prayer before its full dimensions can dawn upon us. But dawn it must, for too long we have languished in the darkness of denial.

And so we pray:

Grant we pray

that we not be wrapped in the darkness of error

but always be seen to stand in the light of truth.

Amen