



Inside Track

Pope Rebukes Humanity – Calls for “Ecological Conversion”

During an April 22 video stream, Pope Francis had strong words for humanity on Earth Day, rebuking mankind for its collective failure to take care of the planet.

“Because of our selfishness we have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the earth,” the pontiff said in his address. “We need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair.”

Pope Francis, who has made environmentalism one of the hallmark issues of his papacy and heaped praise on teenage climate-change activist Greta Thunberg, accused humans of having “polluted and despoiled” the Earth.

“For this reason, various international and local movements have sprung up in order to appeal to our consciences,” he added, perhaps an allusion to groups such as Thunberg’s Fridays for Future, as well as the United Nations (the pope spoke at the UN Assembly in 2015 shortly before member states unanimously adopted Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, which he called “a great step forward for global dialogue, marking a vitally new and universal solidarity”).

“I deeply appreciate these initiatives; still it will be necessary for our children to take to the streets to teach us the obvious: we have no future if we destroy the very environment that sustains us,” the pontiff continued.

“We have failed to care for the earth, our garden-home; we have failed to care for our brothers and sisters. We have sinned against the earth, against our neighbors, and ultimately against the Creator, the benevolent Father who provides for everyone, and desires us to live in communion and flourish together.”

As if treating the Earth as a sentient entity in parity with God himself weren’t enough, Pope Francis went on to call on his listeners to undergo an “ecological conversion.” “We cannot heal the earth unless we love and respect it,” he declared.

Under Biden, Gun Ownership Would Be a “Heavily Regulated Privilege”

Dave Workman, senior editor for GunMag.com (published by the Second Amendment Foundation), reviewed the 3,100-word anti-gun platform available at Joe Biden’s campaign website and called it a recipe “to turn the right to keep and bear arms into a heavily-regulated privilege.”

The de facto Democratic Party candidate for president insists, of course, that he will follow “constitutional, common-sense gun safety policies.” But consider just the first policy: abolishing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act passed in 2005 that keeps gun makers from being held liable for crimes committed when a criminal uses one of their products.

President Biden would ban the manufacture, sale, purchase, and possession of any semi-automatic firearm (which he broadly declares to be “assault weapons”). And he would work to declare such presently owned firearms to be covered under the National Firearms Act, passed in 1934, which at



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present is limited to machine guns and certain other short-barreled firearms.

By implication, anyone owning such a firearm would be subject to the \$200 tax on each firearm. But there's no doubt that, having his way, he would bring that tax up to date, equivalent to nearly \$4,000 per weapon in today's money.

He would require background checks on all firearms-related transactions. He would reinstate the Obama-Biden policy that keeps firearms out of the hands of people who are deemed unable to manage their own financial affairs for mental reasons.

He would push every state to enact "red flag" laws, and while at it, would require that when people become newly prohibited from owning a firearm, they would be forced to give up possession of their existing firearms.

He would enact other restrictions: "safe at home" rules, limits on how many firearms one may purchase in a month, and so on.

The de facto Democratic candidate can pontificate all he likes about what he'll do to the Second Amendment once he is in office. There is not much chance that he'll get the opportunity.

Even Without a Strict Lockdown, Sweden Stabilizes COVID-19 Cases

Dr. Anders Tegnell, the state epidemiologist of Sweden, recently told the Swedish news agency TT that the Scandinavian country's more relaxed approach to fighting the coronavirus pandemic is beginning to yield results. Tegnell said the latest figures on infection rates and fatalities indicate the crisis is starting to stabilize.

"We're on a sort of plateau," Tegnell told the Swedish news agency.

A report in the U.K. newspaper The Sun on April 20 noted that Sweden recorded just 40 coronavirus deaths and 392 cases that day "as the country continues to avoid lockdown restrictions."

The Sun observed that Sweden is the only country in Europe not to have implemented lockdown measures on the public.

The 392 new confirmed cases is the smallest jump since April 12 and takes Sweden's total confirmed cases to 14,777, observed The Sun.

We compared Sweden's coronavirus statistics to Portugal's, since the countries have nearly identical populations (Portugal: 10,252,000; Sweden: 10,236,000). A report from Statistica.com showing the number of COVID-19 cases in Europe by country, as of April 21, 2020, revealed that Portugal had 20,863 cases, compared to Sweden's 14,777.

Sweden's neighbor, Norway, with half Sweden's population, at 5,333,000, also had half the number of cases at 7,113, as might be expected. So even with its more relaxed restrictions, Sweden is faring as well as its neighbor on a per capita basis.

Sweden's pandemic strategy has been described as trusting the public to act responsibly. Rather than imposing wide-ranging bans and restrictions, authorities have advised people to maintain good hand hygiene, work from home, and practice social distancing. In other words, the same as all other



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countries, only without the heavy hand of the state.

One point that might be worth considering in view of Sweden's approach to handling the COVID-19 pandemic is, if less-draconian measures produce results as effective as shutting down a nation's economy, then why not take the less-intrusive approach?

U.S. Cities Enforce Social Distancing With Drones — Donated by China

A number of police departments around the country are using drones manufactured by a company with ties to the Chinese government in order to enforce COVID-19-related lockdowns, prompting concerns from experts who say the drones may serve as a way for the east Asian communist regime to spy on the United States, reported Fox News on April 20.

Already, 43 law-enforcement agencies in 22 states are surveilling Americans with the help of drones made by China's Da Jiang Innovations (DJI), ensuring citizens remain in their homes and observe social-distancing rules.

While DJI denies it has any motives beyond altruism in its donation of drone technology to U.S. law-enforcement agencies, many — from lawmakers to watchdog groups to drone experts — say America's reliance on Chinese technology to monitor its own citizens could lead to disastrous national security consequences.

DJI, based out of Shenzhen, China, is the world's largest and most well-known drone manufacturer, with a market share estimated to be between 87 and 90 percent. Due to the size of the company's profits and the number of its employees, it automatically falls under the eye of the Chinese government. Yet DJI claims it does not spy on Americans and that users have the option of preventing their devices from transmitting data.

But an expert with close ties to the intelligence community told Fox News that data could be collected without the awareness of even DJI employees — only DJI founder Frank Wang and the Chinese government would know.

Even prior to the coronavirus outbreak, U.S. intelligence officials were concerned enough about DJI to order the entire fleet in its possession grounded. Early in February, the Interior Department issued a no-fly order taking all of its drone fleet out of the sky — a move many believe was aimed at China. This was a follow-up to a temporary order issued in 2019 that arose from concerns of potential espionage. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that all 800 of the department's drones were either made in China or built with Chinese parts.



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