

# **Global Catholic Climate Movement**

## **Our Statement to the Church and the World**

### **Who we are**

The Global Catholic Climate Movement is a first-of-its-kind international coalition of Catholics from many nations, continents, and walks of life. We are laity, religious, and clergy, theologians, scientists, and activists from Argentina, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Kenya, Australia, the United States, and many other nations. We are united by our Catholic faith and our work in various roles and organizations on climate change issues.

Our collaboration echoes the global dimensions of the Catholic Church and a shared sense of responsibility to care for God’s beautiful, life-giving creation. We are inspired by Church teachings and guided by the virtue of prudence—understood by St. Thomas Aquinas as “right reason applied to action.” We accept the findings of scientific leaders, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), that humanity’s greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to widespread and mostly harmful changes to planetary systems. We are certain that anthropogenic [human-made] climate change endangers God’s creation and us all, particularly the poor, whose voices have already spoken of the impacts of an altered climate.

### **What we believe—and why**

The basis of our concerns is scriptural and founded on the tradition of the Church. From Genesis through Revelation, Catholics accept as a revealed truth that creation and its order is a good that we must embrace and steward. This has been echoed and championed by Church leaders for two millennia. In response to what God has given the human race—clean air, life-sustaining water, fruits of the earth’s harvests, and the bounty of the sea—we are called to honor God our Creator for these many blessings. We are obliged to respect these gifts, which are for all people. For this reason climate change is for Catholics a profoundly spiritual, ethical, and moral issue. While discussions of climate change often involve debate about economic theory and political platforms, and while it can involve issues of partisan politics as well lobbying by special interest groups, our focus is on the moral and spiritual issues involved. Climate change is about our responsibility as God’s children and people of faith to care for human life, especially future generations, by caring for all of God’s wondrous creation.

The interdependency of creation and humanity is being underscored in Pope Francis’s visit to Philippines. The impacts of extreme weather on the vulnerable and marginalized become clear as we join the Holy Father in praying for all the families that were impacted by super Typhoon Haiyan—for the many thousands dead or missing and the countless more who remain homeless.

### **A call for prayer, a call for action**

“We are people of hope,” the bishops of the Philippines [once wrote](#). Like them we believe that together and with the grace of God “we can change the course of events.”

First, we recognize that conversations about the climate crisis have historically been more about intellectual arguments than about the profound spiritual and moral implications of our failure to care for God's creation. Catholic leaders are thus called to speak with a prophetic voice and in a spiritual dialogue with all people, especially those political and business leaders and consumers who engage in climatically destructive policies and practices. And we recognize our own need for ongoing conversion to live more in keeping with the Creator's intentions for life in abundance for all people. Until the moral implications of anthropogenic climate change are clearly established and accepted, it is unlikely that societies can or will transition in an appropriate timeframe to sustainable technologies, economies, and lifestyles.

And so in light of growing scientific evidence and real-world experiences, we offer our prayers for God's healing grace as we work in the world to care and advocate for the needy and all creation.

We do so by calling on our brothers and sisters in Christ to defend the common good by acknowledging those least able to defend themselves—the world's people living in poverty, our children, born and unborn, future generations, and all forms of life that populate God's creation.

Knowing that there are abundant positive solutions available, we offer to assist those voices that demand strong international climate agreements, as well as call for and encourage the conversion of hardened hearts.

We invite all Catholics to explore the issues of climate change and to join future actions—both to raise awareness about this important issue and to act within the public sphere.

And finally we entrust all our efforts to Jesus Christ, who makes all things new.

### **Conclusion: a continuation of Catholic teachings**

Pope Francis will be issuing an encyclical about caring for the environment. This document will carry on the teachings of the Church given to us by Saint John Paul II and Benedict XVI, as well as many bishops across the globe. We have already heard this continuity in the words to date of Pope Francis. With this statement, we the undersigned now seek to help bring these teachings of the Church to the world.

Thus we conclude with these words of hope, offered at the opening of the Holy Father's papacy:

“Today too, amid so much darkness, we need to see the light of hope and to be men and women who bring hope to others. To protect creation, to protect every man and every woman, to look upon them with tenderness and love, is to open up a horizon of hope; it is to let a shaft of light break through the heavy clouds; it is to bring the warmth of hope! For believers, for us Christians, like Abraham, like Saint Joseph, the hope that we bring is set against the horizon of God, which has opened up before us in Christ. It is a hope built on the rock which is God.”

+ Pope Francis, [Inaugural Mass](#), March 19, 2013