

For Immediate Release

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**HUNDREDS OF LOCAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES JOIN POPE FRANCIS AND
PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW FOR SEASON OF CREATION**

On September 1 Christians churches will come together to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and to observe the Season of Creation between that day and October 4 – the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Major Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Anglican organizations have joined to encourage the 2.2 billion Christians worldwide to pray and act on ecological issues next month, promoting a new ecumenical website with special resources, SeasonOfCreation.org.

(International, September 1 2016) - Pope Francis and Patriarch Bartholomew released their special messages for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, kicking off the month-long Season of Creation celebrations. Both leaders used strong language to stress the urgency of the ecological crisis and the need to take action on climate change. Their special messages are available here.

Meanwhile, Christian Churches are organizing and supporting hundreds of events worldwide until the Season of Creation's close on October 4th, by collaborating through the ecumenical website seasonofcreation.org. Nearly 200 events on 6 continents have already been reported and many more are being planned, with lots of them being ecumenical in nature and with participation of local bishops and faith leaders.

The Season of Creation, originally launched by the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople in 1989 has been progressively joined by other Christian churches, with the Pope announcing the Roman Catholic Church's participation last year. Vespers at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican at 5pm this evening presided by the Pope and attended by leaders from other Christian denominations will be the formal launch of the Season.

"We urgently need to make changes," said Fr Frédéric Fornos, International Director of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. "All the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is involved in this World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, by prayer and action to preserve our "common home" for future generations. "O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty" (Laudato Si n° 246).

"The global Catholic community joyfully joins Pope Francis and other Christian churches for this important celebration," said Tomás Insua, Global Coordinator of the Global Catholic Climate Movement. "The website SeasonOfCreation.org has proven to be a wonderful tool for Christians worldwide to come together in prayer and action to address the severe ecological crisis of our time".

The Message comes a day before the United States and China will reportedly announce their ratification of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change adopted at the UN conference in Paris last December. The Agreement provides for wide ranging action by governments as from 2020 to prevent the most dangerous impacts of climate change.

“As Christians, we have hope. We believe God does not abandon creation and that we ourselves can become beacons of that hope by sowing the seeds of a different future”, said Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), calling upon Christians worldwide to pray together for “God’s beautiful work”.

In his message, Tveit also noted other actions that can be taken by those who join the prayers. “Let us call on our governments to ratify the Paris agreement; demand for alternative indicators of growth that better measure the health of the communities and the ecosystems. We can divest from fossil fuels and reinvest in sustainable alternatives”, he said.

The convening organizations who are leading the Season of Creation promotion efforts are: [World Council of Churches](#), [Anglican Communion Environmental Network](#), [Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network](#) (Apostleship of Prayer), the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](#), [ACT Alliance](#) and [GreenFaith](#).

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

About the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer)

For over a century, the Apostleship of Prayer has been publishing to the world the prayer intentions entrusted to them by popes. Now, in its process of recreation, the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network emphasizes its role of communicating the prayer intentions and leveraging new media and tools. Its mission is to unite people in prayer and service in response to the challenges facing humanity that the Holy Father expresses in his monthly intentions. Those who participate in this network are encouraged to become apostles in daily life through a spiritual path called "Way of the Heart," transforming those who take that path in the service of the mission of Jesus Christ. Founded in 1844 and present in over 100 countries, the Apostleship of Prayer unites more than 35 million people in its network, including its youth branch, the Eucharistic Youth Movement. For more information: <http://www.apmej.org>.

About the Global Catholic Climate Movement

Founded in January 2015, the Global Catholic Climate Movement is a network of over 350 Catholic organizations working to respond to the moral imperative of the climate change crisis. Further information can be found at <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>