



Coalition Members

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

Department of Justice
Peace and Human
Development

Migration and
Refugee Services

The Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities

Carmelite NGO

Catholic Charities USA

The Catholic Health Association of the United States

Catholic Relief Services

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men

The Franciscan Action Network

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference

The National Council of Catholic Women

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to share with you the *Catholic Climate Covenant* and invite you to take *The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor*. I am also asking you to help spread the good news of this Covenant and encourage others to join us in taking the St. Francis Pledge.

This unprecedented initiative offers Catholics a concrete way to live out our faith by caring for God’s Creation and the “*least of these*” in response to the challenges of global climate change. Pope Benedict XVI is leading these efforts: “*Our earth speaks to us, and we must listen if we want to survive.*”

This Catholic Climate Covenant brings together our Catholic commitments to care for God’s Creation and for vulnerable people at home and abroad. They face the worst impacts yet they contribute least to climate change. Sadly, they are likely to suffer the most from its consequences and have the least capacity and resources to respond.

We invite Catholic individuals, families, parishes, schools, communities and others to more faithfully examine the haunting question “*Who’s Under Your Carbon Footprint?*” and to join the Catholic Climate Covenant by taking and carrying out *The St. Francis Pledge*.

The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor is a promise and commitment to honor God’s Creation and stand with poor people by committing to:

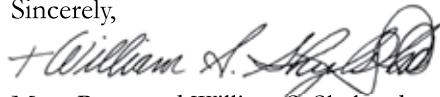
- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God’s Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable;
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change;
- **ASSESS** how each of us —as individuals or within our families, workplaces or other organizations—is contributing to climate change (i.e. consumption and conservation);
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors contributing to climate change and;
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact the poor and vulnerable.

I encourage you to take the St. Francis Pledge as a parish or parish school and promote it among your people, parish ministries and organizations, within your education and information efforts, and especially among young people. Please take a few minutes to look over this mailing and visit the website (www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org) for concrete ways to promote and fulfill the pledge.

This unique effort is coordinated by the *Catholic Coalition on Climate Change* which includes our Bishops’ Conference and a dozen other national Catholic organizations. It carries forward the moral principles and policy directions in the U.S. Bishops pastoral statement: *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*.

At this important moment for our Church and nation, for our planet and our people, let us together tread more lightly and act more boldly to address the moral dimensions of climate change. Thank you for helping our Catholic community demonstrate a common commitment to stewardship of God’s Creation and solidarity with poor people.

Sincerely,



Most Reverend William S. Skylstad
Bishop of Spokane
Catholic Climate Covenant, Honorary Chairman
Past President, U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops



Using This Resource

There are many ways to share the Catholic Climate Covenant and promote the St. Francis Pledge. Here are a few ideas for implementing this resource in your parish. But this resource could be implemented in a school or other Catholic organizations as well. You will know best how to share this message and encourage your own parish community, school staff and students or other constituencies.

Lead by Example: Take the pledge yourself and encourage others to join you in this effort.

Parish Council: Discuss with the Parish Council and encourage their support and participation.

Staff and Volunteers: Share this resource and the Covenant website www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org with your staff and parish volunteers, including:

- Leaders of religious education
- Youth ministers
- School principals and faculty
- Persons involved with liturgy

Display the Poster: Remove and display the two-panel poster in a place where parishioners will see it. Additional copies can be downloaded from www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

Choose a Weekend: Find a weekend in the near future to share and promote your parish's participation in this effort.

Bulletin Insert: Tear off the right hand panel of this resource and make copies of both sides (*print ad and Pledge*). Insert this in your bulletin. Encourage your parishioners to take the Pledge home and register online that they took the Pledge.

Schools and Religious Education: Encourage your parish school and religious education leaders to visit the Covenant website www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org where they will find resources appropriate to their ministry.

Worship and Preaching: Often the Sunday readings suggest themes of caring for Creation and for the poor and vulnerable. The website includes some ideas for particular Sundays.

Visit the Website (www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org):

- To discover more ways to fulfill the St. Francis Pledge as a parish, for families, for schools and other groups.
- To find other suggestions for integrating care for Creation in your liturgical celebrations.
- To download clip art and quotes on environmental stewardship and climate change from the U.S. bishops and the Holy Father for use in your bulletins.
- To read stories about the many ways the Catholic community is caring for Creation and poor and vulnerable people impacted by climate change.
- For adult and school-aged curricula and many other useful tools and ideas.

Elements of this printed resource and other related materials are available for download on the Covenant website.

Please be sure to take the St. Francis Pledge and register it online at:
www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org

The Saint Francis Pledge

to Care for Creation and the Poor



All across our country, Catholics are taking the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor and joining the Catholic Climate Covenant. The St. Francis Pledge is a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's Creation and advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change. To join the Covenant, you commit to act on each of the five elements of the St. Francis Pledge and register your Pledge at www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

I/We Pledge to:

- PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- ASSESS** how we—as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations—contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

Take this home with you and take the St. Francis Pledge.

Go to www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org to register your St. Francis Pledge.

Here are some specific ways to act on your St. Francis Pledge. Many more ideas can be found on the Catholic Climate Covenant website: www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org.

PRAY

- Be mindful and pray about those most impacted by climate change and for the grace to recognize our own contributions to the problem.
- See the prayers found on the Covenant website including the Canticle of the Creatures by St. Francis and others.
- Become familiar with and recite the many Psalms that portray the richness of Creation.

LEARN

- Review the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and how they relate to climate change www.usccb.org/sdwp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.shtml.
- Read and discuss the U.S. Bishops' Statement: Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good found at www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.shtml.
- Host a discussion group using a curriculum like the one found on the JustFaith.org website: God's Creation Cries for Justice. Climate Change: Impact and Response.

ASSESS

- Conduct an energy audit of your home, church, school or institution to discover where energy can be conserved.
- Consider and examine your carbon footprint to assess how your choices and behaviors contribute to or help reduce carbon emissions.

ACT

- Reduce your consumption of energy (act on your energy audit) by updating appliances, adjusting your thermostat, insulating, etc.
- Ask other Catholics and get your parish, school or other organization to take the St. Francis Pledge.
- Drive less and walk more, combine errands, or use public transportation.
- Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

ADVOCATE

- Write or call your members of Congress and urge that the needs of people in poverty be a central priority in strong and necessary climate legislation and other policies that address environmental stewardship.
- Check the websites of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development and the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change to stay up-to-date with public policy efforts in this area.

Go to the Catholic Climate Covenant website to register your St. Francis Pledge, to find ways to fulfill your pledge and to link up with other Catholics who have taken the pledge and explore other resources:

- A short video about the covenant
- News and stories about what Catholics (*individuals, parishes, schools, institutions*) are doing
- Quotes for bulletin inserts, church newsletters
- Liturgical resources and ideas
- Lesson plans and other helps for schools and adult religious education programs

Take the St. Francis Pledge and go to www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org

The impact of **climate change** falls heaviest on **the poor**.
Our faith invites us to **tread lightly** and **act boldly**.

Our cars and power plants, more energy consumption and waste — we're leaving a bigger carbon footprint. Scientists tell us that means more climate change. Here and around the world, it is the poor who will be hit hardest. With more droughts, floods, hunger and joblessness.

As faithful Catholics, we have a moral obligation to care for both Creation and the poor. Pope Benedict XVI insists, "*Before it is too late, it is necessary to make courageous decisions*" to curb climate change.

Take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor. Pray • Learn • Assess • Act • Advocate

Join Catholics taking action in our families, parishes, schools and communities to reduce our carbon footprint, care for "*the least of these*" (Mt 25) and raise our voice on behalf of Creation and the poor.



Catholic Climate Covenantsm
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Go to CatholicClimateCovenant.org



**Who's under your
carbon footprint?**

