

Press release

Vatican convenes ecological leadership summit

Political leaders and grassroots activists from around the world unite to signal urgent need for increased ambition on climate change and sustainability

Brussels, 4 July 2018.

On July 5 and 6, the Vatican will host a major international conference on protection of the environment. The occasion of the conference is the third anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on care of the Earth, our common home.

The conference will discuss the moral imperative for protecting the environment and events this fall that may deliver progress in achieving it. Participants will develop orientations on how to protect our planet including at forthcoming international events, such as the UN climate change conference [COP24](#), and non-state events, such as the [Global Climate Action Summit](#). Contributions by regions with heavily Catholic populations, such as Latin America, Australia, Poland, the Philippines, and the U.S. states of Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania will be crucial to the success of these events.

This conference will provide a venue for Church leaders, political leaders, and grassroots organisers to more clearly formulate how to achieve that progress. Outcomes are expected to include a statement from Pope Francis and statements of support for increased global ambition on emissions, clean energy, and climate justice from unusually diverse perspectives.

A broad range of allies – including politicians, indigenous leaders, youth activists, and economists – are uniting under the Catholic Church's vision of action to protect the Earth. From the Church itself, cardinals and other representatives from communities around the world, including educators, leaders of spiritual movements, and men and women religious will be present. Together, these allies share hope of justice for all who share our common home.

The conference programme, including the full list of speakers, is available [here](#). Speakers include:

- **His Holiness Pope Francis**
- **Leaders of international negotiations** (Dr. Patricia Espinosa, Exec. Sec., UNFCCC; Dr. Michał Kurtyka, Pres., COP24)
- **Politicians with a conservative perspective** (Hon. John Gummer, Lord Deben, Parliament of UK; Minister Jadwiga Emilewicz, Polish Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology)
- **Economic thinkers** (Prof. Nicholas Stern, London School of Economics; Mr. Pierre Larrourou, Pacte Finance Climat pour l'Europe)
- **Youth organisers** from the continents of Africa, South America, Europe, Oceania, and Asia
- **Representatives of grassroots movements** (Mr. Bill McKibben, 350.org; Mr. Naderev Saño, Greenpeace Southeast Asia)
- **Catholic authorities from around the world** (Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Sec. State; Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development; Cardinal Pedro Barreto, Archbishop of Huancayo, Perú; Cardinal Charles Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, Myanmar; Fr. Robert Athickal, India; Fr. Rigobert Minani, Democratic Republic of the Congo)

STATEMENTS

A statement about the conference from the Vatican is available [here](#).

Michel Roy, Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, said “As Pope Francis says in his encyclical, the climate crisis is not only an environmental issue, but also a human and ethical one. Environmental degradation is accompanied by poverty, loss of livelihoods and the perspective of a better future. We have a responsibility towards the next generations. It is urgent to change our over consumption and commit to the care of our common home.”

Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General of CIDSE, said “CIDSE is honored to be a partner of this conference on such an important and timely issue. For three years, *Laudato Si'* has been an incredible source of strength and inspiration in our work. What we want to see now is real political commitment to climate justice and an active response to Pope Francis' call to respect our common home. CIDSE is working with people around the world, to fight for a safe climate in which they can live and thrive, and where global warming is limited to 1.5 °C. Guided by their courage, we are asking world leaders to make serious commitments this year. Another, and a better world is possible, but only if we start putting people and the planet first!”

Tomás Insua, Executive Director of Global Catholic Climate Movement, said “Around the globe, people look to the Church for leadership. The Vatican, and actually Catholics from all around the world, are saying clearly, climate change is a faith issue. If we work together, we can protect the most vulnerable from climate change and provide a just transition to clean energy for hard-working miners and oil workers. There is not a moment to lose. The climate crisis is with us, and we must take up the solutions within our grasp—right now.”

Additional statements from partners attending the conference:

“*Laudato Si'* was so important for us because we are Christians at our core, for instance where I am from in Samoa, our motto is ‘Samoa is founded on God’. Having *Laudato Si'* come out was a validation for us that our Church has recognised our struggle, that Pope Francis and the Vatican know what’s happening to us, and they know that it’s wrong and it’s not God’s will for us to suffer. It’s really through us that churches can be part of the mobilisation of this climate movement, and that there is a lot of power that comes from faith.”

Brianna Fruean, Pacific climate warrior.

“To commit to *Laudato Si'* on the American continent means, as a priority, to take a clear position on extractivism. In their recent pastoral letter, CELAM bishops declared that extractivism is a tendency without control of the economic system, aiming at making profit from nature.” **Fr. Dario Bossi**, Church & Mining network

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