



06.01.2017

Catholic Leaders Respond to Paris Withdrawal

We, the member organizations of Catholic Climate Covenant, are deeply disappointed by President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement and stop all future payments to the Green Climate Fund. We implore him to reconsider. The international agreement of 2015 demonstrates that all nations will be impacted by a warming world and that all nations have a corresponding responsibility to limit greenhouse gas pollution causing climate change.

Climate change is already harming vulnerable people throughout the U.S. and around the world. American citizens in [Louisiana](#) and [Alaska](#) are being displaced by rising sea levels caused by melting glaciers and thermal expansion. Across the globe, families in [Zimbabwe](#) are being devastated by crushing drought amidst some of the hottest years on record. Globally, the World Health Organization [warns](#) that “between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.” Both at home and abroad, climate change unjustly and disproportionately harms poor and marginalized people who contribute least to the problem.

Catholic teaching insists that climate change is a grave moral issue that threatens our commitments: to protect human life, health, dignity, and security; to exercise a preferential option for the poor; to promote the common good of which the climate is part; to live in solidarity with future generations; to realize peace; and to care for God's good gift of creation. These arguments have been made by [Saint John Paul II](#), [Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI](#), [Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace](#), [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), [bishops from every continent](#) and, most recently, [Pope Francis](#).

The Catholic Church recognizes that climate change is a global problem that requires global solutions. It has repeatedly called for and supported international climate change agreements including by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in [2009](#), [2010](#), and [2012](#). Pope Francis wrote and released his ecological encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, in part to influence the Paris Agreement [stressing](#) that “its implementation will require unanimous commitment and generous dedication by everyone.” In *Laudato Si'*, he emphasized that “continuity is essential, because policies related to climate change and environmental protection cannot be altered with every change of government” (no. 181).

Here in the United States, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has encouraged the Trump Administration—in letters and visits to [Secretary of State Rex Tillerson](#), [National Security Advisor Lt. Gen H.R. McMaster](#), and [Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin](#)—to abide by the Paris Agreement and live up to its commitments for the Green Climate Fund. In March, [15,000 Catholics](#) sent a petition to President Trump asking him to honor the Paris Agreement and to contribute to the Green Climate Fund.



Beyond the Catholic community, *majorities of Americans in every state* believe that the U.S. should remain in the Paris Agreement. Similarly, *hundreds of U.S. businesses* – including major fossil fuel companies – have urged President Trump to honor the Paris Agreement. Across the United States, the message from Americans to President Trump is clear: any short-term economic gains should not be at the expense of long-term stability. This is not what America wants.

We, the members of Catholic Climate Covenant, believe there is no justification for this decision and we implore President Trump to reconsider this path. We will continue to raise our voices against climate policies that harm the planet and people while we will advocate for policies that respond to “*both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*” (*Laudato Si'* no. 49, emphasis in original).

Signatories

Daniel Misleh,
Executive Director, Catholic Climate Covenant

Eli McCarthy, Ph.D.
Associate Director of Justice and Peace, Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Fr. Michael Lasky, OFM Conv.
Board of Directors, Franciscan Action Network

Scott Wright
Director, Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

Sheila Hopkins
President, National Council of Catholic Women

Sr. Carol Keehan
President & CEO, Catholic Health Association

Sr. Donna Markham, OP, PhD, ABPP
President & CEO, Catholic Charities USA

Sr. Jane Remson, O.Carm.
Main Representative, Carmelite NGO

Sr. Mary Pellegrino, CSJ
President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Sr. Patricia McDermott, RSM
President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

Tomas Insua
Movement Coordinator, Global Catholic Climate Movement



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

CatholicClimateCovenant.org • (202) 756-5545 • 415 Michigan Avenue NE, Suite 260 • Washington,

Very Rev. Kevin Mullen, OFM

President, English Speaking Conference, Franciscan Friars (OFM)