

# POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL FAITH CLIMATE ACTION KIT

## #1 Understand the encyclical

Find select quotes for your use from the Pope's 184-page encyclical on ecology. In addition, find links to the encyclical and news coverage and analysis.

## #2 Talk about it

Use our sample Creation and climate sermons, social media graphics and sample tweets. Find guidelines for hosting a discussion and submitting Letters to the Editor.

## #3 Stand with Pope Francis

Join us in standing with Pope Francis by adding your name to pledges provided by Catholic Climate Covenant and Interfaith Power & Light.

## #4 Start a team, go green

Find inspiration and tips for forming a green team, cutting your carbon footprint, and saving money that can be used to advance your mission.

## #5 Take action

Participate in advocacy to ask Congress to support the Green Climate Fund to help the nations suffering most from the effects of climate change.

*"Climate change is a global problem with grave implications. . . It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. . . A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal."*

*Pope Francis, encyclical on ecology, June 2015  
Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home*

Interfaith Power & Light and the Catholic Climate Covenant have teamed up to bring you this Faith Climate Action Kit so your faith community can respond to Pope Francis' encyclical on ecology, with its strong environmental justice and climate theme.

This is a watershed moment for Catholics and for people of all faith traditions. *Newsweek* observes, "the encyclical... matters because it is an authoritative message by one of the world's great religious leaders. The encyclical will stimulate homilies and discussions in parishes around the world. It will become a source of inspiration and ideas for activists, preachers, teachers, theologians and authors who will echo and develop the Pope's message."

No matter what your faith tradition, it is our hope that this Faith Climate Action Kit will help you leverage this moment and Pope Francis' encyclical for your own activities— whether that means starting a green team, doing energy retrofits, conducting community conversations, writing a letter to the editor, or sending postcards to your congresspeople. As we say in our tweets, #AllAreCalled to respond. Thank you!



## #1 Understand the Encyclical

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### *What is a papal encyclical?*

Encyclicals are formal letters issued by a pope to the universal Catholic Church—its bishops and people of goodwill everywhere—concerning moral, doctrinal and disciplinary matters. The Pope is one of the most popular public figures in the world, both in and outside of the Church. Regardless of their religious beliefs, people around the world admire Pope Francis, and his leadership can create an atmosphere where world leaders will act on climate change in Paris in December of 2015 at the UN climate negotiations. [Read the full encyclical here: Laudato Si', On Care for our Common Home.](#)

### *What are the key messages?*

The encyclical highlights climate change as a moral issue, pointing out that the poor suffer the most from consequences of improper care of the environment even though they have contributed the least to climate change. Pope Francis challenges the assumptions of "both the left and the right" with the document, said Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace. The Pope calls the approach to stewardship outlined in the encyclical, integral ecology. [The Vatican Information Service has published an overview of the encyclical with its key messages.](#)

### *When will the Pope come to the U.S.?*

Pope Francis will visit the U.S. in September—the first visit to the U.S. by a pope since 2008.

#### Pope Francis Visits Washington, D.C.

September 23, 2015

White House Welcoming Ceremony

Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Speech to the Senate and House of Representatives

#### Pope Francis Visits New York

September 25, 2015

United Nations General-Assembly

Visit to St. Patrick's Cathedral

Madison Square Garden Mass

#### Pope Francis Visits Philadelphia

September 26, 2015

Prayer Vigil with World Meeting of Families

September 27, 2015

Mass with World Meeting of Families

*Select Quotes from Pope Francis from the encyclical on ecology by paragraph*Quotes on Climate Change

“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.” (25)

“Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.” (23)

“If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world’s population lives on the coast or nearby, and that the majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas.” (25)

“There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy.” (26)

Quotes on Humanity’s Relationship with the Earth

“[The earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.” (2)

“We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.” (2)

“Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it.” (139)

“Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment.” (141)

### Quotes on Ecological Injustice and the Impact on the Poor and Vulnerable

“The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” (23)

“Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry.” (25)

“A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.” (91)

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.” (139)

### Quotes on Over-consumption

“The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth.” (21)

“These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish.” (22)

“It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants. But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them.” (22)

“Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention.” (190)

“The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume.” (204)

### Quotes on Our Call to Action

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.” (202)

“Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.” (211)

### *[Links to encyclical resources, news and analysis](#)*

[Catholic Climate Covenant encyclical resources for Catholics](#)

[Pope Francis' encyclical resources page](#) from Interfaith Power & Light

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## #2 Talk About It

### *Catholic Sermon Ideas from Catholic Climate Covenant*

Whether we're praying at home or in the parish, our common values and practices unite us. These suggested prayers and reflection resources deepen our engagement with Catholic teaching on climate change and help transform our hearts and minds.

Suggested Prayers to reflect on Creation, from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops

Suggested scriptures and hymns to reflect on Creation, including for specific masses, from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops

A Faith Reflection to Climate Change with prayers, scriptures, and action steps, from Carmelite NGO

Walk Lightly Prayer and other prayer resources on the environment, from CAFOD, the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales

Scottish Catholic Study Guide with prayers, scriptures, and reflections, from the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh

For encyclical-specific Catholic liturgical calendar connections, [click here to request resources from the Catholic Climate Covenant](#) that include the following:

- ◆ Four homily helps
- ◆ Prayers of the faithful
- ◆ Sample bulletin insert
- ◆ Suggested entrance hymns

### *Sample care of Creation sermons & notes — for other faiths— from Interfaith Power & Light*

Here are some prayers, notes and sermons on care of Creation and climate given during the Interfaith Power & Light annual event to preach and teach about climate change.

#### A General Climate Blessing

Sister Joan Brown  
NM Interfaith Power & Light

#### Love God, Love Your Neighbor

The Rev. Canon Sally G. Bingham  
Sermon preached at St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
San Francisco, CA

#### A Place Called Hope (video link)

The Rev. Kim Morrow  
First-Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC  
Lincoln, NE

#### Notes for Jewish Leaders

from Preach-In on Global Warming

#### Notes for Lutherans

from Preach-In on Global Warming

#### Prayers for faiths using Revised Common Lectionary

from Preach-In on Global Warming

#### Notes for Unitarian Universalists

Environmental Justice Theme

#### Baha'i Materials for Preach-In

from Preach-In on Global Warming

**[Click here for More Sample Sermons](#)**

*Sample Tweets*

Cut and paste these tweets into your twitter status to help spread the word about the encyclical's key messages, and about the support faith-based climate leaders can find at Catholic Climate Covenant and Interfaith Power & Light.



With #climatechange, there are no sides-just solutions. @interfaithpower @CatholicClimate

Caring 4 Creation is basic tenant of all faiths. We believe #AllAreCalled to act on #climatechange. @interfaithpower @CatholicClimate

Many faiths, one Earth. See how US congregations are responding 2 #climatechange. @interfaithpower @CatholicClimate

We agree w/#PopeFrancis & @interfaithpower - world's poor are 1st & worst impacted by #climatechange. That's why #AllAreCalled to act.

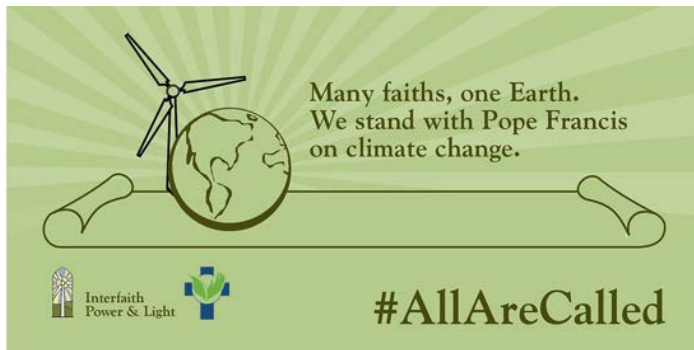
The climate is a common good #encyclical - #AllAreCalled @interfaithpower @CatholicClimate

@interfaithpower and @CatholicClimate members know the benefits of action on #climatechange. We stand w/#PopeFrancis to protect Creation.

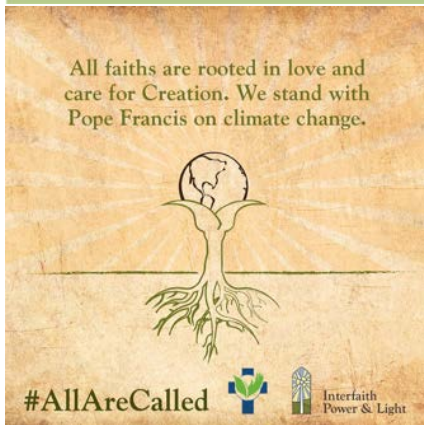
You can't love God & destroy Creation. @CatholicClimate and @interfaithpower stand w/#PopeFrancis because #AllAreCalled

*Facebook Share Graphics*

Click on the images below to get the larger share graphic for your Facebook page.



To download the Many Faiths, One Earth Facebook graphic, [click here](#).



To download the stand with Pope Francis Facebook graphic, [click here](#).

### *Send a Letter to the Editor*

The Pope and the encyclical will be in the news for quite some time to come. Keep your eyes open for print and online articles related to the Pope, the encyclical, the Pope's U.S. visit this fall, or the global climate talks in Paris in December. Any of these are a chance for you to weigh in with your opinion on the moral implications of climate change. Here are some basic guidelines to help you.

An LTE is written to a newspaper or online publication to respond to an article or offer an opinion.

#### **HOW DO I WRITE A GOOD LTE?**

1. LTEs should be submitted to the paper that serves the region where you live and/or work.
2. Follow the newspaper's guidelines.
3. Get your primary message across at the very beginning, and then spend the rest of the letter painting a clear picture of the problem and backing up your point.
4. Use stories, not statistics. Our brains remember personal and anecdotal details better than numbers – particularly when those details remind us of ourselves or place us in a narrative. Statistics can be useful, but use them sparingly.
5. Make it locally relevant. Many newspapers receive plenty of national stories from news syndicates, and are eager to print something that local residents want to read.
6. If appropriate, end your letter with a call to action and an opportunity to get involved.
7. Your own letter will be more effective if it's written from the heart. Don't copy and paste from a sample letter – instead, explain why you care. Adding some humor is a bonus.



### *Ideas for using the encyclical to inspire your faith community*

Host a reading and discussion group to review Pope Francis' encyclical, utilizing the selected quotes referenced in section #1 of this guide.

Review the “calls to action” below as outlined by the Pope in the encyclical, and discuss with your group how you can turn these words into action at the local level. Let this first meeting form the basis of a new Cool Congregations green team or Catholic Creation Care Team. The next section will outline these in greater detail.

#### **Selected Quotes on the Encyclical's Calls to Action**

“Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.” (19)

“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.” (202)

“Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.” (211)

“Because the stakes are so high, we need institutions empowered to impose penalties for damage inflicted on the environment. But we also need the personal qualities of self-control and willingness to learn from one another.” (214)

“We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.” (229)

### #3 Stand with Pope Francis

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If you're a Catholic, please take the Catholic Climate Covenant St. Francis pledge — to pray, act, and advocate to solve climate change. Or visit [catholicclimatecovenant.org/act](http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/act) for more information.

Clearly, Pope Francis' encyclical and visit to the US is timed to coincide with the 2015 UN Climate Talks in Paris later this year. As people of faith, Interfaith Power & Light communities from across the United States will bring to the table examples of what is possible by taking the Paris Pledge. Signers will strive for a 50% carbon emission reduction by 2030 and will set a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050 (below 2005 levels).

Interfaith Power & Light would like to see global nations commit to these levels. Therefore as a community, we must practice what we preach. IPL's Rev. Sally Bingham hopes to hand-deliver a LONG list of congregations and individuals (to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Paris), who are willing to commit to the same carbon reductions we are asking nations to make. It's a moral imperative to respond to global warming, and we need to work together in the upcoming years to make bigger change happen. We know it's possible, because so many congregations have already reached the 2030 Paris Pledge carbon reduction goals, and some are even completely carbon neutral. Visit our [coolcongregations.org](http://coolcongregations.org) website to learn how they did it.

UN Secretary Ban Ki-moon has called on government and civil society leaders to bring bold initiatives and proposals to drastically lower climate emissions, saying, "I challenge you to bring to the Summit bold pledges. Innovate, scale up, cooperate, and deliver concrete action that will close the emissions gap and put us on track for an ambitious legal agreement." The Paris Pledge was announced by IPL's Rev. Bingham in response to this challenge on Earth Day 2015.

**All people of faith [click here to take the Paris Pledge today, whether you're an individual or representing a congregation or organization.](#)**

## #4 Start a team, go green

If you're a Catholic, start a **Creation Care team** to enable committed Catholics to lead the charge to address climate change. Whether it's a group from your parish, workplace, or school, your team will work together to make a difference with the people you know. Creation Care teams create more sustainable facilities and advocate for faith-informed climate policies. Creation Care teams help your community be, in Pope Francis's words, protectors of God's gifts. When you start a Creation Care Team, you'll receive:

- ◆ Resources to recruit team members
- ◆ Tools to help educate fellow parish members on the importance of caring for creation
- ◆ Hands-on activities your team can do to make your parish more sustainable
- ◆ Inspiration and reflection on Catholic teaching about climate change

### Explore Starting a Creation Care Team

Every major religion has a mandate to care for Creation and to act as good stewards to preserve life for future generations, and many religions also now have climate statements. Interfaith Power & Light offers a **Cool Congregations** challenge and certification program, which is designed to support faith communities as they “walk the talk” by reducing their own carbon footprint, thus helping to cool the planet. A side benefit of the program is the ‘multiplier effect,’ as congregants are encouraged to model the same energy saving behavior at home that they see at their congregation. Learn about starting a green team, 25 Things Under \$25 to start, how to go solar — all to inspire your community. Visit CoolCongregations.org today and learn how to take the Cool Congregations Challenge for prize money, or how to become a Certified Cool Congregation so you can earn a lovely, sustainable wooden plaque for your sanctuary recognizing your achievement. **IPL also has 40-state affiliates, many of which provide support through various programs and services. Click here to find your state affiliate.**



## #5 Take action

When you become part of this movement, you will realize there is no shortage of opportunities for civic engagement and advocacy. Our current focus, is the **Green Climate Fund**.

If carbon dioxide had a color, there would be a lot of red white and blue up in the sky. Although China may have surpassed us in carbon pollution in recent years, the U.S. is still the world's largest historical contributor of global warming pollution. That's why we have a special obligation to help people around the world dealing with the impacts of climate change.

Soon, the Senate Appropriations Committee will take up the U.S. commitment to the Green Climate Fund for vulnerable people impacted by climate change. If your senator is listed below, your voice can make a real difference. **Please click here** to send a letter to your senator today, asking them to support this important legislation on behalf of the less fortunate.

### *Republicans on Senate Appropriations*

Cochran, Thad (MS) , Chairman  
 McConnell, Mitch (KY)  
 Shelby, Richard C. (AL)  
 Alexander, Lamar (TN)  
 Collins, Susan M. (ME)  
 Murkowski, Lisa (AK)  
 Graham, Lindsey (SC)  
 Kirk, Mark (IL)  
 Blunt, Roy (MO)  
 Moran, Jerry (KS)  
 Hoeven, John (ND)  
 Boozman, John (AR)  
 Capito, Shelley Moore (WV)  
 Cassidy, Bill (LA)

### *Democrats on Senator Appropriations*

Mikulski, Barbara A. (MD), Ranking Member  
 Leahy, Patrick J. (VT)  
 Murray, Patty (WA)  
 Feinstein, Dianne (CA)  
 Durbin, Richard J. (IL)  
 Reed, Jack (RI)  
 Tester, Jon (MT)  
 Udall, Tom (NM)  
 Shaheen, Jeanne (NH)  
 Merkley, Jeff (OR)  
 Coons, Christopher A. (DE)  
 Schatz, Brian (HI)  
 Baldwin, Tammy (WI)  
 Murphy, Christopher (CT)

Pope Francis pointed out in his encyclical on ecology that it is the world's poor who are bearing the brunt of climate impacts. As Americans, and as people of faith, we are obliged to advocate for those whose lives and livelihoods are threatened, and who cannot advocate for themselves.

The Green Climate Fund was conceived to help poor and vulnerable countries adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change like changing weather patterns, sea level rise, and extreme weather events and build more resilient societies. More than 30 countries have pledged \$10.2 billion to get the fund up and running. But we need to do our part and deliver on that promise.

**[Click here to tell your senator: \\$500 million for the Green Climate Fund is essential to combating global climate change!](#)**

From the low-lying Maldives to famine-stricken East Africa, people in developing countries suffer disproportionately from climate disasters that threaten their health and livelihoods. Developing countries

need funds to move forward with sustainable clean energy and to avoid the dirty fossil fuels that created the current crisis.

President Obama has pledged \$3 billion from the U.S., and requested the first installment of \$500 million in this year's budget. To maintain U.S. leadership in addressing the global climate challenge, Congress must approve this request. In contrast to the \$22 billion a year in direct subsidies to fossil fuel companies, \$500 million is a small-but-critical investment to ensure vulnerable communities are prepared to mitigate the hard-hitting impacts of climate change.

Respond to Pope Francis' call to action on climate with



**Catholic Climate Covenant<sup>sm</sup>**  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.



**Interfaith Power & Light**  
A Religious Response to Global Warming

Visit [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org) and [www.interfaithpowerandlight.org](http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org) to learn more.

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