



Pledging to Change

As the feast of St. Francis of Assisi (October 4) approaches, our Diocesan Public Policy Committee asks that we prayerfully consider taking the **St. Francis Pledge**. This is a promise to **pray, learn, assess, act** and **advocate** about climate change. It is being promoted by the Catholic Climate Covenant, a collaborative effort led by our U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and over a dozen other Catholic organizations. As Catholics we are called to care about this issue not only out of respect for the Creator of this planet, but also out of love for other people. The ravages of climate change— flooding, drought, the spread of disease, crop failure— most acutely hurt those who are

already hurting, namely the poorest and most vulnerable among us. Our destruction of the planet has a direct impact on people in poor countries in the Global South along with those in poor communities right here in the United States. If you're willing to take the St. Francis Pledge, please register online at the web site www.catholicclimatecovenant.org.

There you'll also find information on a special program entitled "**Creating a Climate for Solidarity: From St. Francis to Pope Francis to You**" which illustrates through the teaching and examples of those two men why we should act to protect the Earth. The materials for this multi-media presentation are free and available at the website org or by clicking this link

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5256/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=8753

The program aims to lead participants to

1. **Understand** more fully the connection between Creation care and solidarity with the poor and marginalized made by St. Francis of Assisi and expanded on by Pope Francis;
2. **Be inspired** by Catholic teaching about Creation care and solidarity;
3. **Engage** both personally and as a community in concrete ways to better protect Creation and vulnerable people at home and abroad;
4. **Build** leaders and networks for future efforts to practice the Catholic values of environmental stewardship, protection of human dignity, and outreach to the poor.



Please work to bring this program to your church committees, youth group, college campus ministry or others in your faith community. Contact Justice & Peace Ministry staff if you need assistance.

The St. Francis Pledge

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.

POWERFUL WORDS ON POWER PLANTS

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), electric power plants which run on fossil fuels (petroleum, coal, natural gas) are the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the US. As a greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide is one of the main factors causing our climate to change. The EPA is in the process of developing more restrictive emissions standards for new and existing power plants to address this situation.

In a letter to the EPA, Archbishop Thomas Wenski, the chair of the Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, asked that the U.S. act *now* to address climate change and that the regulations protect the poorest and most vulnerable people from the effects of climate change. The letter noted, "Power plants have often been located near low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Air pollution from these plants contributes to respiratory problems, especially in the young and the elderly."

It went on to say, "Beyond the regulations, the United States should exercise leadership for a globally negotiated climate change agreement." A link to the full text of the letter can be found here:

<http://usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/>

The Bishops Conference is urging Catholics to add their voices in comments to the EPA in support of the goal of cutting carbon emissions from power plants by 30% over the next 15 years. To learn more about the proposed regulations see <http://www2.epa.gov/carbon-pollution-standards> and to make your voice heard about the importance of this effort to address climate change, go to

http://org2.salsalabs.com/o/5256/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=17826

SPEAK OUT ON U.N. CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS

World leaders are meeting in New York City this month for climate change talks which will culminate in Paris in 2015. To draw attention to the urgent need for these leaders to take action, tens of thousands of people, including some from our diocese, will be participating in the People's Climate March on September 21. The Catholic Climate Covenant has joined with dozens of other faith organizations to gather signatures on a petition to President Obama and members of Congress, to "call on our political leaders ... to take a lead role in helping to craft a moral global framework for the UN climate negotiations." See <http://www.faithclimatepetition.org/> The petition reads in part:

As people of faith, we are called to protect and serve God's Creation and seek justice for all people and future generations. The gravity of climate change requires us to act with urgency.

As we approach the UN negotiations for 2015, we prayerfully ask that the US government lead, with a commitment to:

- *Legally binding solutions that reduce national greenhouse gas emissions to levels consistent with scientific recommendations that prevent the worst impacts of human induced climate change.*
- *Provide poor and vulnerable communities here and abroad meaningful support to build low carbon and climate-resilient societies.*

To add your name to the petition go to

http://salsa4.salsalabs.com/o/51086/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=11264



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

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