



The Global Catholic
Climate Movement

www.CatholicClimateMovement.global

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Catholic Organizations Celebrate Vatican Declaration on Climate Change and Warn Against Attempts to Undermine It

The [Global Catholic Climate Movement](http://www.CatholicClimateMovement.global) (GCCM), which represents nearly 100 Catholic organizations working on climate justice, celebrated today's "[Protect the Earth, Dignify Humanity](#)" summit and declaration in the Vatican. The meeting, which had the goal of strengthening the global consensus on the issue of climate change, was cosponsored by the Pontifical Academies of Sciences and Social Sciences, and included the participation of Vatican officials plus over 100 high-level invitees, including scientists, diplomats, development experts, and religious leaders from different faiths.

The summit included opening addresses by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and by Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. And it concluded with the release of a [joint declaration](#) that stressed the moral issues connected to human-induced climate change.

"Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its decisive mitigation is a moral and religious imperative for humanity," reads the declaration. "In this core moral space, the world's religions play a very vital role. These traditions all affirm the inherent dignity of every individual linked to the common good of all humanity. They affirm the beauty, wonder, and inherent goodness of the natural world, and appreciate that it is a precious gift entrusted to our common care, making it our moral duty to respect rather than ravage the garden that is our home. The poor and excluded face dire threats from climate disruptions, including the increased frequency of droughts, extreme storms, heat waves, and rising sea levels".

The Catholic groups participating in the GCCM said in a statement: "We celebrate this Vatican summit and declaration, as it is an important step to raise awareness among Catholics about the climate change issue. Human-made climate change is a moral problem, as it affects mostly those who did the least to create it: the poor and future generations. In midst of the world's inaction to tackle climate change it is very important to stress the moral dimension of the climate crisis, and faith communities have a crucial role to play."

The Vatican's joint declaration refers to the UN climate summit happening in December: "The world should take note that the climate summit in Paris later this year (COP21) may be the last effective opportunity to negotiate arrangements that keep human-induced warming below 2-degrees C, and aim to stay well below 2-degree C for safety, yet the current trajectory may well reach a devastating 4-degrees C or higher". The Global Catholic Climate Movement is mobilizing ahead of that climate summit through a [petition](#) that aims to raise a strong Catholic voice in each country, asking world leaders for bold climate action.

At the same time, the GCCM encouraged the Catholic community to be aware of the events in Rome today and to warn against attempts to disparage the Vatican's contributions to climate change and sustainability. Namely, the press conference today in Rome of the Heartland Institute, which is a "climate denier" lobbying group, that sought to undermine the Church's position about the climate change scientific consensus by shedding confusion on the issue. "We also want to express our concern with some attempts to discredit the Church's position on climate change," the GCCM stated. "While acknowledging that the Church is not a scientific body, the Vatican has embraced and supported scientific findings, such as those summarized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There is a strong scientific consensus that climate change is caused by human action and will have severe consequences if not tackled urgently, so campaigns that aim to undermine climate action through misinformation should be condemned. We invite all Catholics to join this effort of the Church to reflect on the severity of the climate crisis and take action."

This Vatican summit is a high-profile first step of the Vatican to prepare the way for the upcoming encyclical about ecology by Pope Francis, expected in June 2015. As the organizers explained in their website, one of the summit's goals was "to build a global movement to deal with climate change and sustainable development throughout 2015 and beyond." Next week members of the GCCM will be joining Catholic climate leaders from around the world in Rome for meetings on how Catholics globally can collaborate to protect God's creation.

The Global Catholic Climate Movement is an international network of almost 100 Catholic organizations aiming to mobilize Catholics around the world for climate action in line with Catholic values, especially the protection of creation and all life. The movement has recently completed a [Lenten Fast for Climate Justice](#) and is currently promoting the [Care4Creation Month](#) campaign.

END

Notes for Editor

Founded in 2014, the GCCM is a coalition of almost 100 Catholic organizations, networking through new media to promote worldwide reflection, prayer and action on Catholic teaching on the care of God's Creation. Further information on the GCCM can be found at <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

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