



The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

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Summer 2008 Update and SOME REALLY BIG NEWS

God's creation is one and it is good!

His Holiness Benedict XVI, Sydney, Australia, July 17, 2008

As we celebrate the full sunshine of summer in the Northern Hemisphere, Pope Benedict is exhorting young people in Australia to have courage and faith in the face of so many global challenges including “the concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment.”

Reflecting on his long airplane journey from Rome to Australia, Pope Benedict told the audience that he marveled at the beauty of the Mediterranean, the deserts of Africa, the lushness of Asia. He also saw

...scars which mark the surface of our earth: erosion, deforestation, the squandering of the world's mineral and ocean resources in order to fuel an insatiable consumption. Some of [the gathered youth] come from island nations whose very existence is threatened by rising water levels; others from nations suffering the effects of devastating drought. God's wondrous creation is sometimes experienced as almost hostile to its stewards, even something dangerous. How can what is “good” appear so threatening?

But he reminds us that in baptism *we* have become a new creation. We who have been made in God's image and likeness embrace “God [who] has a human face - Jesus Christ” and are called to bear witness to our Savior. “Our hearts and minds are yearning for a vision of life where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion. This is the work of the Holy Spirit! This is the hope held out by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to bear witness to this reality that you were created anew at Baptism and strengthened through the gifts of the Spirit at Confirmation.”

We are indeed blessed that our Holy Father continues to bear witness to the need to listen to the “voice of the earth” as he said to a group of priests last year. For the full texts of Pope Benedict's speeches and homilies at World Youth Day, click [here](#).

NEWS FROM THE COALITION

There is so much to share since our Spring Update which was sent before Pope Benedict's visit to the United States. Here are the highlights:

- National capacity-building grants: Eleven [national Catholic organizations](#) were awarded grants to help them integrate climate change activities into their ongoing education, outreach and advocacy efforts. The response to the request for proposals was overwhelming and a sure sign that Catholic institutions and individuals are seeking to learn more about how the Catholic community might respond faithfully to God’s call to be stewards of Creation in light of the threats posed by climate change.
- Promising climate change legislation fails on Capitol Hill. As you may know, the Lieberman/Warner/Boxer *America’s Climate Security Act* failed to attract enough Senators to end debate (60 needed) and died on the Senate floor. This legislation was, in essence, a template for future bills and the Catholic bishops and many other people of faith—as well as you—worked tirelessly to ensure that the bill contained provisions to hold the poor harmless from the impacts of climate change and legislation designed to address it. The Catholic community advocated for public policies that ensure:
 - low-income families in the US are protected from disproportionate impacts of rising energy costs,
 - workers in energy industries that will be harmed by a move toward renewable energy receive some assistance with job transition and
 - the poorest countries around the world receive assistance from the US to adapt to the negative consequences of climate change such as food shortages, flooding, heat waves, rising sea levels and water insecurity.

We thank you for your efforts and will continue to keep you informed as new policy is drafted in the next Congress.

- The Coalition continues to expand. We welcome new [partners](#) in our efforts including The Leadership Conference of Women Religious, The Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB and the Carmelite NGO. Each organization is sending representatives to the CCCC Steering Committee meetings to help us more effectively share Church teaching and develop programs and approaches that engage more and more their constituencies.

THE REALLY BIG NEWS

The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change has teamed up with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Environmental Justice Program, the Franciscan Action Network and St. Anthony Messenger Press to launch a new initiative: *A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Partnership to Protect Creation and People in Poverty*. The initiative will launch in late fall or early winter.

A Catholic Climate Covenant is an extension of the ongoing efforts by the CCCC and USCCB to more fully implement the bishops’ statement on climate change and welcomes the resources and enthusiasm of our new partners from the Franciscan community. Together, this new partnership will seek to engage more thoughtfully and prayerfully and to share more extensively with all Catholics ways to respond to climate change consistent with Gospel values and Church teaching while embracing the heritage of our beloved St. Francis.

At the core of *A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Partnership to Protect Creation and People in Poverty* will be the “St. Francis Care of Creation Pledge” to encourage

individuals, parishes and schools to commit to caring for creation and protecting poor people from climate change impacts. The initial set of materials will be a mailer sent to all parishes in the US in late fall or early winter announcing the new initiative. The mailer will contain an attractive poster for parish hall or school, a camera-ready bulletin insert outlining Church teaching on climate change and highlighting the St. Francis Pledge. A more extensive website will hold additional resources and ideas including homily suggestions, prayer and liturgy resources, and helpful links as well as a 2-3 minute reflective video. We'll notify all our members when this website is available and a link will be posted on the CCCC website.

Educational Tools

JustMatters Module

We continue to assist *JustFaith* in updating the very successful JustMatters module, “God's Creation Cries for Justice.” Dozens of small faith groups used the 8-week program this year and offered feedback on the materials and outline of the program. We are happy to say that it received solid high marks this past year, but there was room for improvement. For more information, go to: <http://www.justfaith.org/JF1252.html>.

This Is Your Home

We continue to promote this wonderful, downloadable resource as a great introduction to climate change, Catholic teaching and action. With a grant from the USCCB's Environmental Justice Program, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters in Monroe, MI. produced this three-part series. An accompanying study guide can also be downloaded. It makes for a great one-night or several night series for parishes. It is geared towards a younger audience, but works well with adults, too. Click [here](#) to see the website.

Catholic Approach to Climate Change Question and Answer Resource

Answering difficult questions about the Church's involvement in social justice issues have always been part of the work of those engaged in social ministry. Undoubtedly, you have encountered some tough questions about climate change. We have developed a tool to help answer some of those questions for your use. This nine-page resource is divided into five sets of questions and answers: faith, science, political, economic and poverty. To download your copy, go to [Resources](#) and click on “A Catholic Approach to Climate Change” under “Education”.

Other Climate Change Tools

Be sure to look at the resources page on our website for more educational tools:
www.catholicsandclimatechange.org

Coalition Partners

More and more national Catholic organizations are joining the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. We encourage you to visit their climate change related information on their websites as well:

- Catholic Relief Services: www.crs.org
- National Council of Catholic Women: www.nccw.org
- Catholic Health Association of the United States www.chausa.org
- Catholic Charities USA www.catholiccharitiesusa.org
- National Catholic Rural Life Conference www.ncrlc.com
- Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities www.accunet.org

- Franciscan Action Network www.franciscanaction.org
- Migration and Refugee Services: www.usccb.org/mrs
- Leadership Conference of Women Religious: www.lcwr.org
- Conference of Major Superiors of Men: www.cmsm.org
- Carmelite NGO: www.carmelitengo.org

Share This News

We encourage you to forward this e-mail to your family, friends and colleagues and help us build a network of concerned Catholics engaged in promoting the common good, acting with prudence and protecting the poor as climate change unfolds.

Click [here](#) and request that you be removed from our mailing list if you no longer wish to receive this bulletin.