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# U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration

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As Catholic communities, organizations, and institutions in the United States, we join with state, tribal, and local governments, as well as businesses, financial institutions, and other faith organizations, to declare that we are still in on actions that meet the climate goals outlined in the Paris Agreement.

The Catholic Church has long recognized—and 55 years ago Pope Paul VI eloquently described--the tragic consequences of unchecked human activity (*Laudato Si'*, 4). This reality includes the problem of excess greenhouse gas pollution and the reality of human-forced climate change. In 2001 the U.S. Bishops said that “global climate is by its very nature a part of the planetary commons,” and that prudent action must be taken to protect it (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, 2001). On numerous occasions Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have called for an international climate change agreement.

Climate change is an urgent moral issue because it compromises the future of our common home, threatens human life and human dignity, and adds to the hardships already experienced by the poorest and most vulnerable people both at home and abroad. We teach that governments exist to protect and promote the common good, and that “the *climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.*” (*Laudato Si'*, 23).

"[A]t its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both 'the human environment' and the natural environment. It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, 2001).

In December 2015, the leaders of 195 nations adopted the Paris Agreement that established a framework for nations to reduce carbon emissions to limit the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels, and to avoid the most dangerous effects of climate change. The Holy See and the U.S. Bishops have repeatedly voiced their support for it.

On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris agreement, the only nation to do so. In response, the U.S. bishops declared, “The President's decision not to honor the U.S. commitment to the Paris agreement is deeply troubling” ([USCCB Statement on the President's Withdrawal from Paris Agreement](#), June 1, 2017).

As Catholic communities, organizations, and institutions in the United States, we join with other institutions from across American society to ensure that the United States remains a global leader in reducing emissions. We call for the Administration to join the global community and return to the Paris Agreement.

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