

Rome
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*Vatican conference on the 3rd anniversary of Laudato si' calls for ambition on
environmental protection*

Pope Francis encourages progress at global events this autumn

A two-day conference in the Vatican has resulted in urgent calls for action on environmental protection, including climate change. Headed by Pope Francis and including UN environmental chiefs, policy-makers from across the political spectrum, indigenous and youth activists, and people from around the world, the group reflected on next directions for a common action. The address by Pope Francis, available in its full text [here](#), called us to urgently respond to the example of St. Francis in “repairing our common home”.

Speaking of the UN climate negotiations to take place in Poland this December, during which nations will establish their next steps in implementing the Paris climate agreement, Pope Francis said, “The COP24 Summit, to be held in Katowice, Poland, in December, could prove a milestone on the path set out by the 2015 Paris Agreement.” The Holy Father continued, “governments should strive to honour the commitments made in Paris, in order to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis . . . we cannot afford to waste time.” Action by the private sector was also highlighted by the pope, which also asked for an “ecological conversion” of each person.

Speaking of the non-state climate summit to take place in California, Pope Francis said “Along with states, local authorities, civil society, and economic and religious institutions can promote the culture and practice of an integral ecology”.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Human Development, which convened the event, reminded participants of the urgency of acting on the Holy Father’s and Church teaching, saying “We are indeed playing a reckless gamble with our common home, and ultimately with the future of life on Earth. Our actions today will determine the future not only of the present generations but also of future generations for millennia”. In this sense, the Cardinal concluded, “the challenge for the Dicastery is to push the local Churches to implement the changes that *Laudato si'* calls us for”. Father Bruno Marie Duffé, secretary of the Dicastery, said that “the ecological conversion asks us for a new relation with the richness of creation, with other living creatures and ourselves”. It implies, Duffé remarked, calling for

an intergenerational dialogue, also “an integral human development, respectful of the dignity of every human person, of the earth and the environment”.

The pope’s comments were echoed over the course of the two-day event by hundreds of participants. Speakers included Cardinals Parolin, Turkson, Barreto, and Bo, UN Environment head Erik Solheim, Bill McKibben, Yeb Saño, and ministers and members of parliament from Poland, Norway, and the UK, among many others. The speakers declared their own commitment to making progress on climate change and environmental protection, and called governments to step up their commitments. Patricia Espinosa, chair of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), said, “If we truly want to make the fundamental, transformative changes, perhaps what we need then is not a physical ark, but an ark of ambition.”

Participants developed lines of action around critical events in the path to achieving ambition. As a whole, the participants:

- renewed the commitment on the *Laudato si’* requests for radical conversion;
- recalled for an urgency to pass from intention to action in the care of creation;
- asked to enrich participation and action of young and indigenous people during the **Synod on Youth and Synod on the Amazon**, because they are not the future but the present of the world;
- encouraged global financial institutions to support local and international decisions towards an integral ecology, by “walking the talk” as a Church, including investments with positive social and environmental impact;
- engaged the faithful around the **Season of Creation** through a statement jointly signed by the heads of major Christian churches, local action and advocacy, and other initiatives.

In reaction to the conference, Tomás Insua, executive director of Global Catholic Climate Movement, said, “Wherever we live and whoever we are, the ecological crisis touches all of us. *Laudato Si’* teaches us that we are not alone in this crisis, that our faith gives us strength to work together for the solutions we urgently need. With the guidance of Pope Francis, people around the world are coming together to call for greater ambition and faster action on climate change.”

The conference was convened by the Vatican’s Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in cooperation with the Global Catholic Climate Movement. It had partners in Caritas Internationalis, CIDSE, CAFOD, the Global Solidarity Fund, Fastenopfer, REPAM, and EcoJesuit. More information about the conference is [here](#).