

Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers Declaration and Call to Action to Care for Creation

Grounded in the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers' (CADEIO) purpose to 1) stimulate the exchange of ideas, experiences and networking among the Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers of the arch/dioceses in union with Rome; 2) promote programs that further the work of Christian unity and interreligious cooperation; and 3) cooperate with the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and with other ecumenical and interreligious agencies, CADEIO embraces a Dialogue of Action to promulgate the Roman Catholic Church's teachings on caring for creation.

The Dialogue of Action is one of the principal means by which Catholics build relationships with other Christians and people of other religions.¹ Pope Francis speaks of this dialogue as a "Dialogue of Fraternity" (in its original sense of "sisterhood and brotherhood") to address the social ills of today's world, citing 1 Peter 3:8: "*Finally, all of you should be of one mind, sympathetic with each other, love each other as brothers and sisters, and keep a humble attitude.*"² The Pope's encyclical *Laudato Si'*³ (LS) calls Catholics into dialogue with all humanity (LS 3) to address one of the principle challenges facing God's creation: global climate change and environmental degradation. (LS 25)

Out of gratitude and obligation for all of God's creation, as well as in furtherance of our clear purpose, CADEIO recognizes that:

- "Human-induced climate change is a scientific reality, and its decisive mitigation is a moral and religious imperative for all of humanity."⁴

¹ The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, "*Dialogue and Proclamation*, Interreligious Dialogue (1), Forms of Dialogue (3), The Forms of Dialogue (42), Dialogue of Action (b)" (May 19, 1991)

² CADEIO, "Pope Francis' Dialogue of Fraternity" (October, 2015)

³ Encyclical Letter "*Laudato Si'*" of the Holy Father Francis, On Care For Our Common Home" (May 24, 2015)

⁴ Pontifical Academy of Sciences, "Declaration of Religious Leaders, Political Leaders, Business Leaders, Scientists and Development Practitioners" (April 28, 2015)

- The earth “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.” (LS 2)
- “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” (LS 23) “The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.” (LS 95)
- “The majority of people living on our planet profess to be believers. This should spur religions to dialogue among themselves for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity.... The gravity of the ecological crisis demands that we all look to the common good, embarking on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that ‘realities are greater than ideas.’⁵” (LS 201)
- The United Nations personnel responsible for the implementation of the Paris Accords on climate change, as well as the newly approved Sustainable Development Goals insist that religious communities with their wide-ranging contacts at all levels of global society and their motivational capacities are crucial actors in the process of implementation.
- As expressed in the Lund Principle⁶, we are invited to "never to do alone what we can do together.”
- Because sustainability is a global challenge, no one religion can effectively pursue implementation on its own, including within the United States. CADEIO is well positioned in this regard given its commitment to interreligious dialogue.

From this recognition and commitment to action, CADEIO will:

- invite all arch/diocesan ecumenical and interreligious officers to dialogue with other churches and religions to care for creation.
- encourage arch/diocesan ecumenical and interreligious officers to collaborate with offices within their local church when addressing care for God’s creation.
- provide forums, workshops, information and resources to support the CADEIO community.

⁵ Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium* of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World” (November 24, 2013) 143

⁶ World Council of Churches, *Faith and Order Conference* (1952)

- develop systems to facilitate the flow of information and connection between (arch)dioceses and other stakeholders.
- collaborate with organizations to further the effectiveness of CADEIO's *Declaration and Call to Action to Care for Creation*.
- advocate for being responsible stewards of God's creation.
- embrace CADEIO's *A Roman Catholic Spirituality to Care for Creation*

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit we pray,

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis