



## 5 reasons why Catholics should care about the COP26 climate summit

In 6 days, the United Nations climate change summit, COP26, is set to begin in Glasgow, Scotland.



The two-week (Oct. 31-Nov. 12) conference, [delayed a year by the coronavirus pandemic](#), has long been billed as a critical checkpoint in the global effort to limit the planet's warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial times.

Scientists have said, to reach this goal, drastic cuts in global greenhouse gas emissions, at least a 45% overall reduction, need to be made this decade.

As it stands the Earth has already warmed roughly 1.1 C, and current national climate pledges place the planet on a path to heat by 2.7 C by the end of the century.

Some 20,000 delegates, and thousands more activists and advocates, are expected to attend COP26. Catholics who will be in Glasgow say there are many reasons for people of faith to pay attention to the proceedings.



*A Faith gathering at Ss Peter and Paul Kiama on the World day of action October 19 2021*

"From a Catholic point of view, I think if we care about God's Earth, if we care about creation, if we care about the poor, if we care about our children, and if we care about the unborn children of today, we need to be engaged with this," said Lorna Gold, board chair of the *Laudato Si'* Movement.

### Reason #1: Pope Francis cares (as do many faith leaders)

Pope Francis has frequently referenced the climate conference in speeches and messages to world leaders and global gatherings.

On Oct. 4, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Francis convened nearly 40 religious leaders at the Vatican to [sign a joint appeal to participants at COP26](#). In the statement, the faith leaders urged those in Glasgow "to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our *stewardship*."

The faith leaders committed to take actions within their own religious communities. Within the Catholic Church, those efforts are encapsulated within the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, [which is set to launch on Nov. 14](#), or just days after COP26 ends.

The pope is also expected to raise climate issues before the U.S. leader heads to Scotland, when he meets with President Joe Biden on Oct 29.

## Reason #2: Paris Agreement wasn't the end, but a beginning

In 2015, nearly every nation on Earth [adopted the Paris climate accord](#), where for the first time all countries, not just the most industrialized ones, committed to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions.

But the Paris Agreement only put the overall goals on paper; it did not include specific measures of how to get there. Instead, each nation agreed to present its own emissions-reduction plans, called nationally determined contributions or NDCs, and update them every five years..

Much of the time since 2015 has been spent crafting the rulebook that spells out what countries can, and cannot, count in determining their emissions reductions. **Much debate has centered on actual reductions versus "net zero," where a country or company offsets some portion of emissions by purchasing reductions elsewhere.**

"That's why the rulebook is so important," Gold said. " and that these are actual reductions."

Along with submitting new, **more ambitious emissions-reduction pledges** and the focus on the 1.5 C target, other important issues on the table will be **delivering on pledges of financing to help less-industrialized nations adapt to and mitigate climate change**, to the tune of \$100 billion annually, and sending a clear signal that the world is moving past the era of fossil fuels.

## Reason #3: Catholic social teaching is on the table, especially for the poor

Name a principle of Catholic social teaching — from the dignity of every person, to solidarity and workers' rights — and you will find it relates to the discussions at COP26, said Sr. Veronica Brand, who represents the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary at the U.N.

**"With the impact of climate change, we are talking about action on behalf of justice. ... We are talking about lives being threatened. We're talking about livelihoods and the dignity of those who are most marginalized," she said.**

The people suffering most from global warming have contributed least to the problem and have fewer resources to adapt and respond.

Cecile Kern, global policy and research advocate with Mercy International Association, said it's important to recognize that "the climate crisis is

not simply a climate crisis" but also a social and economic one.

## Reason #4: The climate is not waiting for governments to agree

While world leaders and diplomats debate and hash out details of the Paris Agreement, average global temperatures have continued to rise, with increasingly evident impacts.

The six hottest years on record have [occurred since 2015](#) when the Paris Agreement was reached, and many parts of the world have been hit by extreme weather — heat waves accompanied by wildfires and severe storms and flooding — that scientists link to global warming.



The costs of climate change are adding up, too, with extreme weather causing an average of \$202 million a day in damages in the past half-century, [according to the World Meteorological Organization](#).

## Reason #5: The pandemic connection

Although COVID-19 delayed the climate conference, many see the forced pause as [an opportunity](#), especially for accelerating the global transition to clean energy necessary to achieve the 1.5 C target.

Because of that, COP26 has taken on added importance, and how countries invest to re-boost their economies will be critical, said Neil Thorns, director of advocacy for CAFOD, the official development agency of the Catholic Church of England and Wales.

"Is it going to be spent on jobs which are green and sustainable? Is it going to put the poorest at the heart of that money? Are we going to make sure that the most vulnerable groups are protected and nurtured?" he asked.

"Pope Francis says to us you don't come back the same, you either come back better or worse. And we want to make sure we come back better," Thorns said of COP26.



[This is an extract from NCR EARTHBEAT Oct 16, 2021]  
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## LET US PRAY

The prayer below is based on the Joint Appeal of almost 40 **World Religious Leaders and Scientists made on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021**. It can be taken as a truly representative multi-faith prayer. The Appeal ends as a plea to the international community, gathered at COP26, to take speedy, responsible and shared action to safeguard, restore and heal our wounded humanity and the home entrusted to our stewardship. ... ..

### *Heavenly Father*

*We come together to raise awareness of the unprecedented challenges that threaten our beautiful common home;*

*Teach us to be true to our faiths and spiritualities to care for the human family and for the environment in which we live;*

*Help us to deepen our understanding of our interdependence with each other and with our natural world;*

*May we come to an understanding that we are not limitless masters of our planet and its resources;*

*And may we increasingly appreciate that the multiple crises facing humanity reflect a crisis of values, ethical and spiritual;*

*We are caretakers of the natural environment with the vocation to care for it for future generations and the moral obligation to cooperate in the healing of the planet;*

*We will address these challenges using the knowledge of science and the wisdom of religion, thinking long term for the sake of all humanity;*

*As people of faith we commit ourselves to personal conversion and transformative action in solidarity with each other.*

*In your name, Heavenly Father.*



## Laudato Si' Movement

As Catholics we cannot remain impassive before this tragedy, we are called to promote change. A few days before the start of the 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), WE INVITE YOU TO RAISE YOUR VOICE ALONGSIDE Pope Francis !

["Healthy Planet, Healthy People" petition](#) has already been signed by hundreds of thousands of people across five continents, what are you waiting for?

Sign and spread this initiative

## FROM THE CARMELITE CENTRE



***"Contemplation - a way of being, not doing"***

Join Wayne Stanhope, OCarm, for this Carmelite Conversation on **Wednesday 3 November, 10.30-12 midday on Zoom.**

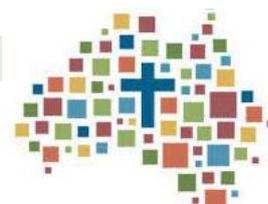
[Read more](#) | [Reading material & bookings here](#)

✚ 'Laudato Si' is not a green encyclical. It's a social encyclical. The green and the social go hand in hand. The fate of creation is tied to the fate of all humanity.'

✚ 'A fruitful thought should always be unfinished in order to give space to subsequent development' – a quote from Romano Guardini by Pope Francis

**Let us Dream** – Pope Francis

## PLENARY COUNCIL FEEDBACK from PROVINCIAL PAUL CAHILL O.CARM



Spending 7 hours a day online for 6 days with 300 other participants can be exhausting and overwhelming, but Fr Paul Cahill says that the first Assembly of the Plenary Council was, ‘a prayerful, humbling, respectful and inspiring experience in which I was keenly aware of my own inadequacies but graced to be able to participate.’

These are some personal reflections by Fr Paul at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Plenary Council.

‘This Plenary Council involves a long process. It is at least three years since wide consultation began among the people of Australia about the question of *What is the Spirit saying to us in Australia today*. The reflection and dialogue occasioned by the feedback to that consultation led to the formation of the Agenda for and celebration of this First Assembly. A large number of proposals were gathered together from all the discernment and discussion that occurred at the Assembly. These will now be collated and formed into proposals by the Plenary Council Steering Committee. As I understand it, these proposals will be the subject of further wide consultation among the people of God before they come before the Second Assembly (in July next year, hopefully in person, in Sydney) for voting. [TO READ MORE](#) ...

## NEWS FROM TIMOR LESTE from Mayra Walsh, Community Development Coordinator

‘I’m pleased to report that the situation has improved in Timor. Covid case numbers have dropped significantly and vaccine rates are rising steadily, with Dili having recently had 70% of the adult population fully vaccinated. It is also pleasing to see that Covalima Municipality (where Zumalai is located) has the second highest rural vaccination rates, with 77.9% first dose, and 50.2% second dose.

Sadly the number of deaths has increased significantly, from 26 deaths two months ago, up to 119. There have been suggestions that the death toll is probably much higher, as many deaths may not have been investigated and therefore not attributed to Covid, however this can’t be confirmed.

Here are the latest numbers from the Timor-Leste Ministry of Health. On 11 October 2021 there were:

- 2 new case of COVID-19 from 136 tests
- 19,675 total confirmed cases in Timor
- 208 currently active cases
- 119 deaths (total)

## LET US DREAM – The Path to a Better Future – Pope Francis

*This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities, what we value, what we want, what we seek – and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of.*

*Millions of people have asked themselves and each other where they might find God in this COVID crisis. What comes to my mind is the overflow. I’m thinking of great rivers that gently swell, so gradually that you hardly notice them, but then the moment comes, and they burst their banks and pour forth. In our society, God’s mercy breaks out at such “overflow moments”; bursting out, breaking the traditional confines that have kept so many people from what they deserve, shaking up our roles and our thinking. The overflow is to be found in the suffering that this crisis has revealed and the creative ways in which so many people have responded.*

*I see an overflow of mercy spilling out in our midst. Hearts have been tested. The crisis has called forth in some a new courage and compassion. Some have responded with the desire to reimagine our world; others have come to the aid of those in need in concrete ways that can transform our neighbour’s suffering. Let’s talk about how. Let’s allow God’s words to Isaiah to speak to us: **Come, let us talk this over. Let us dare to dream.***