



The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

P.O. Box 60205
Washington, DC 20039



Catholic Climate Covenant
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Catholic Climate Covenant Partnership

The Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor is widely embraced by the Catholic community. More than forty five national Catholic organizations have publicly affirmed their commitment to *Catholic mission-based sustainability* by endorsing the St. Francis Pledge as a Catholic Climate Covenant Partner. Partners involved in Catholic higher education include:

- Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
- Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities
- Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities
- Catholic Campus Ministry Association
- Catholic Relief Services College
- Lasallian Association of College and University Presidents
- National Catholic Student Coalition

In September 2011, the Coalition partnered with these seven organizations to publish *Sustainability and Catholic Higher Education: A Toolkit for Mission*. The *Toolkit* is organized around the five components of the Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor, and offers practical suggestions by which institutions of Catholic higher education can holistically:

- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of environmental degradation and climate change.
- **ASSESS** how we — as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations — contribute to environmental degradation and climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to environmental degradation and climate change.
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in environmental and climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

Each section of this toolkit examines a different dimension of the Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor by:

- Identifying who on campus can most effectively address each dimension.
- Offering suggestions for how each element might be implemented on campus.
- Suggesting ways in which the institution might go “beyond the campus” and into the community.

The *Toolkit* encourages individual colleges and universities to become Catholic Climate Covenant Partners by institutionally endorsing the St. Francis Pledge. As of October 2012, fourteen Catholic colleges and universities had become a Catholic Climate Covenant Partner, and had used *Sustainability and Catholic Higher Education: A Toolkit for Mission Integration* as a guide to living out the St. Francis Pledge on campus:

- Cabrini College
- Chestnut Hill College
- College of Mount St. Joseph
- College of St. Benedict /
- St. John's University (Collegeville, MN)
- Loyola University Chicago
- Mercyhurst University
- Neumann University
- Saint Joseph's College of Indiana
- Salve Regina University
- St. Anselm College
- St. Michael's College
- Stonehill College
- The University of Notre Dame
- Viterbo University

To learn more about how these schools have used the *Toolkit* to foster and enhance institutional commitment to *Catholic mission-based sustainability*, visit <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/colleges>.



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- **What**
 - Official endorsement of the Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor, by which the college/university commits itself to:
 - **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
 - **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change and environmental degradation.
 - **ASSESS** how we-as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations- contribute to climate change and environmental degradation by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
 - **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change and environmental degradation.
 - **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change and environmental discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

- **Why**
 - Recognize that caring for God's good gift of Creation is a requisite part of Christian life (mission fidelity)
 - "Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith." –Pope John Paul II, 1990 *World Day of Peace Message*, no. 15
 - Appreciate the unique contributions of Catholic mission to sustainability (mission integration)
 - Creation as God's good gift to be "cultivate[d] and care[d] for" (Genesis 2:15)
 - Environmental degradation compromises additional Catholic commitments
 - Protect and defend human life and dignity: "[H]ow can we separate, or even set at odds, the protection of the environment and the protection of human life, including the life of the unborn?" –Pope Benedict XVI, 2010 *Message to the Diplomatic Corps*
 - Exercise a fundamental option for the poor and vulnerable: "Environmental degradation makes the life of the poor especially unbearable." –Pope Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, August 27, 2006
 - Stand in solidarity with 45+ Catholic organizations that have become Partners by endorsing the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor

- **How**
 - Notify the Coalition of institutional endorsement by sending an email to: info@catholicsandclimatechange.org

- **Then What**
 - College/University:
 - Publicize Partnership
 - Encourage campus community members to take the Pledge & register commitments at catholicclimatecovenant.org
 - Convene a St. Francis Pledge Committee and discern Toolkit implementation
 - Integrate Pledge into school's sustainability branding
 - Link to Coalition/Toolkit from school's website
 - Coalition:
 - Add institution's name to Partner list
 - Promote institutional stories in weekly Newsletter
 - Facilitate communication between and among college and university Partners
 - Develop resources (academic, campus ministry, etc.)



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