



April 25, 2018

Dear Catholic leader:

I write to seek your support for the U.S. Catholic Climate Declaration, a distinct Catholic expression of the We Are Still In (WASI) campaign. Archbishop Broglio, Bishop Dewane, and I sent a similar appeal to our fellow bishops in the United States, and we now invite you to sign the Declaration.

### **Why this effort?**

The WASI campaign is an effort to demonstrate America's commitment to address climate change after President Trump announced on June 1, 2017 his intention to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. On that day, the U.S. bishops added their voice to the many groups expressing disappointment with this decision. A few days later, American civil society launched the We Are Still In campaign to show the world that America's leaders stand by the Paris Agreement and are committed to meeting its goals. To date, over 2,600 institutions—including cities, states, tribes, businesses, investors, universities, non-profits, and places of worship—have joined the campaign, representing the largest cross-section of American society ever to support climate action.

Today, we ask your organization's endorsement of the Catholic Climate Declaration

This declaration is a distinct Catholic expression in support of the We Are Still In campaign. The Catholic Climate Declaration expresses the moral imperative to protect and promote human life and human dignity, the poorest and most vulnerable peoples, and our common home. It recognizes—as the U.S. bishops said in 2001—that:

At 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.

## **Catholic Teaching on Climate Change**

Beginning with Saint John Paul in 1990, the Catholic Church has accepted the reality of human-forced climate change and expressed concern about the moral consequences of global warming. The Church has repeatedly advocated for an international climate change agreement in response to this existential threat. The Paris Agreement is an international effort adopted by 195 nations and supported by the Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It recognizes that climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet and it establishes a framework to limit the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels.

This effort is being coordinated by [Catholic Climate Covenant](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org), a USCCB-supported organization whose mission is to inspire and equip people and institutions in the U.S. to care for creation and for the poor in response to Church teaching on climate change. Commitments to the Catholic Climate Declaration will be made public on the third anniversary of the release of *Laudato Sí*, June 18, 2018. If you wish to enroll your Catholic institution, organization, or community, please go to <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/catholic-climate-declaration>.

We hope you will join us in response to our Catholic faith.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Richard E. Pates

Diocese of Des Moines

Episcopal Liaison, Catholic Climate Covenant