



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

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Maryknoll leadership welcomes Pope Francis to U.S. and raises his prophetic call to care for the Earth

WASHINGTON, DC — On the day of Pope Francis' first visit to the United States, Maryknoll joins millions of people of faith and people of conscience in welcoming him warmly. The leadership of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the Maryknoll Sisters, and the Maryknoll Lay Missioners released a [statement](#) today on Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, "Laudato Si': Care for Our Common Home." We note the historic importance of the encyclical not only for Catholics but for all people who care for the environment and for the poorest, most marginalized communities around the world.

The [Maryknoll leaders' statement](#) highlights the Holy Father's insistence on linking concern for those who are poor and care for the Earth, noting that social exclusion and environmental devastation are at the heart of the same problem – and cause suffering in the marginalized communities worldwide where Maryknoll missionaries serve. These communities are already the most impacted by climate change, and as Pope Francis points out, they will suffer the most as environmental disasters increase in enormity and frequency.

Sister Antoinette Gutzler, President of the Maryknoll Sisters, said: "This encyclical is so hopeful and so deeply spiritual. It empowers all of us to change our lifestyles and ask the question, "What kind of world do we want to leave those who come after us, our children and grandchildren?"

Fr. Raymond Finch, Superior General of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, said: "Pope Francis is reaching out to people of all faiths and political persuasions, and appealing for dialogue. A dialogue to face our problems of war and injustice together and to find ways to act with compassion."

Sam Stanton, Executive Director of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, said: "Pope Francis is famously quoted as saying, "Who am I to judge?" With this encyclical he turns the question to each of us: "Who am I not to act?"...on behalf of the poor and on behalf of the Earth."

Gerry Lee, Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, said: "Our missionaries in the Global South have long seen the devastation to marginalized communities that the dominant economic system wreaks on small farmers and urban dwellers. Now they are reporting on the impact of climate change."

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missionaries, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missionaries serve.

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