

Global Warming & Catholic Response: Global warming—driven primarily by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial agriculture—has intensified climate change, which manifests in rising global temperatures, more extreme weather events, sea level rise, and ecological disruption. In response to this crisis, the Catholic Church, through the Magisterium (its official teaching authority), has articulated a strong theological and moral imperative for action. This response is grounded in Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, and the writings of modern popes and theologians. **1. Effects of Global Warming on Climate Change:** Scientific consensus indicates the following major effects of global warming on the climate system: Temperature rise: Average global temperatures have increased significantly since the industrial revolution. Melting ice and sea level rise: Polar ice sheets and glaciers are melting, contributing to rising sea levels. Extreme weather events: Increased frequency and severity of hurricanes, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Ecosystem disruption: Loss of biodiversity, habitat destruction, and changing migration patterns. Impact on human health and livelihoods: Increased incidence of heatwaves, vector-borne diseases, water scarcity, and displacement of communities (especially in poorer regions). **2. Catholic Response Based on the Magisterium:** **a. Papal Teachings: Pope Francis – Laudato Si’ (2015):** This encyclical is the most comprehensive magisterial document addressing climate change and global warming. Key points include: “Integral ecology”: Recognizes that environmental, economic, social, and cultural issues are interconnected. Anthropogenic climate change: Affirms the scientific consensus that human activity is a major contributor to global warming. Moral and spiritual crisis: Sees ecological destruction as a result of consumerism, technological domination, and indifference. Option for the poor: Emphasizes that the poor are disproportionately affected by climate change. Call to action: Urges conversion of hearts, structural change, international cooperation, and an ecological spirituality. “The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.” (Laudato Si’, §23). **Pope Benedict XVI – “The Green Pope”:** In speeches and writings, Benedict XVI emphasized: The need for “human ecology” and respect for creation as a gift. The link between respect for the environment and respect for human dignity. Development of renewable energy and sustainable practices. “The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.” (Caritas in Veritate, §48). **Saint John Paul II:** In his 1990 World Day of Peace Message, he spoke of the “ecological crisis as a moral issue.” He emphasized stewardship of creation as a fundamental Christian duty and warned about consumerism and the misuse of resources. **3. Catholic Social Teaching and Climate Change:** Catholic Social Teaching provides several core principles that guide the Church’s response: Stewardship of Creation: Humans are caretakers, not owners, of the earth. Common Good: Environmental degradation affects all, especially the vulnerable. Preferential Option for the Poor: Climate justice requires special concern for the marginalized. Solidarity: A global crisis demands global unity and cooperation. **4. Influential Catholic Authors and Theologians: Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ:** In Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love, she connects theology with ecology and emphasizes God’s ongoing presence in creation. She calls for an “ecological conversion” rooted in awe and responsibility toward God’s creation. **Sean McDonagh, SSC:** Columban priest and eco-theologian. In Climate Change: The Challenge to All of Us, he highlights the urgent need for both systemic change and personal conversion in light of Catholic values. **Thomas Berry, CP:** Though not strictly within the magisterium, Berry’s The Dream of the Earth offers a profound theological reflection on humanity’s place in the universe. He speaks of moving from a technological-industrial paradigm to an ecological-spiritual consciousness. **Leonardo Boff:** Liberation theologian who connects climate justice to social justice. In Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor, he argues that ecological degradation and poverty stem from the same root causes—economic exploitation and spiritual alienation. **5. Catholic Action and Advocacy:** Catholic Climate Covenant: U.S.-based initiative promoting Catholic engagement with climate change through education, carbon footprint reduction, and policy advocacy. Caritas Internationalis: Global confederation that works on environmental justice in humanitarian and development efforts. **Conclusion:** The Catholic response to global warming and climate change is robust, theologically grounded, and socially conscious. Rooted in Scripture and Tradition, especially the teaching authority of the Magisterium, it calls for: A deep respect for creation as a divine gift, Structural changes to address ecological harm, A conversion of heart and lifestyle, and Solidarity with the poor and future generations. This response recognizes the climate crisis not just as an environmental issue, but as a profound moral and spiritual challenge for the Church and the world.

Bishop’s Appeal: So far 40 families from our parish have donated \$10,335. The total assessment for our parish is \$12,641. **Amount needed to meet the Goal is \$2,306.** If you have not sent in your donation yet, please pray about what God is calling you to give to help support the Church. Please know that whatever you are able to give we are very grateful for. (Please note that whatever amount we fall short in reaching our goal our parish does get billed for.) **Donate following the link:** www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give

Announcements:

St. Leonard’s is having a cash raffle. All proceeds go directly to the church. 1st prize is \$5,000, 2nd prize is \$1,250 and 3rd -7th prizes are \$250. Tickets are \$50 each and only 400 will be sold. The drawing will be on Sept. 14th. If interested in purchasing tickets, please contact Tahni Carothers (715-889-3720). Tickets will also be sold after mass on occasion.