

Slide 1 – Why do we need climate action now?

Slide 2 – This is nothing new

- As early as 1971, this is more than *fifty years ago*, Pope Paul 6th wrote that we were “creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable.” He called environmental degradation a “wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family” (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 21).
- In 1990, this is more than *thirty years ago*, Pope John Paul 2nd said, “the ecological crisis is a moral problem,” and that “the most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution” (*1990 World Day of Peace Message*, 7).
- In 2010, Pope Benedict 16th titled his World Day of Peace message, “If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation.”
- This has not just been Pope Francis’s issue. He has made the call loud and clear, but this is nothing new.
- The science is not new – it may be more and more alarming, but it’s nothing that we haven’t known for decades. The connection to our Catholic faith is not new. The availability for solutions, for the most part, is not new. It’s time that stop waiting for more research, or stronger evidence, or a more direct call. It’s time that we act.

Slide 3 – What are we facing?

More frequent and severe natural disasters

- We know this, right? We know the human suffering at stake, and we see it clearly already, with constant news of earthquakes and wildfires and hurricanes – the damage that they create and the loss that they cause.

Food and water scarcities that will – and are already – leading to migrant and refugee crises

- These climate change-driven natural disasters are displacing populations: sea level rise is drowning islands, land aridity is passing the point of no return, and deforestation and forest fires are happening at unprecedented rates. All of these factors uproot people’s lives and render their homes **uninhabitable**. As climate change worsens, rates of migration will drastically increase.
- Nations are not currently equipped to handle the influx of migrants and refugees that climate change-related events will produce.
- Researchers at Cornell University estimate that there will be 1.4 billion climate refugees by 2060 and 2 billion by 2100.
 - Think about that. There are currently 7.7 billion people in the world, this means ~20% of the global population risks climate-related displacement.
 - As a young adult, 2060 is very much in my lifetime. I will be around for this.

Civilization and ecosystem collapse

- This is strong language – we’re not talking about small increases in temperatures and the loss of biodiversity here.
- We are talking about actions today that directly threaten civilization and ecosystem collapse in the future.

- And while we may not be the ones that will have to clean up that mess, we are handing this crying earth down to future generations.

Slide 4 – A brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity

- All of this is really bleak, right? Distressing?
- The recently published IPCC sixth assessment reiterates this.
- It sounds the alarm, especially in saying that: “the cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.”

Slide 5 – There’s still hope

- It’s easy to be immobilized by fear and anxiety – where is hope in all of this?
- In February, my Catholic Climate Covenant colleague Henry and I met with Pope Francis as part of a dialogue with university students. We talked to him about climate change. His support for our actions, and the outpouring of support we received from those who watched the encounter gave us great hope. Together we wrote a blog post for the Covenant following this encounter, and we said:
- “We know the science and we understand that our faith obligates action. We believe we have the tools to combat this crisis if we act with purpose and in solidarity with one another. The window of time to act might be closing, but so long as our hearts remain open, there is hope.” <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/news/window-time-act-closing-our-hearts-must-remain-open>

Slide 6 – But that hope rests in us – in our responsibility to act in this moment

- And this is why advocacy for climate investments **now** is so critical. This is why we are inviting you to be part of this campaign, Encounter for Our Common Home.
- Our action now has the potential to do much good for the future. But inaction now looks really, really bleak.

Slide 7 – What need does the earth have of us?

- I will leave you with a question that Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'*: What need does the earth have of us? (*Laudato Si'* 160).
- Reflect on this question. What need does the earth have of us? What need does the earth have of you?
- I hope you find it in your heart to respond with participation in this advocacy opportunity.