

CMSM Resolution 2015 – Cherish All of Creation

Resolution General:

The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) resolves to use both our individual charisms and experience as religious leaders in order to enter into the conversation on environmental degradation and to transform our practices to cherish all of creation, particularly responding to the urgent call for action on climate change.

Rationale:

The biblical vision with Christ in the center of our lives and communities, along with our vows and our mission as religious, calls us to see the urgency of this issue, not simply as a justice and peace concern but as embedded in who we are. The Psalms proclaim “you (God) visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it...blessing its growth.”¹ We also rejoice that Pope Francis has recently published the encyclical letter, *Laudato Si’* (Praised Be to You), on integral ecology that includes the “urgent challenge to protect our common home.”² Further, it is perilous to ignore climate change and our impact on ecosystems. Committing to this issue, we live up to our universal call to care for creation, which has been part of our faith tradition because God created the cosmos and models for us walking among all of creation. We also recognize that increasing wars over natural resources and war itself are serious threats to a healthy climate.³

Resolution Specifics:

1. We resolve to put our words into actions by ***creating dialogues, teaching, preaching and practicing*** – in both visible and concrete ways how our actions can reduce our negative impact on the environment.
2. We resolve to work toward a ***more just and equitable system*** where mitigating climate change, which disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable, is part of the ongoing ministries of each congregational member of CMSM. One example is the reduction in crop yields, which leads to higher prices and, thus, more malnutrition for the disadvantaged.⁴
3. We resolve to act by both word and deed in order to ***include effectively in the conversation the most affected by the conversation***.⁵ We do this by recommitting ourselves, as religious leaders to the principle of subsidiarity. We express this by always remembering our interconnectedness and that the vulnerable (children, immigrants, incarcerated, etc.) are always on our minds and, to the extent possible, at the table as we make decisions on the use of resources which may have a direct effect on their lives.

¹ Psalm 65: 5-13; also see 96:11-12, 104:14-21, 24-30.

² Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 13. The urgency of the issue is also explained in the supporting resources.

³ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 48, 82, 105, 200, 228.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 49, 51 (ecological debt). See the supporting resources for the example.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 183.

4. We resolve **regularly to recite** and share the Catholic Climate Covenant’s **St. Francis Pledge “To Protect and Heal God’s Creation.”**⁶

5. We resolve **significantly to change our lifestyle, including our consumption habits**, from ways that perpetuate climate change and towards the “sound virtues” of an “ecological citizenship” for a significantly lighter footprint.⁷ Recommended examples include community gardens, eating less or no meat, more videoconferencing meetings, etc.⁸ See the footnote for further examples.⁹

6. We resolve **significantly to increase our reliance on green energy in our ministries and buildings, as we also significantly decrease and ultimately “replace without delay” our reliance on fossil fuels in each; and to support these same commitments in any investment decisions.**¹⁰ See the footnote for examples.¹¹

7. We resolve that as we significantly decrease the use of fossil fuels, in the transitional moments, we *at least* offset such use, particularly from flights, by **purchasing carbon off-sets** to increase environmental improvement. See the footnote for examples.¹²

8. We resolve consistently to **advocate for significant policy changes** at the local, national, and international spheres that will transform the structures which damage creation. See the footnote.¹³

9. We, the CMSM pledge to: **Pray, Learn, Assess, Act, and Advocate**

**Origin of the resolution:* CMSM Justice and Peace Committee.

⁶ “We have come to renew our covenant with God and with one another in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We have come to help protect God’s creation. We have come as followers of Jesus to commit ourselves anew to one another and to heal injustice and poverty. We have come to stand together against all threats to life. We have come to discover some new beauty every day in God’s creation: the sunrise and sunset, flowers and trees, rainbows and stars in the sky, and many creatures of life. We have come to listen to the “music of the universe”- water flowing over rocks, the wind, trees bending in the wind, raindrops pattering the roof. We will remember always that God speaks to us through the beauty of his creation, and we will try our best to answer God’s call to reverence all that God has created.” Includes planning guides for parishes, schools, colleges, etc. at

<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/pledge>.

⁷ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 23, 159 (intergenerational solidarity), 211.

⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 221, “each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us...how then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm?” See supporting resources on eating meat.

⁹ For example, we may buy local, use public transportation, use electric or hybrid cars, and conserve energy with our thermostats or caulking.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, 165, “especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas—needs to be progressively replaced without delay;” also par. 180 (buildings), 206 (boycotts).

¹¹ For example, this could include purchasing renewable energy such as solar, wind, or geothermal for our buildings, as well as active engagement with corporations to adopt sustainable processes and supply chains.

¹² Columbans have initiated a carbon-offset policy outlined in the supporting resources. Also see, <http://www.renewablechoice.com/reduce-your-flight-impact.html>; <http://www.climatecare.org/home.aspx>; <http://www.climatefriendly.com/Personal/Calculators/AirTravel/>

¹³ Policies that support green energy production and decrease fossil fuels and nuclear energy; that support the EPA and Green Climate Fund; that seek and develop alternatives to war; that support related international treaty’s, etc.