

PRESS RELEASE

Ahead of G7 Summit and UNFCCC Bonn meeting, groups unite for largest ever joint Catholic divestment from fossil fuels

Wednesday, May 10th 2017 - Nine Catholic organizations from around the world have today announced their decision to divest their portfolios from coal, oil and gas companies in the largest joint Catholic fossil fuel divestment to date.

The groups – including religious orders and dioceses from the UK, USA and Italy – made the announcement ahead of international negotiations this month on implementing measures in the Paris Agreement on climate change. Fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas are the main cause of the greenhouse gas emissions which are changing the climate and pushing people in the world's poorest communities deeper into poverty. Globally, 2016 was the [hottest year since records began](#), a title that 2015 and 2014 had both held before it.

The announcement is also significant in the number of different Catholic orders - including Jesuits and Franciscans - uniting once again behind this issue, which is gaining growing support at all levels of the Catholic Church. The news comes off the back of a [January conference](#) - attended by Cardinal Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery of Integrated Human Development and one of the Pope's closest advisors on environmental issues, as well as former UN climate chief Christiana Figueres - on the subject of investing according to the principles laid out in *Laudato Si'*.

The Italian Jesuits are now the second national Jesuit group to have divested and thus heeded the call to care for creation of their fellow Jesuit Pope Francis. The Siloe Monastic Community is the first Catholic monastic community in the world to divest. The Diocese of Pescara becomes the second diocese to have divested to date, while the Diocese of Bologna together with the Italian Bishops Conference and the Catholic NGO coalition FOCSIV will promote divestment issues during a conference on June 8th in the presence of the Italian environment minister Gian Luca Galletti two days before he heads to the G7 environment ministers meeting in Rome. The previous record for number of Catholic institutions divesting jointly was seven and was [set in October 2016](#). A total of [27 Catholic institutions](#) have now divested.

The announcement comes just under a month before the second anniversary of Pope Francis's June 2015 Encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, which called on Catholics and non-Catholics alike to care for our common home. With some of the world's most powerful leaders meeting for the G7 Summit in Sicily from May 26-27 to discuss the biggest threats to global stability, and with almost 200 countries meeting in Bonn from May 8-18 for [UNFCCC negotiations](#) to add the important technical details to the framework of the Paris Agreement, the divestment also sends a powerful signal of the momentum behind and popular support for ambitious action on climate change.

This latest announcement also comes in the middle of the week-long [Global Divestment Mobilization](#) organized by climate change NGO [350.org](#), as part of which thousands worldwide are taking action to push cities, universities, churches, pension funds, museums and other institutions to demonstrate climate leadership by breaking their financial ties to fossil fuel companies.

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ANNEXES:

List of divesting institutions

The institutions divesting are:

1. The Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit (Global, General Curia);
2. The Diocese of Pescara (Italy);
3. Il Dialogo (Italy);
4. The Italian Jesuits (Italy);
5. Rete Interdiocesana Nuovi Stili di Vita (Italy);
6. Siloe Monastic Community (Italy);
7. MGR Foundation (USA);
8. The Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (USA);
9. St Joseph's Province of the Congregation of the Passion - English Province of the Passionists (UK).

Quotes and background on individual divestment decisions

“The Catholic response to climate change is gathering momentum exponentially. From refusing to invest in fossil fuels to installing solar panels on church roofs, more and more Catholics are taking concrete actions to protect creation and the vulnerable in their communities and beyond. This momentum is something that should not go unnoticed by world leaders meeting for the G7 Summit before they return home to turn politics to policy.”

Tomas Insua, Executive Director, Global Catholic Climate Movement.

"We are extremely concerned that the G7 Summit will not make any official climate commitment, only adopting less ambitious objectives than those of Paris and preventing the US withdraw. In the face of this political impasse, several Catholic organizations are committed in the name of Laudato Si' to promoting social and climate justice through concrete fossil fuel divestment declarations. We hope that this action will be a call to international leaders to engage in fighting climate change and, at the same time, a support to the G7 Italian presidency in continuing its work on prioritizing the climate issue on the agenda of the summit. FOCSIV, together with the Diocese of Bologna and the Italian Episcopal Conference, will further involve dioceses to both disinvestment and reinvestment in clean energy for the promotion of universal energy access on the occasion of the G7 Environment in Bologna, with Mons Zuppi and the Italian Minister Galletti"

Gianfranco Cattai, President, FOCSIV (Italy)

"The diversity and global distribution of the organizations taking part in this joint announcement show the leadership of the Catholic communities in taking concrete action in response to the repeated calls of Pope Francis to preserve our common home. We celebrate this announcement and hope that the message it conveys reaches people of all faiths and inspires even more Catholic institutions, including the Vatican itself, to end the harmful influence of the fossil fuel industry's ambition over our economies and societies, and push for clean and just energy sources for all humanity."

Yossi Cadan, 350.org Senior Divestment Campaigner.

"I state the willingness of adhesion to the fossil fuel divestment and clean energy investment campaign promoted by FOCSIV. This statement aims to be a first concrete commitment in the logic of the integral ecology and the care of the common home, which Pope Francis called us to in the encyclical letter Laudato Si', with a view of a progressive and effective process of divestment."

Tommaso Valentinetti, Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Pescara-Penne (Italy)

"The monastic community of Siloe, in the Diocese of Grosseto, starting from the building of the new monastic complex, in 2000, has been building on good practices of building with the use of renewable energy resources. Strongly committed on the issues of caring and safeguarding the creation, we consider it is important to be part of an initiative that is in very deep harmony with the value in which we believe and that gives a concrete answer to Pope Francis's Call in his encyclical Laudato Si' asking for a real ecological conversion and a new way to inhabit the Earth. On behalf of the community of Siloe, which I represent as a superior, I express my commitment to the fossil fuels divestment campaign."

Fr. Mario M. Parente, Priore della Comunità monastica di Siloe (Italy)

"I express the adhesion of the Italian province company of the Society of Jesus to the divestment campaign. With this adhesion I announce the intention to start a more detailed process about the different ways of removing our investments from fossil, progressively, within the next 5 years."

Fr. Gianfranco Matarazzo, Provincial Father of Italian Jesuits (Italy)

"We, as Rete Interdiocesana Nuovi Stili di Vita, express our adhesion to the divestment campaign from fossil fuels. We have a long-standing commitment for the care of our common home, that is

our sister and mother earth, according to the teaching of the Encyclical Laudato Si'. We consider it is important to be part of an initiative that is in very deep harmony with the value in which we believe and that gives a concrete answer to Pope Francis's call in his encyclical Laudato Si' asking for a real ecological conversion, moving from fossil-based energies to renewables ones.”

Adriano Sella, National Coordinator of Rete Interdiocesana Nuovi Stili di Vita. (Italy)

“The director and the head of the environmental section of the magazine Il dialogo have long been involved in the defense of human rights and of the environment. Joining the next joint Catholic divestment announcement is natural and genuine for us because it means adhering to the values we believe in. Therefore, during the Global Divestment Mobilization, we join more than 100 organizations and Churches around the world that have positively received the message of divestment from fossil fuels. Fossil fuel divestment is a concrete way to put Laudato Si' into practice and bear witness to its message. In the Encyclical Laudato Si' Pope Francis affirms: “We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels [...] especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay. (Laudato Si', 165). As Pope Francis says, on climate change there is a clear, definitive and urgent ethical imperative to act. We are convinced that this union will lead to more sustainable finance and a more just and livable world. Therefore we have joined and invite all others to.

Giovanni Sarubbi, (Director) Michele Zarrella (Head of the environmental section) of “Il Dialogo” (Italy)

“We, St Joseph's Province of the Congregation of the Passion (English Province of the Passionists) have committed to full fossil fuel divestment, to start as soon as possible and to be completed over the next 4 years, by 2021 at the latest.”

Fr. Martin Newell CP, St Joseph's Province of the Congregation of the Passion (UK)

“As a community we have long committed ourselves to considering the root causes of violence. Through our study and discernment, we compassionately respond both to compelling immediate and systemic needs at the local and global levels. We find that it is imperative that we move away from fossil fuels because of the impact they have on the environment.”

Sr. Sheila Kinsey, Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (USA)

“The Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, St. Clare Province of the Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, (USA) are announcing today that we can say with integrity that we have no current investment in fossil fuels, and we will in the next year add it to our Socially Responsible Investment Policy to assure no future investments in fossil fuels. In this way, we wish to emphasize the urgency of the climate crisis and deepen our commitment to care for our common home.”

Sr. Melanie Paradis,osf, Sr. Lynn Schafer,osf, Sr. Trish Villarreal,osf, Sr. Alana Gorski,osf, Provincial Council of the The Wheaton Franciscan Sisters (USA)

Notes for the Editor

Founded in 2014, the GCCM is a coalition of over 100 Catholic organizations working to respond to the moral imperative of the climate change crisis. Further information can be found at <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/divest-and-reinvest/>