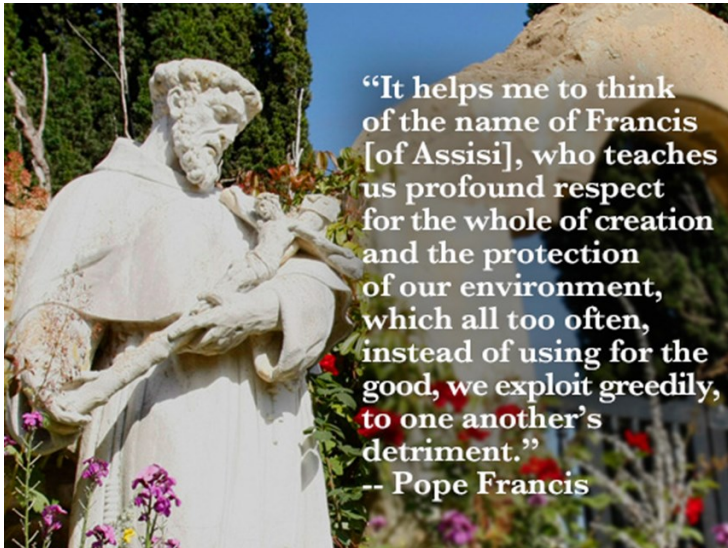


# Justice, Peace and Life

September 2016

CNS photo/Gregory A. Shemnitz



Mercy Towards Our Common Home:

## Let’s Stop Sinning Against the Earth

In the lead-up to the October 4 Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of ecology, take time to reflect on these recent words of Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace:

*[W]e are being asked to show mercy to our common home—to acknowledge and repent for our sins against creation, and to amend our ways through the merciful grace of God. The first step in this process is to humbly acknowledge the harm we are doing to the earth through pollution, the scandalous destruction of ecosystems and loss of biodiversity, and the spectre of climate change—which seems nearer and more dangerous with each passing year. And to realize that when we hurt the earth, we also hurt the poor, whom God loves without limit.*

*Pope Francis is asking us to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that this is sin—sin against creation, against the poor, against those who have not yet been born. This means that we must examine our consciences and repent. I realize that this is not the way we traditionally think about sin. These are sins, Pope Francis says, that “we have not hitherto acknowledged and confessed.”*

*But we are now called upon to do so. This means we need to take a long and hard look at our lifestyles, especially when they reflect a “disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary.”*

*But it goes even deeper. A genuine examination of conscience would recognize not only our individual failings but also our institutional failings. As Pope Francis says, “we are participants in a system that ‘has imposed the mentality of profit at any price, with no concern for social exclusion or the destruction of nature.’” This implicates all of us in one way or another.*

### **Let’s take action to stop this kind of individual and social sin, and start repenting!**

Watch the YouTube video entitled “[Dial Down the Heat: Cultivate the Common Good for our Common Home](#)” to remember whom we are hurting when we destroy the Earth.

Get a sense of how much of the Earth’s resource your household uses by calculating your carbon footprint: [www.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator](http://www.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator) Then commit to using less!

Advocate with Congress for policies to protect the planet: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/Advocacy](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/Advocacy)

Learn more at [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org) and [www.catholicclimatemovement.global/eco-parish/](http://www.catholicclimatemovement.global/eco-parish/)



*“In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and **participation in political life is a moral obligation.***

*This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.”*

*-Faithful Citizenship,  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

## Encouraging Faithful Citizenship in Your Parish

During this election year, we are called to use our right to vote to advance the Common Good. You can encourage this faithful civic engagement in your parish by:

- Printing bulletin **announcements** about forming our consciences for voting during the month of October. You'll find them on the Diocesan web site [www.dor.org](http://www.dor.org). Click on “Public Policy” on the left hand side of the home page, and then on “2016 Election Season Resources.” Go to [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) for even more materials.
- Organizing a **voter registration drive** at your parish. Details on how to do so are available in the [Public Policy](#) section of the diocesan web site. You can pick up registration forms at your local Board of Elections.  
*Important things to note:*  
The deadline to register to vote in the 2016 General Election is **October 14**.  
Voter registration activities in Catholic parishes must be strictly **non-partisan** and must not endorse nor renounce any particular candidate(s).
- **Praying and reflecting.** You'll find election-related Prayers of the Faithful for Mass, prayers for individual use, and links to the document Faithful Citizenship at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). One suggested prayer:

Lord God, as the election approaches,  
we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront our city/state/country,  
and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our community.  
We ask for eyes that are free from blindness so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters,  
one and equal in dignity,  
especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and poverty.  
We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those abandoned,  
men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or gender.  
We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of leaders  
who will bring us closer to your Kingdom.  
We pray for discernment so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word, live your love,  
and keep in the ways of your truth as they follow in the steps of Jesus and his Apostles  
and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.  
We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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