



Catholic Climate Covenant™
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

What Catholics Say About Climate Change

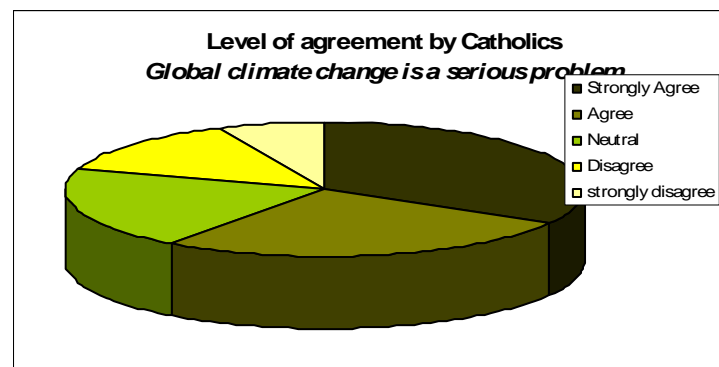
Executive Summary April 21, 2009

The vast majority of Catholics in the United States believe climate change is a serious moral issue, nearly all agree that their faith calls them to be good stewards of the gift of creation and almost two-thirds believe that their faith calls them to be especially concerned about climate change impact on vulnerable people at home and abroad.

These were among the key findings of a random telephone survey of adult Catholics conducted by Zogby International. The survey, which was conducted from March 30 to April 14, 2009, shows that care for God’s creation and addressing the issue of climate change are important to Catholics in this country.

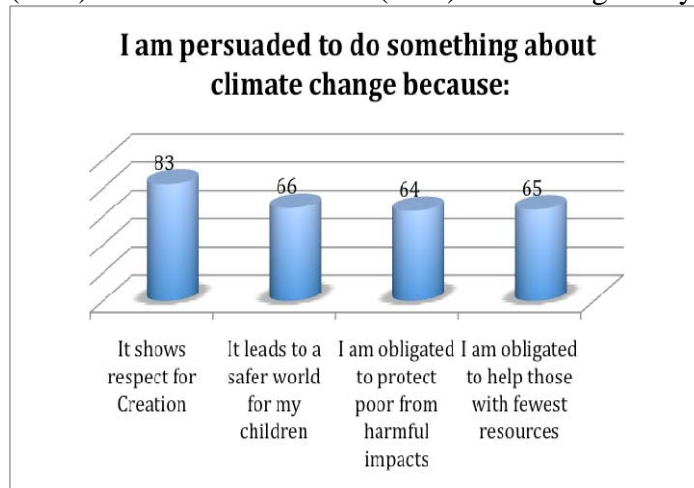
CLIMATE CHANGE AS AN ISSUE

More than twice as many Catholics (55%) agree that climate change is a serious problem than Catholics who do not (22%). Nearly 60% say human activity is contributing significantly to climate change, while only 21% disagree. The majority (58%) believes climate change is a problem that must be addressed now. More than two-thirds believe that even though we don’t know everything about climate change, it is important to act now so the problem does not worsen.



POVERTY

The survey shows that the majority of Catholics believe that poor people in the U.S. (52%) and around the world (60%) will be negatively impacted by climate change. Over



two-thirds of Catholics believe their faith calls them to be obligated to protect the poor and vulnerable who have contributed the least to climate change but will be impacted the most. Sixty-five percent of Catholics are convinced that they have a special obligation to help those with few resources and ability to protect themselves from the impacts of climate change.

PRUDENCE AND GOVERNMENT ACTION

This virtue of prudent action in the face of uncertainty, which both Pope Benedict and the U.S. bishops have emphasized in relation to climate change, has taken hold in the Catholic community: fifty-four percent of Catholics disagreed with the statement that we should wait to act on climate change until we know more.

At the public policy level, already half believe their faith calls them to support government action to protect creation and address climate change (51%) and to address the causes and impacts of climate change (46%). Over half of all Catholics believe that wealthier countries like the United States have a special responsibility to help poorer countries deal with the negative impacts of climate change.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

Over two-thirds of Catholics are concerned about the impacts of climate change on future generations and an equal number say that this is a primary motivation for them to act today to address the issue.

CHURCH TEACHING

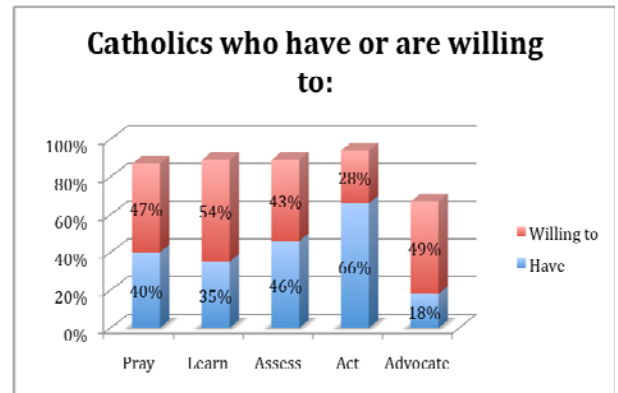
The message of Pope Benedict XVI (and Pope John Paul II before him) expressing concern about the environment climate change and its impacts on poor people is being heard. Nearly one in three Catholics have heard this message already. At the same time, fewer Catholics know of the U.S. bishops' statements on environmental stewardship or climate change: fewer than one in five.

Nine out of ten Catholics who are aware of the bishops' teaching on this issue would like to hear more. Three-quarters of Catholics understand and embrace the Catholic concept of stewardship. The same number agrees that we show respect for God when we take care of God's creation. Nearly as many say that their Catholic faith calls them to care for creation.

The poll demonstrates a strong willingness of Catholics to be engaged in environmental stewardship and are ready to participate in efforts for a more sustainable planet. An overwhelming majority (85%) of Catholics agree that their faith calls them to share what they have and to sacrifice when others are in need. Fifty-six percent believe that a renewed commitment to sacrifice and restraint could make an essential contribution to addressing climate change. Well over two-thirds agree that we must not allow more material things to overtake our concern for the basic needs of people and the environment.

As the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change launches a new initiative: *A Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor* the survey shows that the majority of Catholics have already taken, or are willing to take, the five steps of the St. Francis Pledge:

- TO PRAY about care for creation and the poor and vulnerable: (have: 40%, willing: 47%, total: 87%)
- TO LEARN about climate change and its moral implications: (have: 35%, willing: 54%, total: 89%)
- TO ASSESS their contributions to climate change: (have: 46%, willing: 43%, total: 89%)
- TO ACT to reduce their contributions: (have: 66%, willing: 28%, total: 94%)
- TO ADVOCATE in the public square to ensure that both creation and poor people are protected: (have: 18%, willing: 49%, total: 68%)



SUMMARY

This poll indicates both a willingness and a desire by Catholics to reclaim the scriptural mandate to care for creation—be good stewards of God’s gift of creation—and to sacrifice and actively engage in efforts that will ensure that poor and vulnerable communities in the United States and around the world do not unduly suffer as a result of climate change or its policy solutions.

The Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor contains the tools to greatly expand authentic Church teaching in these areas and to encourage a widespread embrace of the unique and distinctive contribution of Catholics to the public dialogue about reducing energy use, ending overconsumption and ensuring that those who have contributed the least to climate change, poor and vulnerable people at home and abroad, are protected from its most harmful impacts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Dan Misleh, Executive Director, Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, 301-322-1180 or danmisleh@catholicsandclimatechange.org

Survey Methodology [Catholic Adults] 03/30/09 thru 04/14/09

Zogby International was commissioned by [Catholic Coalition on Climate Change] to conduct a telephone survey of [Catholics]. The target sample was [1001] interviews with approximately [60] questions asked. Samples were randomly drawn from telephone cd's of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges. Up to six calls are made to reach a sampled phone number. Cooperation rates are calculated using one of AAPOR's approved methodologies¹ and are comparable to other professional public-opinion surveys conducted using similar sampling strategies.² Weighting by [region, age, race, and gender] is used to adjust for non-response. The margin of error is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

¹ See COOP4 (p.38) in *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates of Surveys*. The American Association for Public Opinion Research, (2000).

² *Cooperation Tracking Study: April 2003 Update*, Jane M. Sheppard and Shelly Haas. The Council for Marketing & Opinion Research (CMOR). Cincinnati, Ohio (2003).