



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

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October 4, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, in keeping with the gentle and caring spirit of St. Francis of Assisi whose feast we observe, we are called to celebrate the gift of life and the dignity of every person. As the Church's patron saint of the ecology, St. Francis reminds us that all life along with its blessings has its origin in God. For in Creation, God established the beauty, order and balance of the universe.

God also blessed humanity with intelligence, with wisdom and creativity, in part to be loving co-creators and prudent caretakers of His creation. God entrusted us with the Earth's air, land, water, and her inhabitants. Unfortunately, we have not always fulfilled that role in a positive manner, as made presently evident by local and global disrespect for the dignity of life, and the pollution and over-consumption of the Earth's resources.

In his 2010 World Day of Peace Message, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, challenges us by asking if we can remain impassive to the environmental issues and their profound impact on humanity. Our response to the Holy Father must be that we cannot remain indifferent.

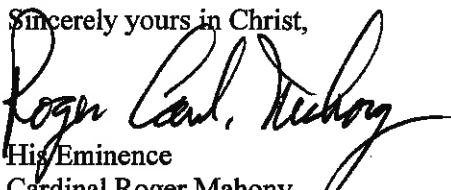
Over the last several years, an increasing number of Catholic dioceses, locally and globally, have been launching environmental ministries and practical ways to preserve our natural resources. Today, I am pleased to announce the establishment of our Archdiocesan Creation Sustainability Ministry.

To support our new ministry, the Archdiocesan Office of Justice and Peace, along with the Office of Synod Implementation, has formed the Creation Sustainability Committee (CSC). Its purpose is to assist our faith communities to reflect upon our calling to be co-creators, to become more environmentally sustainable, and to generate meaningful dialogue with the larger Southern California community as it faces environmental challenges. Through this ministry, our Archdiocese will be joining with Catholics around the world in putting our religious mandates of Creation, along with our calling to be proper stewards of life into practice.

During this month, each of our pastoral regions, along with their bishops, will be celebrating the Gift of Creation at designated parishes and at one of our high schools. We invite all those in the regions, both the faithful and our friends in the community to come and celebrate with us. Further, we urge those who share our vision to work with us in making it a reality. Additionally, we exhort our faith communities and all our brothers and sisters to take *The Saint Francis Pledge*, an initiative that urges Catholics nationwide to pray for, learn about, assess, act and advocate for populations affected by climate change, especially those that are most vulnerable.

Let us join together and become responsible stewards of life. Working together, we will truly make a difference! By our doing, we can along with St. Francis exclaim, "*Praise be to You my Lord with all your creatures.*"

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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His Eminence
Cardinal Roger Mahony
Archbishop of Los Angeles