



**Catholic Climate Covenant**<sup>sm</sup>  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media contact: Elena Gaona

202-907-9717

[elena@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:elena@catholicclimatecovenant.org)

**STATEMENT from Catholic Climate Covenant’s Dan Misleh:  
It’s Time for Change**

In my sixty years, I’ve never experienced so many crises all at once: a pandemic, an economic collapse and civil unrest caused by yet one more black man at the hands of those sworn to protect and to serve. We all long for a return to peace and tranquility. But for far too long, our black brothers and sisters, and other communities of color, have not had peace, health, or safety, and the silence and failure to address systemic levels of discrimination and racism has been deafening. It’s time for change.

The death of George Floyd – and the long list of victims before him - has sparked a national and international reckoning with racism, which has been a long time coming. We have been here before, with the Civil Rights Movement, and the unrest following the death of Martin Luther, King, Jr. America’s original sin of slavery continues to haunt us despite some progress.

“Racism is a sin; a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family, and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father,” the U.S. Catholic Bishops [said in 1979](#).

Today, Pope Francis reminded us to acknowledge that dealing with racism is an issue at the core of our Catholic faith: "My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."

Though the Covenant doesn’t work on criminal justice or police issues directly, we do work in the space of trying to achieve a healthier and more just environment for all. Our work centers on care for creation, which includes recognizing that communities of color are often living in some of the most polluted neighborhoods in the U.S., contributing to the systemic racism that impacts every aspect of daily life. One of our guiding documents, [Laudato Si’](#), emphasizes “Everything is Connected!”

When we work for care for creation, we appeal to a wholistic and expansive definition. It is about caring for this beautiful planet and its ecosystems that sustain all life. We believe that this is a moral responsibility, not simply a nice thing to do because God called us to be co-creators

and to ensure that all are afforded clean and healthy air and that the future of our children is secure. George Floyd's cry "I can't breathe" should never be heard again: neither because of racists actions nor because of unhealthy air, water and land.

We can no longer ignore the cries. Cardinal Turkson, head of the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development, speaking about George Floyd's death and the unrest we are experiencing stated, "What is that? It's just a cry for people to recognize that every human being requires a certain minimum of social conditions to enable him to live and live successfully and happily."

We are in a transformative moment, and transformation can be [scary, challenging, difficult or painful](#). Through news, conversations with family, words from our priests and leaders, and much prayer, we are leaning on each other and on our faith to confront this moment, and to learn, listen and grow.

We must open our hearts to see each other as true brothers and sisters, and to work together, so that on the other end of this unrest, this pandemic, and God-willing, the climate crisis, we will be able to truly build a better world – a world where we are actively aware of our common humanity, where inclusivity is embraced, differences celebrated, and where we can all breathe (and live), in peace. It is time for transformative change.

**Dan Misleh**  
**Founding Executive Director**  
**Catholic Climate Covenant**

###

***About Catholic Climate Covenant:** Catholic Climate Covenant inspires and equips people and institutions to care for creation and care for the poor. Through our [19 national partners](#), we guide the U.S. Church's response to climate change by educating, giving public witness, and offering resources.*