



The Most Holy Trinity
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Pastor's Column

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U.S. Bishops Decry President Trump's Decision to Leave Paris Climate Accord

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President Donald J. Trump announced today that the United States will not honor the Paris agreement on climate change. The United States and China, the two largest carbon emitters, and 195 other nations, signed the agreement that was ratified in November 2016. The Paris agreement establishes that nations must reduce their carbon dioxide emissions in order to keep global temperatures well below a two-degree Celsius increase in relation to pre-industrial levels.

In the following statement, Bishop Oscar Cantú of Las Cruces, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace, stresses that, although the Paris agreement is not the only possible mechanism for addressing global carbon mitigation, the lack of a current viable alternative is a serious concern.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), along with Pope Francis and the entire Catholic Church, have consistently upheld the Paris agreement as an important international mechanism to promote environmental stewardship and encourage climate change mitigation. The President's decision not to honor the U.S. commitment to the Paris agreement is deeply troubling.

The Scriptures affirm the value of caring for creation and caring for each other in solidarity. The Paris agreement is an international accord that promotes these values. President Trump's decision will harm the people of the United States and the world, especially the poorest, most vulnerable communities. The impacts of climate change are already being experienced in sea level rise, glacial melts, intensified storms, and more frequent droughts. I can only hope that the President will propose concrete ways to address global climate change and promote environmental stewardship.

The USCCB has voiced support for prudent action and dialogue on climate change since its 2001 statement: "Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good."

In a letter to Congress in 2015, the U.S. Bishops, along with the presidents of Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services, encouraged the United States to sign the Paris agreement. They have since reiterated their support on several occasions. Pope Francis and the Holy See have also consistently voiced support for the Paris agreement.

F. Mike