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Statement on Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato si'*

Pope Francis today released his second Encyclical, *Laudato si'* ("Praise be to you") – words from St. Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Creatures." This long awaited letter, addressed not just to Catholics but to all the people of the world, is a call to conversion and to action, a reminder that all of us share a "common home" and, thus, are responsible for its care and protection.

Focused on integral ecology and the fundamental relationships we have with God, with other human beings and with all of creation, Pope Francis continues the clarion call of his predecessors, Pope Saint John XXIII, Pope Saint John Paul II and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI that the protection of the environment is not optional but is part of the work given to us as persons made in God's image and likeness and stewards of His creation. The care of our planet is, therefore, a part of the joy of living the gospel, filled with the newness and hope of Jesus Christ.

"While reminding us of our responsibility toward creation," said Bishop Daniel E. Thomas, "Pope Francis also challenges us to grow in our understanding that there is an integral connection between the care for the human person and care for the environment. At the heart of the Encyclical is the question: 'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us?' – a question that can only be answered by reflecting on the meaning of our existence and its values and in particular how our 'throwaway culture' impacts the poor. I want to encourage all Catholics and all people of goodwill to read the text and engage the principles put forth in this Encyclical, and to enter into the dialogue that our Holy Father has begun."

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