



Letter to Young People for the 10th Anniversary of *Laudato Si'*

May 21, 2025

Dear young people,

We write as the world welcomes with joy our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV who proclaimed a hopeful message of unity, peace and justice in the first words of his papacy.

On this 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical, [*Laudato Si'*](#), we write to you to encourage your profound hope despite challenging times. Pope Francis' ministry was marked by a closeness to young people. He often celebrated the ways that young people like you help the world to remove the scales from our eyes, and we thank you for your witness. We, too, want to accompany you as your faith enkindles a desire to respond to the “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (*Laudato Si'*, no. 49).

This anniversary arrives at an important moment, as the Church celebrates the Jubilee Year of Hope. The Jubilee is a sacred time to rest and rejuvenate, to restore relationships, and to spread hope to all. As Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*, “Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems” (no. 61). On this 10th anniversary, we call for the Church to be a radiant sign of hope, praising God through a renewed commitment to care for our common home, which sustains all life.

Yet, we know that the sacred gift of creation is under threat. Climate change and environmental degradation entrap many people in poverty, often in communities already excluded by society. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and industrial pollution threaten the livelihoods and food security of farming, fishing, and forest-dependent communities in the United States and around the world. Illegal and often unregulated mining, as well as other exploitative extractive activities, threaten Indigenous Peoples' survival and sacred places. Toxic waste results in high asthma and cancer rates in low-income communities living near sources of contamination. Extreme weather threatens the health, education, safety, and future of children born today more than in previous generations. When we fail to steward the gifts of our Creator carefully, we also manifest our blindness to the ways we are all interconnected and interdependent.

So, what can we do? We must be steadfast in our hope in God and in one another. God's plan for our salvation and our world involves the participation of all. We need to build a culture of encounter. Pope Francis reminded us of this when he said, “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (*Laudato Si'*, no.13).

Young people can lead the way as catalysts of hope. You have the capacity to organize and create change that will endure for generations to come ([*Evangelii Gaudium*](#), nos. 222-225). One example of this hope in action occurred in early 2025, when a group of 300 youth and 100 adults

from many dioceses in California organized a pilgrimage praying for ecological conversion. Similarly, the California Catholic Conference lifts up young voices each year when [high school students participate in advocacy](#) on important local ecological concerns. By this kind of bold witness, youth and young adults serve as a vital bridge. Do not doubt that you have the power to inspire and lead efforts to effect change locally and globally.

We are with you, standing in the tension between God's vision for his beloved creation and our current reality. In his apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis called to you, "Dear young people, ... Don't go through life anaesthetized or approach the world like tourists. Make a ruckus! Cast out the fears that paralyze you (no. 143). We trust in the Holy Spirit to guide your strong witness to the faith as you run the race. Your "momentum" can inspire the entire Church (*Christus Vivit*, no. 299). How will you share this essential expression of your faith with us and with others?

We close echoing the words of Pope Leo XIV: "We are all in the hands of God. Therefore, without fear, united hand in hand with God and among ourselves, we move forward. We are disciples of Christ."

May the hope of Christ burn ever brightly in your hearts, so that others may learn from your witness.



Most Reverend Borys Gudziak
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Chairman, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development



Most Reverend A. Elias Zaidan
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More information on the USCCB's environmental work can be found [here](#).