

Vatican city climate change

Climate change is "undeniable" Cardinal Peter Appiah Turkson, chancellor of the ...

Speaking on Tuesday, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, who inspired the ...

Flags can be see inside the dome during COP28, the U.N. Climate Change Conference, at Expo City Dubai Nov. 30, 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. (CNS photo/courtesy of UN Climate Change COP28, Christophe Viseux)

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The future of humanity depends on what people choose now, Pope Francis said in his message to global leaders at the World Climate Action Summit of the U.N. Climate Change Conference.

"Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death?" he asked in his message. "To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future!"

Excerpts from Pope Francis' full written message were read by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, Dec. 2 during the high-level segment with heads of state and government at the climate conference, COP28, being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Nov. 30-Dec. 12.

Pope Francis was to have been the first pope to attend the U.N. climate conference Dec. 1-3, but canceled his trip Nov. 28 after coming down with a serious bronchial infection.

The Vatican published the pope's full speech Dec. 2, although Cardinal Parolin read only excerpts at the summit to respect the three-minute limit on national statements. The text was submitted in full to the conference.

The destruction of the environment is "a sin" that not only "greatly endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable," he wrote, but it also "threatens to unleash a conflict between generations."

"The drive to produce and possess has become an obsession, resulting in an inordinate greed that has made the environment the object of unbridled exploitation," the pope wrote. People must recognize their limits, with humility and courage, and seek authentic fulfillment.

The world "should not be un-connected by those who govern it, with international negotiations that "cannot make significant progress due to positions taken by countries which place their national interests above the global common good,"" he wrote, quoting from his 2015 encyclical "Laudato Si", On Care for Our Common Home."



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The poor and high birth rates are not to blame for today's climate crisis, he wrote. "Almost half of our world that is more needy is responsible for scarcely 10% of toxic emissions, while the gap between the opulent few and the masses of the poor has never been so abysmal. The poor are the real victims of what is happening."

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