



November 10, 2015

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for the Environment and Climate Change. On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Canada, I assure you of our prayers and our earnest hope to be able to collaborate with you and with all the Government of Canada.

This past November 4, I wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau, drawing his attention to several issues of common concern which the Catholic Bishops of Canada consider of immediate and pressing urgency (please find enclosed a copy of my letter). Among the concerns was our desire to encourage the Government to continue along the lines already indicated by the Prime Minister – namely, of cooperating with other states and collaborating with our country's provincial, territorial, and municipal governments in response to today's urgent climatic, environmental and related social challenges. In this regard, I pointed out the importance of the encyclical *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis which was issued earlier this year. I am taking the liberty of enclosing complimentary copies for you in English and French.

In a fashion similar to the appeal I made to the Prime Minister, I also ask you to ensure that in your efforts to include wide representation in consultations or meetings by the federal government on the environment, invitations be extended as well to faith-based organizations and agencies, related interest groups as well as industry. All the different and complementary segments of Canadian society need to take responsible action on the challenges that the world, our "common home", faces regarding climate and the environment.

Moreover, faith-based representation in social and national discussions is especially important because each religion expresses itself through a framework of a general worldview and ethical principles which relate its beliefs to everyday action, and so motivate personal and social change. As an example, I am enclosing copies in English and French of a publication issued in early 2013 by our Conference's Commission for Justice and Peace, *Building a New Culture: Central Themes in Recent Church Teaching on the Environment*. Furthermore, faith-based organizations today are deeply involved in ecumenical and interreligious collaboration, and thus are able to provide compelling examples to all of society on the important, beneficial and

indispensable nature of honest dialogue and prophetic collaboration, most especially on questions which can be difficult, challenging and involving different but critical perspectives. The Canadian Council of Churches has already brought to the attention of the Prime Minister, with a copy to you, of the joint statement which it published – co-signed by representatives of Christian Churches, including me, as well as by leaders of other religions in Canada – which is entitled *On Promoting Climate Justice and Ending Poverty in Canada* (<https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Faith-Communities-in-Canada-Speak-Out-EN.pdf>).

As examples of the interest and commitment specific to Canadian Catholics regarding climatic and environmental challenges, I draw your attention to the following:

1. The Fall 2015 Education and Action Campaign by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, *Creating a Climate of Change*. For more information:
 - in English, <https://www.devop.org/en/pressroom/2015/comm2015-08-27>
 - in French, <https://www.devop.org/fr/pressroom/2015/comm2015-08-27>
2. A national march in the nation's capital and in cities across Canada, organized by Development and Peace with the Global Catholic Climate Movement, Avaaz.org and other agencies, to be held November 29, 2015, the eve that the Framework Convention on Climate Change meets in Paris. For more information:
 - in English, at <https://www.devop.org/en/blog/march-climate-change-november-29th>
 - in French, at <https://www.devop.org/fr/blog/ce-29-novembre-marchons-pour-un-climat-de-changement>
3. An international petition from the Global Catholic Climate Movement, which has been endorsed by Pope Francis and is circulating around the world and throughout the Catholic Church in Canada, <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/petition/>;
4. An international call for prayer (the “#Pray4cop21 prayer chain”), also originating with the Global Catholic Climate Movement in preparation for the Paris climate change convention, <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/pray4cop21/>.

On a final point, I urged the Prime Minister, and now also urge you as Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, to work toward fair, binding and truly transformational climate agreements, both nationally and internationally. This recommendation is shared by all the Catholic Episcopal Conferences of the world, for the most part working through regional episcopal councils, which recently made public a 10-point appeal to the negotiators at the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in preparation for the upcoming Framework Convention on Climate Change. I am enclosing a copy of the text, to which our Episcopal Conference is also a signatory. An electronic version in both English and French is available on the website of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace,

- in English, <https://www.devp.org/en/pressroom/2015/comm2015-10-26>
- in French, <https://www.devp.org/fr/pressroom/2015/comm2015-10-26>

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops is the national assembly of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Catholic Bishops of Canada. In looking forward to opportunities for our Conference to discuss these and other related concerns with you, I assure you, dear Minister, of our prayers and our best wishes, as well as our hope to dialogue with you in mutual respect and trust.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas Crosby".

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton and
President of the Canadian Conference
of Catholic Bishops

Enclosures:

- Copy of letter to Prime Minister Trudeau
- Complimentary copies in English and French of *Laudato Si'*
- Complimentary copies in English and French of *Building a New Culture*
- Appeal to COP 21 Negotiating Parties