

PRESS RELEASE

For further information:

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Canadian Chapter of Global Catholic Climate Movement Opens as Response to Pope's Francis' Call for Urgent Climate Action

Saskatoon, SK & Toronto, ON, 19 September 2019 -- As Christians worldwide celebrate the Season of Creation, and pray for care and renewal of our natural environment, the Catholic community in Canada is mobilizing to protect the planet by establishing a Canadian chapter of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM Canada).

The newly formed Canadian chapter will connect Canadian Catholics to a vibrant Global Catholic Climate Movement of 650+ Catholic member organizations, ranging from large international networks to local religious orders, plus parishes, grassroots leaders and thousands of lay Catholics, dedicated to responding to Pope Francis' "Laudato Si'" call to take urgent action against the injustice of climate destabilization.

"The launch of GCCM Canada is a big deal that we are proud to support," said Lucy Cummings, Executive Director of Faith & the Common Good. "Roman Catholics are the largest religious denomination in Canada. We need strong Canadian Catholic voices to be part of the climate conversation. We must link our faith communities together to care for and protect our common home."

GCCM Canada was publicly launched on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon as part of a Caritas Canada - Development and Peace conference that included a keynote address from Archbishop Don Bolen. The Saskatoon event was part of a worldwide Caritas mobilization of Catholic faithful to help "protect the traditional defenders of the Amazon, who are saving our ecological future."

"We are united in our commitment to protect the Earth, our common home, and all who share it. The launch of GCCM Canada and the Caritas *Care for Our Common Home* campaign demonstrate that the Canadian Catholic family has an important role to play as we urgently search for solutions to these challenges," said Chris Hrynkow, Associate Professor at St. Thomas More College and a GCCM Canada advisor.

GCCM Canada is connecting members of the Catholic community around climate action with the financial support of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada, the Sisters of St. Joseph Toronto, The Ursuline Sisters of Chatham, the Sisters of Notre Dame, Visitation Province, Sisters of Our Lady's Missionaries, and other generous donors. Canadian Catholic

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collaborative partners include the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice, The Mary Ward Centre, the Centre Oblat – A Voice For Justice (a joint project of the three Canadian Oblate Provinces and St. Paul University), Creation Care Ministry of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ottawa, Caritas Canada Development & Peace and the Green Churches Network/Églises Vert among many others.

“I have been humbled and encouraged by the outpouring of support for the establishment of GCCM Canada from Canadian Catholics. Prayers, donations, spreading the word, requests for collaboration, and offers to volunteer. Folks want to see stronger Catholic mobilization to protect our planet,” said GCCM Canada Coordinator Agnes Richard.

As part of its 2019 Season of Creation launch, GCCM Canada will take part in a number of climate justice events including: an interfaith forum in Kitchener on **September 26th** hosted at St Mary’s Catholic Church to discuss tangible ways faith groups can respond to the climate crisis; an on-line webinar on **October 2nd** hosted by GCCM Canada exploring why standing with First Peoples and protecting Indigenous rights is so critical to climate justice; and a “Feast of Creation” ecumenical prayer service hosted by the Toronto Archdiocese on **October 4th** to celebrate spiritual unity around Creation care.

Fr. Prakash Lohale, director of the Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Affairs, Archdiocese of Toronto, emphasized that “the theme ‘Web of Life’ during this Season of Creation is a reminder that we are interconnected and interdependent. We are related and united as brothers and sisters, woven together to the whole of the universe, the entire cosmos.”

“Helping to grow an eco-spirituality that heals our relationship with all of creation is one of our key goals.” said Richard. “Our Season of Creation launch activities showcase a promise on behalf of GCCM Canada to engage Canadian Catholics anew, helping them connect to each other and to take action to live in communion with the rest of creation. A fundamental part of this work will be to echo Pope Francis’ words in *Laudato Si’* by ‘choosing life’ and encouraging Canadian Catholics to protect our common home.”

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Further information about the aforementioned events is available below:

What Does Climate Change Ask of You? The Leadership Role of Faith Communities in Response to Climate Change

- Host: Divest Waterloo, Interfaith Grand River, Faith & the Common Good
- What: An interfaith forum with workshops to discuss tangible ways that faith communities can galvanize the strength of their membership to take a leadership role in responding to the climate crisis.
- When: Thursday, September 26, 2019 at 3 PM – 9 PM
- Where: St Mary's Catholic Church 56 Duke Street West, Kitchener ON, N2H 3W7
- Register: Free. All are welcome. Need to register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/what-does-climate-change-ask-of-you-the-leadership-role-of-faith-communities-in-response-to-climate-tickets-70619347369>
- Contact: Laura Hamilton, Divest Waterloo, laura@divestwaterloo.ca

“#LiveLaudatoSi Canada Learning Webinar: Defending the Defenders”

- Host: GCCM Canada
- What: An on-line learning workshop to discuss rainforest devastation and its impact on vulnerable peoples in the Amazon basin while highlighting similar causes for concern faced by Indigenous communities here in Canada. Will also provide information on how to get involved in GCCM Canada.
- When: Wednesday, October 2, 1:00-2:00 pm (EDT)
- Where: On-line Webinar
- Register: Free. All are welcome. Need to register: <https://www.faithcommongood.org/gccmcanadalaunch>
- Contact: Agnes Richard, Coordinator, GCCM Canada, arichard@faithcommongood.org

Feast of Creation: An Ecumenical Celebration of Beauty and Diversity

- Host: Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs, Archdiocese of Toronto
- What: An ecumenical prayer service hosted by the Archdiocese of Toronto, Native Peoples' Mission, The Mary Ward Centre, and GCCM Canada.
- When: Friday October 4, 2019, 6:30-8:30pm

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- Where: St Basil's Parish, 50 St Joseph St., Toronto
- Registration: Free. All are welcome. No need to register.
- Contact: Kathy Murtha, Retreat Coordinator, The Mary Ward Centre for Education, Spirituality and Justice, kathymurtha83@gmail.com

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About Us:

- **Global Catholic Climate Movement Canada (GCCM Canada)** is a charitable network that works in partnership with the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), local allies, and Catholics across Canada to animate the social, political, and ecological insights articulated Pope Francis' climate justice encyclical, Laudato Si'. (https://www.faithcommongood.org/global_catholic_climate_movement_canada)
- **Faith & the Common Good (FCG)** is a national, [interfaith](#) network dedicated to assisting and inspiring religious congregations and spiritual groups of all backgrounds to take collective action in creating more sustainable communities. (<https://www.faithcommongood.org/>)