

Quick Facts: The Climate Crisis...



1) ... is real and happening now.

There is clear international scientific consensus that the world's climate is changing as a result of human activity. It will have catastrophic impacts if not tackled urgently. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report of October 2018, representing all governments, had 91 lead authors and 133 contributing authors.

The IPCC 2014 report concluded that there is no doubt that the climate system is warming and that many observed changes are unprecedented. Most leading peer-reviewed articles and scientific organisations worldwide have publicly supported this position.

Climate change is real. Joint Science Academies Statement, 2005 quoted on NASA website

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal. IPCC, 2014

Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree: climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities. NASA 2019



2) ... is a threat to all life, including human life, and to the planet on which we live.

As a result of changes to the climate, we are already experiencing:

- Greater extremes of weather; heavier rainfall and more intense floods, and longer or more intense droughts or dry spells, sometimes in the same location
- Longer and more intense wildfire seasons
- Increased pressure on groundwater supplies
- Melting ice, sea level rises and coastal flooding
- Ocean acidification and loss of coral reefs
- Additional pressure on ecosystems leading to loss of species

These changes will continue throughout this century and beyond, because of damage that is already done. Unless we can limit temperature increases to a maximum of 1.5 degrees Celsius, environmental destruction will be much more severe, and will put millions of lives at risk.

Climate change creates additional stresses on land, exacerbating existing risks to livelihoods, biodiversity, human and ecosystem health, infrastructure, and food systems. IPCC 2019

Vulnerable people have their human rights constantly threatened by the effects of climate change. Caritas Internationalis, 2018

If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #24, 2015

We ask, please understand this, our people are dying. Enele Sopoaga, Tuvalu Prime Minister, 2019



3) ... is already affecting food, water, land and health in the Pacific.

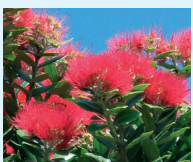
Caritas Oceania has been documenting, since 2014, the impact of the climate crisis on land, food and water supplies, extreme weather emergencies and other changes to people's lives. The facts show that the impacts of the climate crisis in our region are significantly affecting people's lives now – it is not just something to be faced in the future. UNHCR estimates that, already, around 25 million people worldwide are displaced by environmental factors. There are predictions this will increase to 150 million people by 2050, including over 1 million in the Pacific.

We used to have a garden, but the floods happen so often that everything has been lost. Malia Masoe, Samoa (Caritas Oceania environment report 2018)

When a La Niña event comes, there is near total drought for as much as two years. Br Chris Popplewell, Kiribati (Caritas Oceania environment report 2014)

Food not grow good because of more rain, more sun, at the wrong times. Mikaela Kenny, Solomon Islands (Caritas Oceania environment report 2016)

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4) ... is one of the most urgent moral issues facing humanity today.

The climate crisis is a serious threat to the survival of many people, with the poor and vulnerable at greatest risk. Overconsumption of the world's resources is robbing future generations of what they need to survive.

The wealthiest 10 percent of the world's population are responsible for almost 50 percent of the total carbon emissions, while the poorest 50 percent are responsible for only 10 percent of emissions. The people who are suffering first, and who will be affected the most, are those who have contributed the least towards polluting and overusing the world's resources.

Pope Francis helps us to understand that all issues threatening and affecting human life are interconnected. When we neglect to value any form of life at any of its stages, we become neglectful of the totality of creation. Our Catholic faith recognises numerous threats to life, including abortion, euthanasia, poverty, war, the arms race, racism, the death penalty and environmental destruction.

Neglecting to monitor the harm done to nature and the environmental impact of our decisions is only the most striking sign of a disregard for the message contained in the structures of nature itself. When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected. Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #117

The survival of the natural environment is also the survival of ourselves. When will we understand that a crime against nature is a crime against ourselves and sin against God? Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
What does the commandment "Thou shall not kill" mean when twenty percent of the world's population consumes resources at a rate that robs poorer nations and future generations of what they need to survive? New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, quoted in Laudato Si' #95



5) ... can be combated. All is not lost. We still have a chance to make a difference.

The climate crisis is extremely serious, and we need to implement urgent and radical changes to our economy and lifestyles to overcome it. But we have not yet reached the point of no return. We can still make a difference politically and personally, collectively and individually. We need government policies which reduce our carbon use, and which support vulnerable communities – including rural communities – to make the transition. We need communities – including Catholic parishes and schools – to be innovative in reducing our use of energy and non-renewable supplies, plastic and paper.

Together let's work to ensure we respect all of life, and to pass on to future generations the gift of creation that has been entrusted to us.

All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start. Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #205

Limiting warming to 1.5°C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics but doing so will require unprecedented changes. IPCC Working Group III, 2018

Our understanding that we are stewards of God's creation, our solidarity with the poor, and our respect for the common good make the issue of environmental justice the responsibility of every person. New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference 2006

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