

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ENCYCLICAL CELEBRATION EVENT IN SEATTLE**  
**Pope Francis' letter on caring for creation**

Pope Francis' much anticipated encyclical on the environment will be celebrated at a 7 p.m. service Thursday, June 18, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, 7100 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW, Seattle.

All are invited to the 7 p.m. service to gather with local Catholic, ecumenical, and environmental leaders to honor Pope Francis' call to protect the Earth. Speakers include:

- Fr. Walmesley, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Parish
- Dr. Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos, director of the Institute of Catholic Thought and Culture at Seattle University
- Dan and Robyn Campbell, young couple parishioners at Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Jessie Dye, program & outreach director of Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light

These speakers will be available prior to the service at 6.p.m for interviews.

There will also be the opportunity for a tour of the parish grounds which features solar panels, a children's solar kiosk, a rain garden, a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat peace garden, green buildings, and other energy saving measures that have made the parish a leader in environmental sustainability.

On morning of June 18 in Rome, the Vatican will release the first comprehensive Catholic moral statement on caring for creation in the face of climate change. The pope's encyclical, titled "Praised Be" (or *Laudato Sii* in Latin), is expected to make three key points: 1) Catholic teaching calls for protecting God's creation; 2) humans cause climate change, which is a serious moral issue; and 3) the time to act is now -- specific personal and public policy measures are needed to address global warming.

The encyclical will explicitly name climate change as one of the greatest threats to life on Earth, which poses particular challenges here in the Pacific Northwest where glaciers are melting, drought and forest fires are intensifying, and fossil fuel projects threaten Native American and other communities.

"*Praised Be*, a call from Pope Francis to inspire us to care for creation, will resonate with Catholics throughout the region," predicts Father Jack Walmesley, Our Lady of Guadalupe pastor.

## Quotes from local Catholic leaders

**Professor Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos**, director of the Institute for Catholic Thought and Culture, Seattle University, says Pope Francis is building on a long Catholic tradition of concern and care for creation.

“Pope Francis has given us the profound gift of drawing our attention to care for *all* the earth,” said Punsalan-Manlimos. “When we reach back into our sacred texts, we find this message written throughout – the message is not new. In his encyclical, Pope Francis is weaving together the wisdom of our faith tradition and its moral demands to take our proper place in God’s creation, in God’s ecosystem, with humility and restraint.”

**Father Jack Walmesley**, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Seattle

“In my role as a pastor, I find that people want an authentic voice not tainted by partisan cynicism. The people I serve are seeking a hopeful, pastoral and moral voice speaking for the common good and protection of Earth’s air and water. Pope Francis is such a voice, and his call to action on behalf of the Earth and the most vulnerable of God’s children will be heeded by billions of the faithful around the world.”

**Michael Reichert**, president of Catholic Community Services/Catholic Housing Services of Western Washington

“Pope Francis summons us to see that care for the poor and protection of God’s creation are two sides of the same coin. Ongoing exploitation of the earth violates the life, dignity, and freedom of the most vulnerable people among us.

Without a stable climate, without clean air and water, the poorest among us are the first to suffer. Air quality is typically worse in low-income communities around the U.S., and global warming-pollution caused by burning fossil fuels creates terrible storms, droughts, or floods that impact the poorest communities here and around the globe. As Catholics – as people of faith – we have a moral responsibility to take action on climate change and poverty. We can no longer delay.”

**Sister Jo Ann Showalter**, Sisters of Providence leadership team

“As climate change continues to negatively impact all living things, even here in the Northwest, our moral compass calls us to act on behalf of all of God’s creatures. This includes not only aquatic life, but also the humans whose sustenance or livelihoods are threatened by these devastating environmental changes.”

**Jessie Dye**, program & outreach director of Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light

“The Pope’s message is one of hope, but also one of action. We must all commit to live more sustainably on the earth, being mindful of waste and excess. At the same time, Pope Francis asks us to step into the public arena and urge our leaders to limit global warming pollution. Here in Washington, we can put our faith into action by saying no to coal export and oil transport, and yes to a price on carbon.”