

May 5, 2020

“True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good.” (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*, #178)

Dear Member of Congress:

We are Catholic religious orders and organizations from around the United States who write to you grounded in our faith’s call to preserve the dignity of each person, prioritize the needs of people who are poor and vulnerable, and care for God’s creation.

While the coronavirus has made all of us vulnerable to illness and financial setbacks, we know that low-income communities and communities of color face greater risks due to already existing health and economic disparities. We therefore thank you for passing legislation during the upward curve of the pandemic that not only protects our heroic healthcare workers but also provides crucial relief for millions of us and our neighbors who have lost jobs and income.

We see, however, that some communities are still bearing a larger burden from the pandemic and the economic fallout, and we urge you to ease these impacts in future relief packages. Specifically we call for:

- Healthcare resources to be directed to African-American and Latino communities and tribal nations historically and currently harmed by air and water pollution that puts residents at higher risk for respiratory illnesses
- A nationwide moratorium on shut-offs of water, electricity and heat to ensure that low-income households aren’t left more susceptible to the coronavirus due to lack of access to such basic necessities
- Increased funding for energy efficiency programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) that benefit low-income households.

While these immediate needs are uppermost in our minds, we also are looking ahead toward getting people back to work and building a more resilient and healthy society once the worst of the health crisis has passed. We are compelled to seek a sustainable recovery that reduces risks to communities disproportionately vulnerable to health crises and economic disruption and that addresses the looming global climate crisis that similarly threatens lives and livelihoods.

As we look ahead, our priorities include:

- Investments in clean energy industries such as solar and wind through mechanisms like clean energy tax credits. Studies have shown that these industries are more labor-intensive and create more jobs than do the fossil fuel industries.
- Job training for the clean energy economy of the future, especially creating such opportunities for workers transitioning out of fossil fuel industries and for low-income communities

- Investments in public transportation to ensure workers access to new job opportunities while reducing pollution and helping to mitigate climate change
- Investments in infrastructure to ensure that everyone living in the United States has access to clean water. During the COVID-19 pandemic we see how many vulnerable communities are put at greater risk of infection because they can not engage in recommended hygiene practices.
- Increasing air pollution standards and oversight, especially for mercury and other toxic metals, and upholding environmental impact studies as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. This is necessary to reduce pollution that puts residents of many communities, too often low-income communities of color, at greater risk for viruses like COVID-19.
- Redirecting some of the excessive US military budget to foreign assistance supporting public health, humanitarian programs, disaster preparedness and response, and sustainable infrastructure in developing countries. Boosting security at home now clearly means reducing as much as possible the threats of future global pandemics and the global climate crisis.

The coronavirus has exposed both the weaknesses and strengths of our infrastructure and support systems. Far too many people and communities, left behind in the best of times, are becoming disproportionately vulnerable to COVID-19 and the economic fall-out. Yet we also see a willingness to make individual and collective sacrifices for the common good, and the capacity for governments at all levels to allocate in a short period of time the resources needed to address a global crisis.

In upcoming legislation we urge you to protect those most harmed during the current pandemic while also ensuring that persons who have been shown to be most vulnerable to illness and job losses benefit during the recovery. This also is an important moment to prepare for the next crisis and increase resilience for everyone, regardless of race, class, income and zip code.

Sincerely,

Adorers of the Blood of Christ, US Region
 Adrian Dominican Sisters
 Adrian Dominican Sisters Portfolio Advisory Board
 Albany Province Justice Committee Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
 Association of United States Catholic Priests
 Benedictine Sisters of Erie
 Bon Secours Mercy Health
 Carmelite NGO
 Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers Care for Creation Committee
 Catholic Theological Union
 Christian Life Community, New York Region
 Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach, US Region, Missionary Society of St. Columban
 CommonSpirit Health
 Conference for Mercy Higher Education
 Congregation of Divine Providence

Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul USA
Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids
Dominican Sisters of Caldwell
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Dominican Sisters of Houston
Dominican Sisters of Peace
Dominican Sisters of San Rafael and Mission San Jose
Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa
Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, Leadership Team
EarthCARE Committee of IHM Sisters
Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America
Elizabeth Seton Federation
Erie Benedictines for Peace
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Sister, Executive Director, New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
Franciscan Sisters and Cojourners of Rochester, Minnesota
Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
Franciscan Sisters of the Poor
Franciscan sisters of the Sacred Heart
Franciscans for Justice
Glenmary Home Missioners
Global Catholic Climate Movement
Global Catholic Climate Movement -- TN chapter
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Holy Cross International Justice Office
Ignatian Solidarity Network
IHM Sisters
Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Social Research Institute, Loyola University New Orleans
JPIC Coordinator Daughters of Wisdom
Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee, Dominicans of Springfield, IL
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Leadership Team of Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Leadership Team of Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg
Leadership Team of the Congregation of St. Joseph
Leadership Team of the Felician Sisters of North America
Loretto Community

Loretto Earth Network
Marianist Province of the U.S.
Marianist Social Justice Collaborative Steering Committee
Marist Fathers and Brothers
Marquette University Center for Peacemaking
Maryknoll Lay Missioners
Maryknoll Sisters, Western U.S. Region
Medical Mission Sisters
Mercy Investment Services, Inc.
Metro NY Catholic Climate Movement
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Catholic Women
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of IHM
Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity/Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Order of Friars Minor Conventual
Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters
Partnership for Earth Spirituality
Pax Christi - National Shrine of Our Lady of LaSalette
Pax Christi Greensburg
Pax Christi Metro New York
Pax Christi USA
Pax Christi, National Shrine of Our Lady of LaSalette
Peace and Justice coordinator, Western Province Congregation of the Mission
Pedro Arrupe Jesuit Institute
Presentation Sisters San Francisco, CA
Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order
Rejedores de Comunidad Inc.
Religious Order- Marianites of Holy Cross
Roman Union Ursulines in the United States
Santa Maria de la Vid Abbey
School Sisters of Notre Dame Atlantic Midwest Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame, CP JPIC Office
Sisters of Charity Federation
Sisters of Charity Halifax
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Congregational Leadership
Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership
Sisters of Charity of New York
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill Generalate
Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill U.S. Province

Sisters of Charity, BVM
 Sisters of Christian Charity
 Sisters of Mary Reparatrix, United State Region
 Sisters of Mercy Mid-Atlantic area
 Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Leadership Team
 Sisters of Most Precious Blood Leadership Team
 Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur USA
 Sisters of Notre Dame, Toledo Province
 Sisters of Providence Mother Joseph Province
 Sisters of Saint Francis of Rochester, Minnesota
 Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, PA
 Sisters of St. Dominic of Tacoma and Associates
 Sisters of St. Francis (Oldenburg) Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
 Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
 Sisters of St. Joseph Brentwood, New York
 Sisters of St. Joseph Earth Center
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet: Albany Province
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester
 Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield
 Sisters of the Holy Cross
 Sisters of the Holy Family
 Sisters of the Holy Names Mid-Atlantic Mission Center
 Sisters of the Holy Names, US-Ontario Province Leadership Team
 Sisters of the Humility of Mary
 Sisters of the Humility of Mary JPIC Office
 Sisters of the Immaculate Heart Of Mary, Immaculata, PA
 Sisters of the Living Word
 Sisters of the Precious Blood
 Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM of Aberdeen SD
 Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Society of the Sacred Heart United States-Canada Province

Srs. of St. Joseph of Carondelet, LA Province

The Catholic Health Association of the United States .
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U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking

Union of Sisters of the Presentation of the BVM

Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

Wheaton Franciscans, Wheaton IL

World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, North American Region
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Xaverian Missionaries USA