



## Writing Letters to the Editor on the Papal Encyclical

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) is the perfect way to offer a rebuttal, add another perspective, or just express your appreciation for an already-published article or commentary piece.

### Some General Tips

- Keep it short (150-250 words) – If you don't edit your LTE, the news outlet might edit it for you.
- Respond to something you read in the paper – Refer to the title and date of the piece you're responding to in the first sentence
- Send your LTE in the body of your email, not as an attachment.
- Include your full name, religious title, contact information, location, profession or expertise in the email as well.
- Be timely – Send your LTE in on the same day the relevant article is published, in this case the day after the encyclical comes out and it has been reported on in the paper
- Sample LTEs regarding the papal encyclical are below, but please personalize it to include your own experiences and your reactions to the encyclical and the way that it is reported in the paper

If your LTE is published

- Promote it on your Facebook page and/or Twitter
- **Send the link to the electronic version to the Institute Justice Team**, so that we can use it in our advocacy with legislators. [justice@sistersofmercy.org](mailto:justice@sistersofmercy.org)

### Example 1 – support the encyclical's themes

I was pleased/delighted/thrilled to see the attention given to Pope Francis' encyclical (*title of article, date*) and its call to action on behalf of the environment and persons who are poor.

The Sisters of Mercy see in our ministries in the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Philippines the links that the pope refers to between climate change and environmental degradation and the plight of immigrants, women and children, and those victimized by violence and racism. We worry about even greater suffering given forecasts for increased climate refugees, environmental-related conflicts and food crises.

I hope that our national and world leaders heed the pope's critique of the current, dominant economic model that prioritizes the market, profit and unharnessed

consumption. Within this model, Earth is treated as a resource to be exploited. My prayer is that all of us consider changing our own lifestyles to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and, through our purchasing power, to support enterprises, such as fair trade cooperatives, that prioritize the needs of Earth and persons who are poor. As the pope says, “there is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions.”

### **Example 2 -- catch legislators' attention**

I was pleased to see the attention given to Pope Francis' encyclical (*title of article, date*) and its call to action on behalf of the environment and persons who are poor.

I hope that our elected officials heed the pope's concerns for climate change and those most impacted by it at the international, national, state and local levels. As the pope writes: “True statecraft is manifest when...we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good.”

The pope's call to dialogue about shaping the future of the planet is critical, so that all voices are heard, including those who we don't hear from often but who have the most at stake. I urge {*names of US senator(s) and/or US Representative*} to respond to the Pope's plea to “hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” and acknowledge the moral urgency of addressing this global challenge and ensuring protections for those most vulnerable to extreme heat, rising seas, flooding and drought that scientists have linked in part to human-caused climate change.

### **Example 3 – highlight actions already underway**

I was pleased to see the attention given to Pope Francis' encyclical (*title of article, date*) and its call to action on behalf of the environment and persons who are poor. He urged government leaders to take actions at the international, national, state and local levels and each individual to embrace “ecological citizenship” with changed habits and lifestyles since “there is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions.”

Sisters of Mercy (*or a particular institution or ministry*) have been doing our part through legislative advocacy for climate change policies, corporate engagement and changes in our own practices such as the installation of solar panels, development of composting programs, the recycling of electronics and the purchase of electric vehicles and promotion of public transportation.

*I/we/name of institution or ministry* look forward to prayerfully reading and reflecting on the encyclical in the days and weeks to come and discerning even deeper responses we can make. We will invite our Sisters, associates, co-workers, volunteers and friends to join in these responses, which will include urging world leaders to pledge significant reductions in carbon emissions at the international climate talks in Paris later this year as well as considering new practices ourselves to lessen our reliance on fossil fuels and act in harmony and interdependence with all creation.