

The *Laudato Si* Commission
Faith, Justice & Reconciliation Assembly 2024
Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

12.1.23

Dear Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

As the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties begins in Dubai, Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and Canada support bold efforts toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing actions for environmental justice. COP 28 presents an opportunity for us to reflect on these priorities and re-energize our efforts at climate change mitigation and eco-social advocacy.

We write to you as the *Laudato Si*' Commission of the Association of Jesuit College and Universities (AJCU). Our mission, deeply inspired by the teachings of *Laudato Si*', is to guide Jesuit colleges and universities along a transformative path of ecological stewardship and environmental justice. Over 90% of the Jesuit institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada are committed to Pope Francis' 7-Year Journey Towards Integral Ecology, as outlined on the *Laudato Si Action Platform*. As such, many universities have taken important steps already, significantly reducing carbon emissions, expanding renewable energy, procuring more sustainable food, partnering with frontline communities to address food and water insecurities, and investing in research and teaching to support socially just sustainability innovations. But more needs to be done.

The AJCU *Laudato Si*' Commission consists of faculty, staff and administrators from Jesuit colleges and universities. Its mission is to propose at the organization's Assembly in July, 2024 a set of bold and actionable environmental proposals for Jesuit institutions of higher education to take up in their academic affairs and institutional operations. Thus far, the Commission has accomplished the first comprehensive inventory of eco-social activities at Jesuit colleges and universities, from which new proposals are now being developed for the 2024 Assembly. These proposals will leverage our collective impacts across this unique university network as we engage the collective dimensions of change in our academics and operations and endeavor to change ourselves and the millions of students, community members, and living landscapes that we serve.

As COP 28 is occurring now, we turn our attention to the meeting and lend our voice to campaigns supported by many global Catholic organizations. We support the following recommendations:

1. Commit to course-correcting adaptation and mitigation deficiencies to keep the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement alive. This predominantly includes science-based greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to limit post-industrial global warming to 1.5 degrees celsius.
2. Place the forgiveness and restructuring of debt as values and solutions on your agenda for COP28 to help address the massive gap between the needs and the resources in climate finance. This builds upon the momentum generated by the Bridgetown Initiative, the Loss and Damage Fund, and calls for reforms of multilateral development banks and international financial institutions.
3. Implement climate action on agriculture and food security that upholds the role of agroecology and culture-based solutions in addressing food and water vulnerabilities.
4. Deliver USD 100 billion of public and private climate finance annually by developed countries in support of the Global South, and bridge gaps to meet the goal of USD 4.3 trillion by 2030 ([OECD & Climate Policy Initiative, 2022](#)).
5. Commit to developing the Fossil Fuel Non-proliferation Treaty, slashing emissions through a just fossil fuel phaseout, and holding top polluters accountable.

In the recent Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of ‘Journeying in Communion and Commitment’. In this spirit, we invite and encourage active engagement and collaboration from every member of our university communities. Together, we can make a meaningful difference, both within our institutions and in the broader world.

In solidarity and hope,

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Laudato Si' Commission Co-Chairs
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