

January 13, 2017

Dear Cardinal Dolan, Rev. Rodriguez, Rev. Graham, and Rabbi Hier:

As members of a wide array of faith-based groups representing religious beliefs from several Protestant denominations, Catholicism and Judaism, we continually marvel at our similarities and common values. We all believe that the earth, its land and waters, the animals and human beings that inhabit the earth are the creation of a loving God who is in charge, and that we are subject to God's commandments. We are united in our passion to care for God's creation and in our sense of moral imperative to protect the environment.

But at this time of leadership change in America, we are collectively concerned about what we can expect for the quality of air and water, and the protection of our precious public lands. How will President-elect Trump and his team value our country's rich cultural, historical and natural heritage?

Our new president has invited you all to offer prayer at his inauguration and swearing-in ceremony on January 20. As it is with us, each of you shares similar core beliefs about God and Creation and the obligation to protect God's Creation. With the platform bestowed upon you, we ask that you would take a few moments and share the spiritual message of priority for keeping our air clean, our water pristine, and for protecting the public lands that provide us access to the best of America's great outdoors.

Other religious leaders and organizations share our common desire to care for God's creation. In Pope Francis's Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si'*, the Pope repeatedly calls for protection of the environment and to "care for our common home." To echo His Holy Father's unequivocal words, "When we exploit [creation], we destroy the sign of His love... Care for creation is care for God's gift to us, and it means saying to God, 'thank you, I am the custodian of creation'... This must be our attitude in relation to creation, to protect it, because if we destroy creation, creation will destroy us! Do not forget this."

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference has worked, as part of its mission, to educate the Hispanic population of the dangers and severe health consequences of mercury pollution from nearby coal-fired plants. This work is a compelling message of care for the air and water that are God's creation.

The Samaritan's Purse ensures that communities around the world have access to clean water. Some 842,000 people die each year from diseases caused by unclean water and Samaritan's Purse projects provide freshwater wells for communities in need, protect rainwater catchments to ensure that communities have a consistent source of clean water, and engage in many other efforts pointing people to the "living water" found in Jesus Christ. What an inspirational message about the meaning of care for God's natural resources and the people that depend on that care.

We urge you –Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop of New York; Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center; Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, and Rev. Franklin Graham, President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association – to tap into what you already know in your hearts and work, and to say a few words that would encourage the President and his team to make clean air and water, a safe climate for future generations, and protected public lands a top priority. More than that, we would ask that you honor our Creator by conveying the true meaning of environmental stewardship as a God-given moral responsibility.

On Inauguration day, January 20, 2017, we pray that God grace you with His glorious words of care for all Creation.

Sincerely,

Bishop Carroll A. Baltimore, Global United Fellowship
Rabbi Steve Gutow, former Jewish Council for Public Affairs and chair, National Religious Partnership for the Environment
Rev. Dr. Susan T. Henry-Crowe, General Secretary – The General Board of Church and Society, The United Methodist Church
Kyle Meyaard-Schaap, National Organizer, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action
Sister Patricia McDermott, RSM, President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas