News
EarthBeat
Pope Francis joins others in holding a banner during an audience at the Vatican June 5, 2023,

Pope Francis joins others in holding a banner during an audience at the Vatican June 5, 2023, with the organizers of the Green & Blue Festival. The banner calls for financing a "loss and damage" fund that was agreed upon at the COP27 U.N. climate conference in 2022. The fund would seek to provide financial assistance to nations most vulnerable and impacted by the effects of climate change. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)



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Pope Francis will release a follow-up document on the environment on Oct. 4, providing an update to his 2015 encyclical "*Laudato Si*', on Care for Our Common Home" — a landmark papal letter that offered a rallying cry for global action in the fight against climate change.

Francis said the new document is an effort to help "put an end to the senseless war against our common home" and comes after a summer of record breaking rising temperatures, wildfires and storms.

"It is a terrible world war," he lamented.

The pope's remarks came during his general audience at the Vatican on Aug. 30. The new publication will come in the form of an apostolic exhortation, a Magisterial document written by the pope meant to draw focus to a particular issue or concern.

Francis first made public mention of such a document during an Aug. 21 meeting with European lawyers, saying only that he was writing a "second part to *Laudato Si*' to update it on current problems."

Archbishop Peter Comensoli of Melbourne, Australia later revealed on social media that the pope had also mentioned plans for a *Laudato Si*' follow-up during a July 26 encounter with young people from his diocese.

Since then, few details have emerged about the content of the document, with the Vatican Press Office only stating that the document will address "the most recent extreme weather events and catastrophes affecting people across five continents."

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The pope's 2015 encyclical — the first Magisterial document to focus primarily on climate change — was intentionally timed to be released ahead of the groundbreaking United Nations climate change conference in Paris, known as COP21, where nearly 200 nations entered into a historic agreement to reduce carbon emissions.

Since then, the pope has continued to use his decade-long papacy to urge for greater environmental action, though responses to both *Laudato Si*' and the pope's prioritization of creation care have been mixed, especially among the leadership of the U.S. Catholic Church.

In June, U.S. climate envoy John Kerry visited Francis at the Vatican. Afterwards, he told reporters, including NCR, that he considered the pope a leading ally in the lead-up to the next global climate summit, which will take place in November in Dubai.

The pope, said Kerry, is "very troubled by where we are and where we are not, where we should be."

The Oct. 4 release date of the new exhortation is the Feast Day of the pope's namesake, St. Francis of Assisi — the 12th century saint known for his concern for the poor and the environment. It is also the date of the final day of what is known as the "Season of Creation," a month-long ecumenical initiative aimed at inspiring greater prayer and environmental action among Christians.

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