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Pope Francis meets Sultan al-Jaber, the president-designate of the 2023 United Nations Clima

Pope Francis meets Sultan al-Jaber, the president-designate of the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference, known as COP28, his delegation and Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, at the Vatican Oct. 11, 2023. COP28 is set to open Nov. 30 in Dubai. (CNS/Vatican Media)



by Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis will travel to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates Dec. 1-3 to participate in the U.N. Climate Change Conference, the Vatican press office confirmed.

In an interview broadcast in Italy Nov. 1, the pope had said he intended to go, but the Vatican did not confirm the trip until Nov. 3.

"Accepting the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, president of the United Arab Emirates, His Holiness Pope Francis will make the previously announced trip to Dubai from 1 to 3 December 2023, on the occasion of the upcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change," commonly called COP28, said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office.

The conference is designed to assess progress or failures in reaching the goals adopted by 196 nations and parties, including the Holy See, with the Paris climate

agreement in 2015.

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In his interview with TG1, Italy's main evening news program, Francis said the climate summit in Paris "was the most beautiful of all," but since then "everyone has taken a step back and courage is needed to move forward."

Too many people, he said, do not believe climate change is real and that it is threatening people's lives and livelihoods today.

"We still have time to stop it," the pope said. "Our future is at stake, the future of our children and grandchildren. People must take some responsibility."

In early October, Francis released *Laudate Deum* ("Praise God"), a follow-up document to his 2015 encyclical "*Laudato Si*', On Care for Our Common Home," because, he wrote, over the past eight years, "our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point."

He also wrote about COP28, saying "it can represent a change of direction" and show that everything the international community has tried to do since the 1992 U.N. Earth Summit "was in fact serious and worth the effort, or else it will be a great disappointment and jeopardize whatever good has been achieved thus far."

Read this next: Pope Francis to travel to Dubai to address UN climate summit
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