Opinion
EarthBeat



U.S. President Donald Trump signs an executive order in the Oval Office of the White House, Jan. 23 in Washington. (OSV News/Reuters/Kevin Lamarque)



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If you're like me, you're concerned about the fight for the sanctity of life. And, if you're like me, you're therefore concerned about that which sustains life: the natural environment, or God's creation. God's creation includes not only the living things that are precious to God, but also the land, sea and air, and the climate that is being increasingly harmed by our consumption of fossil fuels.

The moral imperative to care for creation seems lost on many Christians today. Notably, this is the case for conservative leaders and lawmakers, who support protecting human life and yet oppose protecting the environment that sustains it. As Catholics who are bound to take the magisterium's word to heart, we must oppose any efforts by our elected officials to enact laws that harm God's creation, including the climate.

So far in January, we've witnessed several attacks on God's creation — specifically, the climate — from the new presidential administration in the United States:

- Ordering to double down on oil and gas drilling at a time when fossil fuel use must be significantly reduced to avoid irreversible impacts;
- Directing the U.S. to withdraw from the Paris Agreement on climate change, which abrogates our international commitments to reduce emissions;
- Pouring $100 billion into A.I. infrastructure that is rapidly increasing its carbon footprint;
- Appointing fossil fuel lobbyists to the Environmental Projection Agency;
- Proposing the elimination of subsidies (such as tax credits for electric vehicles) that are driving innovation and emissions reductions.

Yet even more insidiously tragic than the new administration's anti-climate policies is the public's general lack of appreciation for the *intrinsic value of the environment*. This is a key point that Pope Francis makes in his ecological encyclical, "*Laudato Si*', on Care for Our Common Home," which sees its 10th anniversary this year.

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The pope makes clear that, rather than viewing the environment as a commodity to be exploited for profit or other gain, the natural world and its creatures have value *in*

and of themselves. Since the natural environment is indeed God's creation, we humans are called to steward it rather than "subdue" it, as the biblical Book of Genesis has been traditionally translated.

As a writer on environmental justice, I've used the gifts God has given me to advocate on behalf of creation through public education, including articles such as this. I've also opposed anti-climate legislation by writing to my congressman, testifying to our state's Climate Change Advisory Committee, and even "marching for climate" in D.C.

It's tempting to concede that the opposition to climate action is very powerful and well-funded, and that even one's own church seems to ignore the moral imperative to care for creation. As people of faith and the stewards of God's creation, we must fully realize the intrinsic value of our natural environment that sustains all life — born and unborn, now and in the future.

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