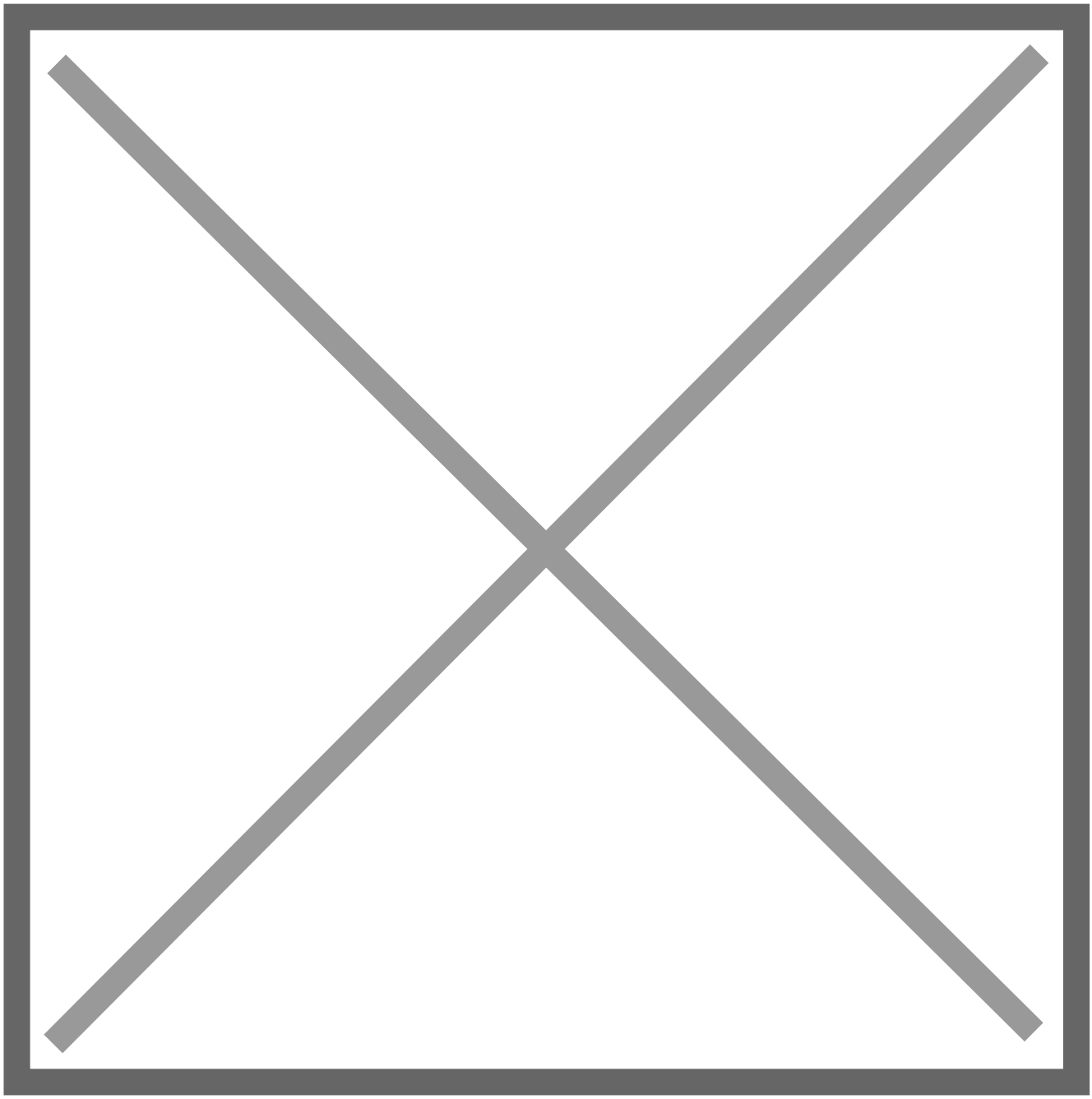


In this 2019 photo, then-Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Washington joins students at St. Mary's School in Landover Hills, Md., in planting a tree in celebration of the school's 65th anniversary. In advance of the 10th anniversary of the late Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the U.S. bishops' conference recognized the impact the climate crisis has on young people and encouraged their strong witness and leadership for a better future. (OSV News/Catholic Standard/Andrew Biraj)

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Washington, D.C. — May 22, 2025
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In a letter to mark the 10th anniversary of the late Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', U.S. bishops have urged young people to "lead the way" on the climate crisis.

Published on May 24, 2015, the late Francis' landmark environmental encyclical "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home" urged steps to counteract "the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet."

In a joint, public letter to young people May 21, Archbishop Borys Gudziak of Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, and Bishop Elias Zaidan of Maronite Eparchy of Our Lady of Lebanon, chair of the USCCB's Committee on International Justice and Peace, thanked young people for their witness and called for "a renewed commitment to care for our common home, which sustains all life."

"(T)he sacred gift of creation is under threat," the bishops wrote. "Climate change and environmental degradation entrap many people in poverty, often in communities already excluded by society. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and industrial pollution threaten the livelihoods and food security of farming, fishing, and forest-dependent communities in the United States and around the world. Illegal and

often unregulated mining, as well as other exploitative extractive activities, threaten Indigenous Peoples' survival and sacred places. Toxic waste results in high asthma and cancer rates in low-income communities living near sources of contamination. Extreme weather threatens the health, education, safety, and future of children born today more than in previous generations."

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They said, "When we fail to steward the gifts of our Creator carefully, we also manifest our blindness to the ways we are all interconnected and interdependent."

The bishops asked, "So, what can we do?"

"We must be steadfast in our hope in God and in one another," they said. "God's plan for our salvation and our world involves the participation of all. We need to build a culture of encounter."

The bishops also pointed to comments made by the new Pope Leo XIV when he introduced himself to the world: "We are all in the hands of God. Therefore, without fear, united hand in hand with God and among ourselves, we move forward. We are disciples of Christ."

"Young people can lead the way as catalysts of hope," on protecting creation, they said. "You have the capacity to organize and create change that will endure for generations to come."

By their witness, the bishops said, "youth and young adults serve as a vital bridge."

"Do not doubt that you have the power to inspire and lead efforts to effect change locally and globally," the bishops said. "We are with you, standing in the tension between God's vision for his beloved creation and our current reality."

The letter can be read here: https://www.usccb.org/resources/letter-young-people-10th-anniversary-laudato-si

This story appears in the **Laudato Si' at 10: Impact on the church and world** feature series. View the full series.