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EarthBeat



A river is seen running through the San Juan Mountains in Colorado July 17, 2025. Catholics wondering what they personally can do to respond to climate change and heed Pope Francis' call in *Laudato Si*' to protect the earth can now look to Catholic Climate Action Projects. (OSV News/Bob Roller)



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Catholics wondering what they personally can do to respond to climate change and heed Pope Francis' call in *Laudato Si*' to protect the earth can now look to Catholic Climate Action Projects.

Also known as "CathCAP," the new platform was launched in June by Catholic Climate Covenant with co-sponsorship by the Association of U.S. Catholic Priests. It aims to offer ecologically conscious individuals and groups a way to measure their own environmental impact, while also assisting organizations in caring for creation.

As the CathCAP website explains, the project allows both individuals and groups to offset some of their carbon footprint. It encourages lifestyle changes, but for carbon emissions that cannot be completely eliminated, such as from car or air travel, participants are invited to use the CathCAP calculator for a carbon emissions estimate and a suggested donation, $15 per ton of carbon.

Schools, universities and parishes can create an account, encourage members to contribute, and use the accumulating funds for an "eco-project" of their choosing that fits CathCAP guidelines, inspired by Pope Francis' 2015 environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si*'.

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Individuals can also contribute to the CathCAP General Fund, which supports Catholic partners around the globe.

"We're not trying to call this a carbon offset program," Dan Misleh, Catholic Climate Covenant's founder and executive director, told OSV News. "What that usually means is, for every ton of carbon you produce, you do an offset to absorb that ton of carbon — typically planting a tree, or something like that. We know it's very difficult to do a one-to-one offset. However, CathCAP does account for your carbon footprint. And what we're saying is, donate that money to your parish or your school."

Misleh provided two examples — of an individual and a parish — to illustrate.

"You set up an account with us, and you donate your carbon 'penalty,' if you will, to your school. And at the end of a year, they get that money back for a project that we would approve," he said.

"Or," he continued, "let's say a parish raises $5,000 over the course of a year. And they're going to use that money to seal up their doors and windows, which is going to reduce the amount of energy they have to use — and therefore their carbon footprint."

The idea, Misleh said, is environmental empowerment.

"We're providing an avenue for people to do good things to mitigate against the climate crisis," he said. "That's really the purpose of it."

The Catholic Climate Covenant, a Washington-based nationwide network of 20 partner organizations, was established in 2006 with assistance from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Ohio-based Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, founded in 2011, acts as "the pastoral and collegial voice" of its almost 1,200 member priests.