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EarthBeat



A protester holds a slogan as they join the global march to end fossil fuel on Sept. 15, 2023, in Quezon City, Philippines. (AP photo/Aaron Favila)

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Vatican City — September 10, 2025
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The fossil fuel, weapons and financial industries thrive on instability and cronyism, and they obstruct efforts toward climate justice and peace, top leaders of three Catholic networks said.

The crises of climate change and global security "are not only linked, but also born of the same short-sightedness, immorality and flawed logic," the leaders said in a joint statement.

"For decades, the pursuit of profit over people has shaped global systems, placing power in the hands of those who benefit from destruction and division," it said, adding that the principles of Catholic social teaching provided practical guidelines for building a better world.

The joint statement, titled "Pilgrims of Hope for a Just and Peaceful World," was signed by: Alistair Dutton, secretary-general of Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based umbrella organization of national Catholic charities; Josianne Gauthier, secretary-general of CIDSE, a Brussels-based group of 18 Catholic agencies from Europe and North America; and Martha Inés Romero, secretary-general of Pax Christi International.

The statement was released during an online webinar Sept. 8 as part of the Jubilee Year of Hope and the Season of Creation, and ahead of the 2025 U.N. Climate Change Conference, commonly known as COP30, which is set to take place in Belém, Brazil Nov. 10-21.

"As representatives of global Catholic networks committed to peace, justice and care for creation, we unite our voices ahead of COP30 in Belém, Brazil, to affirm a simple yet urgent truth: there can be no true peace without climate justice, and no climate justice without peace," the joint statement said.

The crises of "ecological collapse, a fragmenting global order and unrelenting extreme poverty" are interwoven "threads of a shared global threat," not separate

problems, it said.

"The fossil fuel, the arms and financial industries, driven by enormous profit motives, have exerted disproportionate influence over politics, distorting democratic processes and obstructing efforts for climate justice and peaceful resolution," it said. "These industries thrive on instability, inequality, relentless extraction and oligarchic cronyism — leaving behind scorched land, broken communities and a wounded world."

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"A global system increasingly shaped by short-term political interests and concentrated power" lies at the root of today's most common challenges, it said.

Instead of letting a few nations and private actors dominate decision-making, it said, every country, large and small, has equal value and must have a voice "in the global order."

"The shift toward a 'multi-polar' world where 'might makes right' threatens not only the hope of a peaceful future, but also our collective ability to address the climate crisis," it said. "Multilateralism demands much from powerful nations — above all, the courage to cede power for the common good."

"But just as these crises are rooted in the same logic, they can be overcome through shared values," it said, specifically by upholding solidarity, the common good of humanity's common home, the preferential option for the poor and the principle of subsidiarity, which ensures "decisions are made as closely as possible to those most affected."

"Translating these values into action means reimagining our global systems, reforming international financial institutions, ending fossil fuel subsidies, and prioritising community-led solutions in climate and peacebuilding strategies," the statement said.

"It means centering Indigenous knowledge and their right to live in harmony with their land, promoting debt justice, reducing the exorbitant military budgets and ensuring inclusive representation at decision-making tables, from the U.N. to local councils," it added.

The tools to make this happen "are within reach," it said. The "timeless principles from Catholic social teaching offer not only moral clarity, but practical guidance for building a world that is both peaceful and sustainable."

"Pope Leo XIV reminds us that nonviolence, both as a method and a style, provides the foundation for how we confront the challenges of our time," it said, praising those Catholics and communities that are peacefully resisting deforestation, opposing extractive industries and advocating for sustainable development.

"These efforts, rooted in justice and respect for human dignity, are essential to the transformation we seek," it said.

"We pray our leaders remember this spirit of nonviolence in their deliberations, remember the horrors of war, and try again to put the nonviolent pursuit of peace at the heart of their diplomatic engagements, knowing that the future of the planet depends on it," the statement said.