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Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor and former California governor, poses for a photo with Brazilian Cardinal Jaime Spengler of Porto Alegre, left, and Salesian Sr. Alessandra Smerilli, secretary of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, right, after a Vatican press conference on “Raising Hope for Climate Justice” Sept. 30, 2025. (CNS/Lola Gomez)

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Vatican City — September 30, 2025

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Arnold Schwarzenegger told reporters he knows that people get "pumped up" spiritually at Mass, but he wishes he could go to Mass at least once and hear a homily on what Catholics can and should do to reduce pollution.

The Catholic actor, former California governor and former body builder who inspired the Saturday Night Live tagline, "We just want to pump you up!" spoke at the Vatican Sept. 30 during a news conference to present "Raising Hope for Climate Justice," a celebration of the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home."

As founder of the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, which promotes actions individuals can take to fight pollution and climate change, he was invited to the Raising Hope meeting, which Pope Leo was scheduled to open Oct. 1 in Castel Gandolfo.

Brazilian Cardinal Jaime Spengler of Porto Alegre, president of the Brazilian bishops' conference, prefaced his remarks at the news conference by saying that "Arnold is an idol of my youth" from his films, but "I thought he'd be taller."

Turning to climate change and the 30th U.N. Climate Change Conference, or COP30, which Brazil will host in November, Spengler said, "We cannot escape or ignore the challenges that our mistreated planet is placing before us. The signs are undeniable! We are living in times marked by danger — the danger of reaching a point of no return, a breaking point."

Too many people think that "reality, goodness and truth" can spontaneously emerge from technology and the economy, he said. "This model tends to place the human being in the place of God, making man the greatest danger to himself."

"The Earth, with all that it contains, is a living being," he said. "And like every living being, it is fragile!"

But human beings can change, the cardinal said, and the Spirit of God can renew the face of the earth if people are willing to cooperate.

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Salesian Sr. Alessandra Smerilli told reporters it was providential to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si' during the Jubilee of Hope because "it is not just a magisterial document but a navigation guide," and one that hundreds of dioceses, thousands of parishes and universities and millions of people already are acting on.

Several of the questions at the news conference were about hopes for global progress in addressing climate change given that President Donald Trump told the United Nations Sept. 23 that climate change is "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world."

Schwarzenegger said he believed God inspired him to enact tough environmental protection rules as governor of California from 2003 to 2011, and when President George W. Bush's administration tried to stop him, "we took them to court" and won.

"We said, 'Hasta la vista, baby,'" he said, repeating his most famous line from Terminator 2: Judgment Day.

No one "is able to terminate all the pollution" alone, he said, which is why people must work together, especially on a local level.

He also called the Vatican a "true action hero" for installing solar panels on the Paul VI Audience Hall and working on building an agrivoltaic system on a Vatican property outside of Rome that could supply the rest of Vatican City's energy needs.