

**Call to Action on Global Warming:
Archbishop Flynn's statement to the Minnesota Legislature on the Floor of the
House of Representatives, 1/30/07**

Good afternoon Madame Speaker and members of the legislature. I am Archbishop Harry Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and I am here today speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, which represents the Roman Catholic Bishops from each of the six Dioceses in Minnesota. Thank you for providing me with an opportunity to share our perspective on this matter with you this afternoon.

Global warming is an important issue for the state of Minnesota and the entire human family. As a faith community, we take seriously the threat that global warming presents and seek to participate in the solutions. I am here to ask that, as you develop public policies this legislative session, you bear in mind the urgency of addressing the moral and human dimensions of climate change.

Care for creation is a key principle of Catholic Social Teaching. Rooted in Scripture, the Catholic tradition asserts that the Earth and its goods are gifts from God. They are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. Humankind has a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship and a sign of our respect for the Creator.

In 2001, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops did a thorough examination of how stewardship of God's creation provides a lens for addressing the warming of the Earth's atmosphere. We Bishops published a statement, called *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*. Allow me to share with you some of our reflections.

First, the United States Bishops accept the findings of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change: that global climate change is occurring, and is at least partially a result of human behavior. What we already know about global warming demands a response.

Second, our national debate over solutions to global warming needs to move beyond the uses and abuses of science, sixty-second ads, and exaggerated claims. The atmosphere that supports life on Earth is a God-given gift, one that unites us as a human family. We must all strive for a civil and constructive debate that recognizes our common future of tomorrow requires that we act for the common good today.

Third, global warming demands a response from all levels of government. The Minnesota legislature should be among the leaders in our country, creating momentum for our nation to lead the global effort.

Finally, we cannot forget the poorest members of the human family, who will bear the greatest hardship of global warming. Scientists predict that global warming will induce a greater incidence of extreme weather and violent storms. As Hurricane Katrina taught us with such fearful clarity, the poor are too easily left behind when weather catastrophes occur. The human family has a moral responsibility to act when the dignity of the poor and vulnerable is placed at risk.

Here in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, we have taken on a unique faithful response to global warming by convening a "Global Warming Action Team." The team is made of parishioners from throughout the Archdiocese. We are addressing global warming through concrete, everyday actions, including changing to energy-efficient light bulbs, using public transportation more often, and conducting energy audits of parish facilities. Such efforts make up an important component of the solution to global warming.

I urge you to enact wise public policies in Minnesota that build upon such efforts, to help to avoid the worst effects of global warming and, hopefully, to begin to reverse the damage that has already been done.

As Pope John Paul II said,

"We cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well being of future generations."

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, I thank you for your consideration and for your hard work on behalf of the citizens of our state.