

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

THE OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis released today his highly anticipated encyclical on the environment, an authoritative pastoral admonition for all of us to pay much closer attention to the fragile and threatened health of the earth, which serves as our common home.

Using one of the Canticles of Saint Francis of Assisi as both the opening line and the overall theme of the text, the Holy Father reminds all of us of our responsibility to care for and to respect God's creation, which He carefully designed to support life for all of nature. As the designated stewards of the world in which we live, we have been entrusted with this responsibility as a legacy of faith and part of our commitment to the generations that will follow us.

The Holy Father wants us all to take seriously the issues that face our planet – not only from an economic perspective, but out of genuine ethical concern for all of the people with whom we share it. Pope Francis calls us to embrace an integral ecology that brings every dimension of our political, social, financial, ecumenical and scientific worlds together in serious dialogue.

There are no easy or facile solutions to the challenges we face in protecting and preserving the resources that belong to all of humanity. We must consider the impact of our lifestyles on the poor and the vulnerable, who suffer immediately and profoundly from the excesses of development that can provide great wealth and benefits at their expense. The Holy Father urges us to continue to work together across political, national, and ideological divides to address the issues that both benefit and threaten our contemporary environment.

I ask that all of you very carefully review what Pope Francis says in this encyclical and more importantly to consider what each one of us might do to respond to this concern which touches us all.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wilton D. Gregory".

✠ Wilton D. Gregory,
Archbishop of Atlanta