

An Open Letter to Our Friends, Who Care for the Earth, Our Common Home:

We, the sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict of St. Joseph, Minn., stand with the 194 nations that have signed the Paris Climate Agreement. These nations commit themselves to limiting and reversing the damage done to the Earth and all its inhabitants by global warming. The United States recently withdrew from this international agreement. In response, hundreds of cities, states, universities, businesses, and other organizations have stated in a public letter that they still support the agreement and will work to achieve its goals. (You can read their open letter and the list of signers at <http://wearestillin.com/>).

We want to add our voice of support to theirs. Many of the values that guide our lives as Benedictines compel us to take this stand. Those that are especially relevant are community, moderation, and listening.

Community means that all of life is interconnected and that we are responsible not just for ourselves but for all of humanity, especially those people in developing countries who will suffer most from the effects of global warming. Community calls us to look beyond today to future generations who will be affected by our decisions and actions. Community also encompasses all of creation, an infinitely precious gift from God.

Another important value is moderation. When we live out of extremes of any kind, lives become unbalanced and actions irresponsible. And when we see natural resources simply as sources of profit and pleasure, our actions become careless and even reckless, using and using up fragile and finite resources.

Finally, St. Benedict calls us to “listen with the ears of our hearts.” At this moment in human history we must listen to the urgent warning of climate scientists, the voices of air, ocean, and land choked with pollution, and the voices of world leaders like Pope Francis. In his encyclical *Laudato Si’: Care for Our Common Home*, he writes: “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” As a community, we pledge ourselves to be part of that worldwide effort and invite our friends to do the same.