



## Papal Encyclical to Urge Global Action on Climate Change

By John Blosser

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In a move sure to upset climate change deniers around the world, Pope Francis plans to issue a papal encyclical this summer that will urge international action to protect the world from global warming.

The papal letter to Catholic bishops urging them to focus on the environment is bound to have a strong impact, being transmitted to 5,000 bishops, 400,000 priests and 1.2 billion Catholic Church members, translated into hundreds of languages and broadcast worldwide, [Market Watch](#) notes.

Stressing the effects of climate change on the poor, Pope Francis already has voiced several clues about the content of the encyclical, saying, "I don't know if [human activity] is the only cause, but mostly, in great part, it is man who has slapped nature in the face. We have in a sense taken over nature," [NBC News](#) reports.

His concern for the environment also is expected to make up a major part of the Pope's addresses to a joint session of Congress in September, the U.N. General Assembly in New York, and his December speech at the U.N. Climate Conference in Paris, [Market Watch](#) notes.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, who helped draft the encyclical, said in a recent speech that the Pope was "compelled by the scientific evidence for climate change" while also taking into consideration scientific disagreement over its causes, [NBC](#) reported.

"What is not contested is that our planet is getting warmer," Turkson said. "The threats that arise

from global inequality and the destruction of the environment are interrelated, and they are the greatest threats we face as a human family today."

Jessica Hellman, associate professor of biological sciences at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, told NBC, "I think that's a pretty powerful argument and something different from what you hear in the regular political U.N. discourse, so I think it could make a difference."

Given that Pope Francis' encyclical will stand as a challenge to legislators and energy industry leaders who disagree that people are responsible for global warming, it likely will come under fierce fire.

Patrick J. Michaels, director of the Center for the Study of Science at the Cato Institute, said, "I would think that the Pope should come down on the side of economic development as a way of promoting environmental justice," NBC noted.

In a "sneak peek" at the Pope's encyclical, which it termed "a message certain to intensify the anger of GOP climate-science deniers, Big Oil, Koch Bros., Exxon Mobil and most fossil-fuel firms, as well as their banks, investors owning their stocks and capitalists everywhere," Market Watch reports that the Pope is expected to address humanity's "lost moral compass" on the environment, the "exploitation of natural resources," "rapid environmental collapse," a "failure to respect nature" and the greed behind it all, saying "money trumps morality" and "capitalism is killing planet Earth."