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Light illuminates a crater during the sunrise at Haleakala National Park on the Hawaiian island of Maui Oct. 9, 2018. (CNS/Navesh Chitrakar, Reuters)



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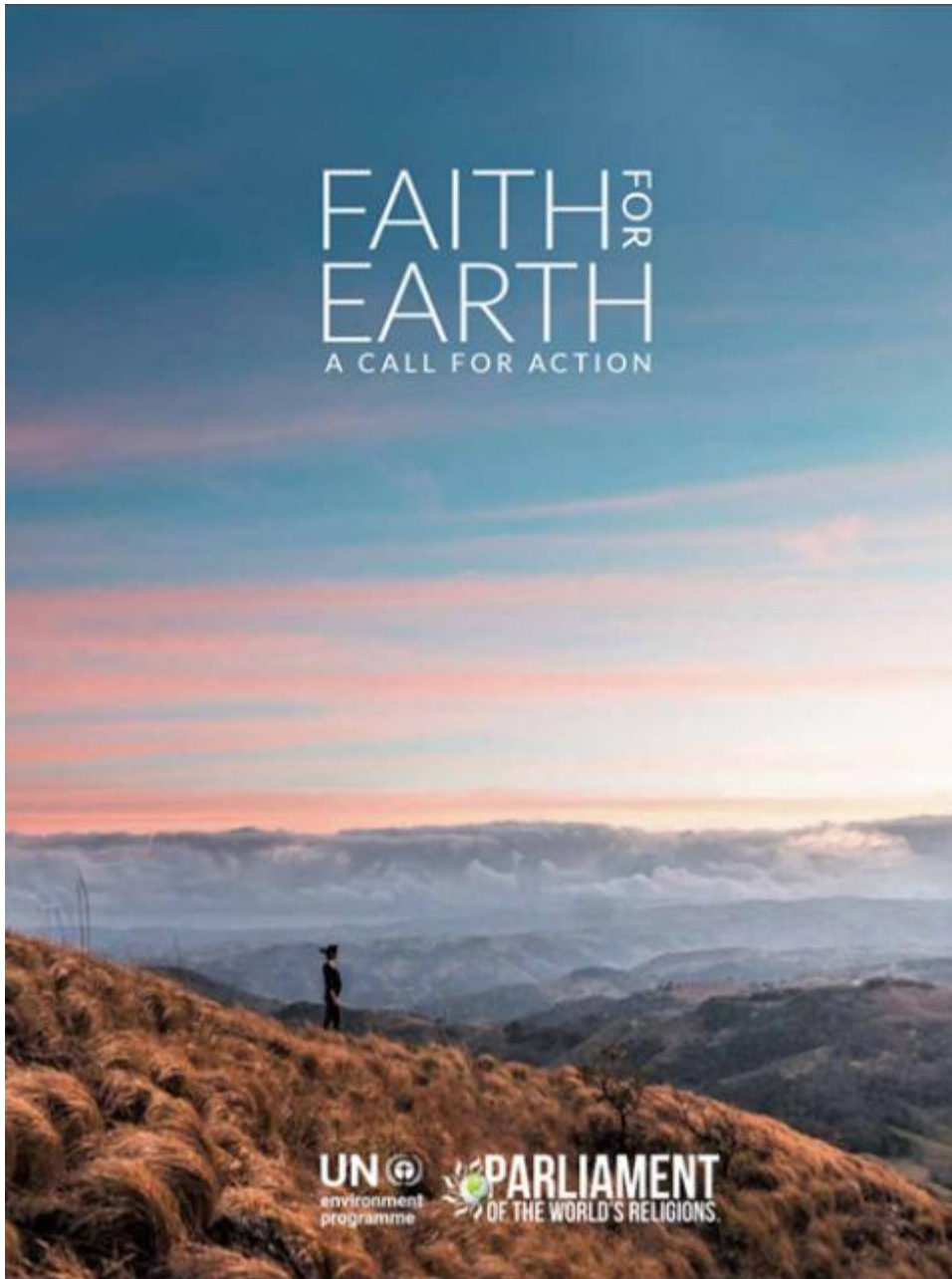
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The world is home to many religions, yet there is common ground in the belief that the Earth, itself a common home, must be respected and protected in the face of growing environmental threats.



That is the main focus of a new book, [Faith for Earth: A Call for Action](#), from the United Nations and the world's religious communities that spotlights the shared reverence and responsibility across faiths toward the environment, and their collective resolve to take actions to preserve it.

Faith for Earth was released Thursday by the U.N. Environment Programme and the Parliament of the World's Religions during the Faith for Nature Global Conference, held in Skálhol, Iceland. The 57-page book, available online and in print, describes how many religions view the natural world and their duty to safeguard it. Those faith-based perspectives are paired with scientific explanations of the multitude of crises threatening the planet's oceans, atmosphere, ecosystems and people.

A first version of the book was published in 2000 under the title *Earth and Faith: A Book of Reflection for Action*. In the 20 years since, "the planet has undergone profound and rapid changes," reads the preface, among them climate change, accelerating species extinction, collapsing ecosystems and "deepening human suffering."

"The decades ahead present us with a crucible of moral choices," David Hales, climate action chair for the Parliament of the World's Religions, writes in an opening message.



St. Hildegard

CANTICLE OF THE CREATURES
 Most High, all-powerful good Lord,
 There are the powers, the gifts, and all blessing,
 To be honored, Most High, in thee being,
 and so become so worthy to manifest their nature.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, with all Thy creation,
 especially for Brother Sun,
 Whom we do see and through whom Thou givest us light,
 and for a beautiful and radiant with pure splendor,
 and for the firmness of Thy, Most High One.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
 in heaven Thou hast formed them clear and precious and beautiful.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, through Brother Wind,
 and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather,
 through which Thou givest sustenance to Thy creation.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, through Sister Water,
 which we see useful and beautiful and precious and chaste.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, through Brother Fire,
 through whom Thou givest us light,
 and for the fire of charity and of strength,
 which we see useful and precious and cheerful and strong.
 Praise be to thee, our Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth,
 who nurtures and governs us and who produces various fruits with
 colored flowers and fruits.

— Hildegard of Bingen, 'Canticle of the Creatures'
 as recorded from the manuscript, 18, p. 24 (148).



LADYBOTS!
 The president of Pope Francis' Ladies in Blue Center for the Common Home has been a key voice in public awareness and discussion of the climate crisis. She has an all-female 80- member group on May 24, 2017 and also its only female organizing secretariat. 'The Canticle of the Creatures' of St. Hildegard of Bingen is a prayer and teaching text that has inspired women's ecology, economics, politics, education, theology and spirituality. Preparing the perspective that the Pope calls "integral ecology" Ladies in Blue has members for the natural world and for social justice are multi-faith, inter-faith, inter-generational, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. It is a commitment to ecological justice, to the poor and to the marginalized, and to the creation of a sustainable and just world. The secretariat has been successful in establishing that the environmental issue, including climate change, is an ethical and spiritual issue. Research Director et al. suggest that there is a need for a public perspective of climate change as a moral issue. The increased significance and more people have been motivated to take action.

What is 'integral ecology'?
 It is an ecology that is both ecological and humanistic. I seek to address every person living on this planet. (1)

The biggest challenge to present our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development. We know that things can change. (1)

We have no solution that is not a dialogical approach dialogical to create a social approach. It must engage questions of justice, the dignity of the environment, as well as both the city of the earth and the city of the poor. (1)

It cannot be emphasized enough that everything is interconnected. We are faced not only with environmental issues, one cannot understand and the other social but rather with one complex interconnected in both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integral approach to addressing persons, recognizing dignity of the individual, and in the same time recognizing nature. (1)

The capacity of people living on our planet is to be broken. This demands a new religion to dialogue among themselves that the role of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and solidarity. (1)

What kind of world do we need to hope to those who come after us, to children who are more pressing? (1)

Ladies in Blue is available to read online and download on PDF of Ladies in Blue. It is an opportunity for the world of Ladies in Blue, along with other initiatives, coverage and other resources can be found at the website of the Ladies in Blue Center for Common Home. <http://www.ladiesinblue.com>



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"Scientific evidence documenting the crisis is undeniable and grows with every passing day. At the same time, there has been a surge of faith-based action and advocacy on behalf of the environment from religious groups everywhere. The response is coming from every corner of the world, reflecting both the diversity of the ways we define our relationship with nature and the essential unity of values at the core of all our hope," the book states.

It adds, "It is time, as never before, to call on our faith, our values, our religious teachings and traditions — on Faith for Earth. And it is time for action."

The book's faith section was authored by Kusumita P. Pedersen, professor emerita of religious studies at St. Francis College, in Brooklyn Heights, New York. It presents teachings on creation and the environment from a dozen faiths, including Christianity, Buddhism, Baha'i, Sikhism, Daoism and Islam, as well as a number of Indigenous traditions.



MOTHER EARTH
 Mother Earth, we see in the text of scriptures as sustenance of the individual, governmental, corporate, or for life, their wisdom to sustain through the moral passage — faith, justice, stewardship, death, and rebirth. We learn to create as these shall to be born, and each one of us is the steward.

All over Africa, Earth is regarded as the female spirit. She is Mother Earth. She is expected to care for her people. She feeds, and she has a feminine ear and heart to hear her people's prayers. We ask her protection again before heading to her the land to that her child may receive her for reward. In our lives here on the spiritual of the Earth, and where we understand it to be able to be added to something to be more and to be more whole.

When every nation and continent is divided to those who are not to be united into the general whole, it is a sign of the Earth's Mother Earth, and the wisdom and knowledge that bring us all together. Faith and wisdom and prayer are separate parts to the African story. Where in a faith is a person's own for faith, the blessings brought to us being all in the same faith.

The role of African religion is to be present between the human, the spirit world, and the environment. In African faith, we are not to be afraid of Earth, but to be afraid of us. We are to be afraid of Earth and to be afraid of us. We are to be afraid of Earth and to be afraid of us. We are to be afraid of Earth and to be afraid of us. We are to be afraid of Earth and to be afraid of us.

— from *Worship in the Time of Crisis*

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The book quotes a number of prominent faith voices, including Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Mohandas Gandhi, along with St. Hildegard of Bingen, Passionist Fr. Thomas Berry and Rabbi Arthur Waskow, and cites passages from the Book of Genesis, the Hadith, Navajo chants and Jainism texts.

The prayers, hymns and texts featured in *Faith for Earth* show how different belief systems have often used similar language in describing the world.

"O Mother Earth! You are the world for us and we are your children," reads the Hindu hymn "In Praise of Mother Earth."



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"Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs," St. Francis of Assisi wrote in his "Canticle of the Creatures."

"Air is the guru; Water the father; and Earth the great mother. Day and night are two male and female nurses in whose lap the entire world plays," reads a passage in the Guru Granth Sahib, the central Sikh scripture.

"Heaven is my father and Earth my mother and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst," wrote Neo-Confucian philosopher Chang Tsai in his 11th-century "Western Inscription."

At the end of the faith section, the book summarizes eight points of agreement across religions regarding humans' relationship to the environment. Among them:

- The natural world itself has value beyond serving human needs, and non-human creatures have moral significance;

- The need for gratitude for the natural world, upon which human survival relies;
- There are both legitimate and illegitimate uses of nature, with greed and destruction condemned and restraint and protection commended.

Along with teachings, *Faith for Earth* focuses on how many religious communities have responded to the call to care for the earth. One shared focus across faiths has been trees.



Pilgrims travel in boats as they accompany the statue of Our Lady of Nazareth during an annual river procession and pilgrimage along the Apeu River to a chapel in Macapazinho, Brazil, Aug. 3, 2014. (CNS/Reuters/Ney Marcondes)

Many Shinto shrines are found in forests, which are then viewed as sacred, leading in recent decades to the preservation of the area's ecosystems and raising environmental awareness. In November 2019, Sikhs celebrated the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak by planting 1 million trees. Catholic dioceses and groups in Africa have also emphasized tree plantings.

Since the early 1990s, some Buddhists have ordained trees, wrapping traditional orange cloths around them, to draw attention to deforestation, while those living in the Himalayan Mountains have networked to take steps to protect the local environment. Elsewhere in the Himalayas, the Chipko movement, especially prominent among Hindu women, began holding vigils in the early 1970s to stop logging in the region. And the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative today is a global effort to end tropical deforestation.

The book also highlights measures that religious communities have taken to live out stewardship in their own actions, such as the Sisters of Earth network of Catholic women religious and their commitment to eco-justice and sustainability.

Sikhs have also worked to "green" their houses of worship, known as gurdwaras. And earlier this year, 500 rabbis and Jewish leaders issued "Elijah's Covenant," a letter calling for action on climate change and support for refugees fleeing disasters.

The practice of a "Green Ramadan" has gained in popularity among Muslims, which includes conserving food at the traditional Iftar evening meal each night to give to people in need, adopting a more plant-based diet and using less disposable products and more reusable items. Last year, the Fiqh Council of North America, which provides guidance to Muslims on the continent, called for Muslim investment firms to develop fossil fuel-free portfolios that include investments in clean energy.

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The U.N. has produced guidelines to help houses of worship reduce energy use and become more sustainable. With buildings responsible for roughly 30% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide, the U.N. said green adaptations by the globe's estimated 100 million-plus houses of worship would be "a massive demonstration of commitment to sustainability."

Said Iyad Abumoghli, director of the U.N. Environment Programme's Faith for Earth Initiative, "Our challenge is not that we don't know what to do — it's how quickly we can do it. ... We're calling on everyone — countries, cities, the private sector, individuals, and faith-based organizations to become part of the flourishing global interfaith movement that is increasingly bringing people together to protect and sustain life on Earth."

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