

*June 19, 2015*



**MESSAGES** - The Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), representing the leaders of the Catholic religious congregations in the United States welcome the Holy Father's call to embrace our moral responsibility to care for one another by caring for all of God's creation. Men and women religious have a long history of standing with those most in need; today that includes those who suffer the consequences of environmental degradation and the destruction of God's creation.

"The Holy Father reminds us of our biblical call to live in right relationship and to cooperate with God's design for our world. When we choose lives of simplicity, hope, and love we honor God's presence in our world; we grow closer to God and we build the community for generations to come," said Joan Marie Steadman, CSC, Executive Director of LCWR.

Executive Director of CMSM, John Pavlik, OFM Cap., continued, "We wholeheartedly support Pope Francis' encyclical on integral ecology and the urgent implications for addressing climate change. This is a matter of faith in the God of all Creation who calls us to love, respect, and walk humbly with all of creation."

It is also a matter of the very essence of the call to religious life; the call to live a vowed life that is marked by simplicity, availability, and deep caring for God's creation. Clearly the time to act is now.

Pope Francis is calling on all people of good will to change their hearts and transform their relationships with each other and with God's creation. We look forward to further reflecting on the Holy Father's challenging words and to praying with the encyclical in the coming days.

The **Leadership Conference of Women Religious** (LCWR) is an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic women religious in the United States. The conference has nearly 1400 members, who represent more than 80 percent of the approximately 51,600 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, LCWR assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.

The **Conference of Major Superiors of Men** (CMSM) supports and offers resources for U.S. leaders of Catholic men's religious institutes. CMSM promotes dialogue and collaboration on issues of religious life as well as peace and justice issues with major groups in church and society. There are more than 17,000 religious priests and brothers in the United States.

Available for interviews:

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