

Climate change to get major Catholic attention in 2009

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A cathedral is seen silhouetted against the sunset in St. Petersburg, Russia, as smoke rises in this 2005 file photo. (CNS/Reuters)

Climate change and the vital importance of protecting God's creation is going to be the focus of a major campaign opening in 2009 and coordinated through the [Catholic Coalition on Climate Change](#).

The coalition, under executive director Daniel Misleh, is planning to introduce an ambitious effort to reach all of the country's 19,000 parishes through what is being called the Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Protect Creation and the Poor. The covenant is an extension of efforts to more fully implement the [U.S. bishops' 2001 statement on climate change](#).

Misleh revealed some of the campaign's developing plans Oct. 25 in an address to the 39th annual Peace and Justice Awards Dinner of the [Commission on Catholic Community Action](#) of the Cleveland Diocese.

The covenant, according to the [coalition's online fall update](#), will be the campaign's cornerstone. It will "offer a distinctively Catholic perspective on global climate change." It will also invite people to "deeper prayer, more learning and sincere action in this time of environmental uncertainty and challenge."

Specifically, the St. Francis pledge calls Catholic individuals, groups and institutions to a "serious commitment" to five steps of action from personal prayer and reflection to advocacy to policymakers those Catholic principles and priorities related to climate change, especially as they touch the poor and vulnerable.

Plans call for unrolling the campaign during the Easter season, perhaps Earth Day, April 22, Misleh said.

The coalition's partners are: [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), [National Religious Partnership for the Environment](#), [Catholic Relief Services](#), [National Council of Catholic Women](#), [Catholic Health Association of the United States](#), [Catholic Charities USA](#), [National Catholic Rural Life Conference](#), [Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities](#), [Franciscan Action Network](#), [the Carmelite NGO](#), [Leadership Conference of Women Religious](#) and [Conference of Major Superiors of Men](#).