



FRANCISCAN ACTION NETWORK

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Many agree, we're running out of time to tackle the climate crisis. The clock is ticking as more and more communities face catastrophic wildfires, droughts, and storms. We urgently need bold, unprecedented action to tackle the twin crises of climate change and inequality. We need to mobilize vast public resources to transition from an economy built on exploitation and fossil fuels to one driven by dignified work and clean energy. We need a Green New Deal.

A Green New Deal would simultaneously tackle the climate crisis, create millions of high-paying jobs, and counteract racial and economic inequity. It would revitalize our infrastructure, retro-fit our buildings, revive clean manufacturing, and restore our ecosystems - delivering clean air and water, good jobs, and climate stability to those who've borne the brunt of the fossil fuel economy.

The Green New Deal just took an *enormous step forward*: Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Ed Markey just introduced [resolutions](#) to support a Green New Deal in the House and the Senate, which lays out a 10-year plan to mobilize every aspect of American society to achieve 100% clean and renewable energy by 2030, a guaranteed living-wage job for anybody who needs one, and a just transition for both workers and frontline communities. This is the type of visionary thinking that reflects the passion and care for all of God's creation that guided the life of St. Francis of Assisi.

Saints Francis and Clare had a relational understanding of creation. For them and for us today, we believe that all people and all creatures, from the smallest to "our Sister, Mother Earth," are sisters and brothers, part of the very fabric of the family of God. Because of this, Francis was named the patron saint of ecology by Pope John Paul II. Following this tradition, St. Bonaventure developed a theological and spiritual vision that acknowledged all creation as emanating from the goodness of God, existing as a "footprint" of God, and leading us back to God if we are able to "read" nature properly. He spoke of creation as the first book that God wrote.

As Franciscans, we are called to consistently examine our relational understanding of creation. Looking to theologians like St. Bonaventure who developed a theological and spiritual vision that acknowledged all creation as emanating from the goodness of God, existing as a "footprint" of God, and leading us back to God if we are able to read the Book of Creation, i.e. nature properly.

The Franciscan emphasis on the goodness of God and creation has many ramifications. Creation is the outpouring of God's love into the universe. Creation reveals to us God's love for us and God's beauty which is why Franciscans call creation, beauty and goodness the mirror of God and that God has two books of creation—Sacred Scripture and creation.

Francis of Assisi looked at life and all creation through the lens of relationship and connectivity. He lived, preached and modeled this relational connection from which blossomed a perspective of deep empathy. He looked for ways to awaken within all people his way of seeing all life as integrally connected, especially concerning the care of those who were poor and marginalized and for Sister Mother Earth. Rather than viewing creation from 'anthropocentrism,' which literally means 'human-centered', Francis saw creation as 'biocentrism' which means 'life-centered.'

Francis of Assisi was bold and prophetic in his vision. He understood the interconnectedness of all creation. The New Green Deal reflects this same visionary thinking combined with an understanding of the relational nature of creation. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis also reflected this vision. He wrote: "New processes taking shape cannot always fit into frameworks imported from outside; they need to be based in the local culture itself. As life and the world are dynamic realities, so our care for the world must also be flexible and dynamic." (#144) Pope Francis also said: "All of this shows the urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution...We do need to slow down and look at reality in a different way, to appropriate the positive and sustainable progress which has been made, but also to recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur." (#114)

It is this type of bold visionary thinking that our nation so desperately needs today. Neither Congresswoman Cortez nor Senator Markey make claim to being Franciscan, but their vision as laid out in the New Green Deal clearly embraces the values and the vision of our Franciscan life and spirituality.

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