

# Pope Francis to Catholics: It's time to take action on global warming

Phil Plait, Slate | December 29, 2014 3:34 PM ET

In a few weeks, Pope Francis will visit the Philippine city of Tacloban, which was devastated by super Typhoon Haiyan in 2012. Shortly thereafter, according to *the Guardian*, he is expected to present an encyclical on climate change, “urging all Catholics to take action on moral and scientific grounds.”

Wow. And no sarcasm there; I mean it. Wow.

This is a very big deal, for many reasons. One is that encyclicals are published on issues of high priority to the Pope, and what's high priority to him is high priority to the church. There are more than a billion Catholics on the planet, so this could have a profound effect.

Another reason is that, also according to the *Guardian* article, he is doing this to directly affect the outcome of a very important meeting late in 2015: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will meet, and their express intent is to create a legally binding global agreement about actions to take on climate change.

I find this to be very good news. High profile figures speaking up about our ever-warming world will go a long way toward taking the action we so very desperately need to take.

In many countries, where Catholics have a strong political presence, this encyclical is bound to have a positive effect. In the U.S. ... well, Sen. James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) is arguably the most powerful climate change denier in politics, and he's a Presbyterian. Inhofe says climate change is a hoax, and that humans can't possibly affect the environment because God “is still up there.” I suspect he is unlikely to be swayed by the Pope, and is actually far more likely to dig his heels in (and bury his head in the sand) even more.

The basic problem here, the very basic problem, is that arguing over climate change isn't based on science, it's based on ideology. The facts are overwhelmingly clear that the globe is warming, creating catastrophic effects from pole to pole, and people who deny that are shutting their eyes tightly and sticking their fingers in their ears.

However, I have hope. Pope Francis choosing to do this after visiting Tacloban is wise; people there are still recovering from the incredible power of super Typhoon Haiyan ... and it's known that cyclones like that one are becoming more

**powerful due to global warming. It will present a strong and clear message of the urgency of this issue.**

**What does it say to you that one of the most socially and politically conservative organizations on the planet is saying it's time to take action about global warming?**

**I have no doubt that the deniers in Congress (and in the usual venues) will blivate, creating sound and fury over this. But what they are doing is flailing, trying to delay the inevitable.**

**We are not in a position to delay any longer. The effects of global warming are profound and dangerous, threatening our civilization. And they're happening now. Not in some nebulous future. Now.**

**In many ways, this Pope has proven to be very forward-thinking. I welcome his words to take action**

**Source: <http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/12/29/pope-francis-to-catholics-its-time-to-take-action-on-global-warming/>**