

# MANIFESTO ON COAL DIVESTMENT

May 20, 2020

We, the undersigned, as leaders and treasurers of religious congregations, as witnesses to the love of the Creator made manifest in nature, and in celebration of the fifth year of Laudato Si', express our full commitment to advance the coal divestment movement in the Philippines.

Five years ago, our beloved Pope Francis released the encyclical Laudato Si' to call attention to the grave consequences of destructive human activity to our Common Home, of which the Filipino people are not strangers to. Too often have we experienced the fury of typhoons, droughts, and other extreme impacts of climate change. It was the dire state of our planet and the injustice suffered by the most vulnerable that moved His Holiness to call for swift and unified action to protect the home God has given us.

In response, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a Pastoral Letter in July 2019, entitled "An urgent call for ecological conversion, hope in the face of climate emergency." As a concrete act of love for our Common Home, the CBCP in this letter issued its commitment to ensure that assets of the Catholic faithful are not used for industries and practices that harm our people and environment, such as coal and other fossil fuels.

Most recently, more than forty faith institutions across six continents welcomed this year's Laudato Si' Week with a declaration of the commitment to divest US\$1.4 billion worth of assets from coal and fossil fuel investments, recognizing that "every dollar invested in fossil fuels is a vote for suffering."

In this regard and in the spirit of Laudato Si', we declare our recognition that divestment from destructive industries, especially coal, is part and parcel of our duties as stewards of Creation and of the assets of the Catholic faithful. We believe that coal, the dirtiest of all fossil fuels and the single biggest contributor to the climate emergency, goes against everything that the Church stands for - most especially the preservation of life and dignity of the human person and the care for God's Creation.

We commit to live this realization through the following actions:

1. To use our positions as shareholders, investors, and depositors of leading Philippine financial institutions to serve as voices of the coal divestment movement, and to oppose all financial decisions that will lend support to the coal industry.
2. To steer the resources of the Church to genuinely sustainable and ecologically just endeavors, such as community-based renewable energy technologies.
3. To engage with the decision makers of banks still funding the coal industry, through letters, dialogues and other lines of communication, to remind them of their moral obligation as a corporate citizen and fiduciary obligation to stakeholders to invest wisely. Investing in coal, which places the life of all Creation in peril and assets of stakeholders at risk of financial losses, is certainly unwise. The Bank of the Philippine Islands, as one of the biggest repositories of the Catholic Church, shall be the first recipient of our calls for coal divestment.
4. To build the capacity of our own congregations, schools, organizations, and communities to promote the end of energy from coal and fossil fuels and the transition to clean energy for all.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si* expressed his critique of dirty energy and advocated for a clear policy direction: *“We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”* (LS, 165)

We today find ourselves amid two global crises that reveal the consequences of decisions that fail to place the health of our people and the planet first, the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency, which both call for the bringing about of a better world. We believe that withdrawing from coal is key to attaining this.

Signed,

1. **Leonardo Cabrera** – Missionary of the Sacred Heart
2. **Sr. Mary Ann de Vera** – Dominican Sisters of the Anunciata
3. **Ma. Luisa Cernero**, ULAN
4. **Sr. Ma. Corazon Cagalawan** – Religious of Notre Dame of the Missions
5. **Sr. Josefina Estrellado** – Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
6. **Sr. Marciana Mazaredo, AMP** – Agustinian Missionaries of the Philippines
7. **Sr. Roselyn Patron**
8. **Lilibeth Lopez** – Missionary Society of St. Columban
9. **Sr. Elizabeth Carranza**, TST – Terra Sisters of the Trinity
10. **Sr. Melanie Grace Illana** – Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo (Scalabrinians)
11. **Sr. Marisol Navidad, RSCJ** – Society of the Sacred Heart Philippine District
12. **Sr. Divina Lua** – Missionary Sisters of St. Columban
13. **Bp. Broderick Pabillo**, DD – Apostolic Administrator Archdiocese of Manila
14. **Fr. Edwin Gariguez** – NASSA/Caritas Philippines
15. **Sr. Nilda Palad** – Handmaids of the Divine Heart (Spinola Sisters, ADC)
16. **Sr. Sharon Policar** – FDCC – Canossian Sisters
17. **Sr. Maria Fe Magbanua** – Servants of the Blessed Sacrament
18. **Sr. Teresita Aspril** – Religious of the Virgin Mary
19. **Sr. Rosa Bug-os, OP** – Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena
20. **Sr. Pamela May Lonoy** – Missionary Sisters of Mary
21. **Sr. Mabel Pilar** – Daughters Mary Help of Christians
22. **Sr. Leodie Riza Remedio** – Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz
23. **Sr. Sofie**
24. **Sr. Dolor Salamisan, AMP** – Agustinian Missionaries of the Philippines
25. **Sr. Lorna Genovate** – Congregation of Hijas de Jesus
26. **Sr. Cristina Remo** – Daughters of St. Joseph
27. **Fr. Angelito Cortez**, OFM
28. **Bp. Gerry Alminaza, DD** – Diocese of San Carlos