

# Pope Francis: Climate Changer?

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**Greg Dalton:** I'm Greg Dalton and today on Climate One we're talking about Pope Francis who will bring his climate crusade to the United States in a few days. The popular pontiff will be the first Pope ever to address a joint session of congress and only the third to visit the White House where he will enjoy a private audience with President Obama. Early this year, Pope Francis issued an encyclical on climate change and inequality that caused quite a stir across the country. His message takes aim at our culture of consumerism and the devaluing of nature. He calls for the world to move away from coal and oil without delay. Pope Francis also takes a swing at unfettered capitalism and technology as root causes of an ecological and moral crisis. He doesn't mince words this Pope, politicians were swift to push back. Rick Santorum said the church should leave science to the scientists. Jeb Bush said "I don't get economic advice from my bishops or my cardinal or my Pope."

Over the next hour we will talk about Pope Francis, the morality of fossil fuels, the importance of what he calls little daily actions and the national politics of reducing carbon pollution that is amplifying, I said amplifying not causing the droughts and heat waves hitting the American West.

Here to discuss all this with our live audience at the Commonwealth Club we have Reverend Canon Sally Bingham, an Episcopal priest and president and founder of Interfaith Power and Light, a religious response to climate disruption. Sam Liccardo is the Mayor of San Jose, California who traveled to Rome recently to participate in a climate meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and father Paul Fitzgerald is president of the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit educator who will share his thoughts on the first Jesuit Pope. Please welcome them to Climate One.

**Greg Dalton:** Okay. I'm Greg Dalton and today on Climate One we're talking about Pope Francis who will bring his climate crusade to the United States in a few days. The popular pontiff will be the first Pope ever to address a joint session of congress and only the third to visit the White House where he will enjoy a private audience with President Obama. Early this year, Pope Francis issued an encyclical on climate change and inequality that caused quite a stir across the country. His message takes aim at our culture of consumerism and the devaluing of nature. He calls for the world to move away from coal and oil without delay. Pope Francis also takes a swing at unfettered capitalism and technology as root causes of an ecological and moral crisis. He doesn't mince words this Pope, politicians were swift to push back. Rick Santorum said the church should leave science to the scientists. Jeb Bush said "I don't get economic advice from my bishops or my cardinal or my Pope." Over the next hour we will talk about Pope Francis, the morality of fossil fuels, the importance of what he calls little daily actions and the national politics of reducing carbon pollution that is amplifying, I said amplifying not causing the droughts and heat waves hitting the American West. Here to discuss all this with our live audience at the Commonwealth Club we have Reverend Canon Sally Bingham, an Episcopal priest and president and founder of Interfaith Power and Light, a religious response to climate disruption. Sam Liccardo is the Mayor of San Jose, California who traveled to Rome recently to participate in a climate meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and father Paul Fitzgerald is president of the University of San Francisco, a Jesuit educator who will share his thoughts on the first Jesuit Pope. Please welcome them to Climate One.

[Applause]

Welcome to all of you. Paul Fitzgerald, tell the story of Pope Francis. Who he is, where he came from, there's been a lot written about this Pope but people may not really know that he was different before than he is now.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born of Italian immigrant parents in Argentina. Grew up, became a Jesuit at a very young age and then at a very young age was promoted to be provincial superior of the Jesuits in the Argentinian province. And as he reflects back later, he was too young and too inexperienced and so he ruled with a pretty firm if not an iron hand. He was novice master, he was provincial, he was director of formation so it rotated around various positions of authority and responsibility. It was during the time of the generals and the dirty war in Argentina, people were being disappeared by the police, people being killed and so it was a very difficult time for the Jesuits and for the church as a whole. He later became archbishop of Buenos Aires and if you read his stuff, he's conservative, very orthodox, very much in line with the thinking of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict. And when he was elected Pope, maybe like some Republican presidents who appoint a Supreme Court Justice and then are bit surprised by how this person begins to rule once she is on the bench.

[Laughter]

We have seen in these last few years a magnificent soul. We call it the grace of office, he is kind, he is generous, he is welcoming, he has washed the feet of Muslim women. He's doing all kinds of what I would call symbolic, prophetic actions to ask the church and the world to think again about us being one human family.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, what has been the impact of Pope Francis outside the Catholic Church, other faith traditions?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Well, I've been working for 15 years on a religious response to global warming and we've been to all of our preachers and teachers have been talking about the moral responsibility that individuals have towards the future, we've talked about individual action, we've talked about trying to influence politics, but particularly the moral responsibility that we have for the generations that come after us. So to have Pope Francis get in his pulpit and say the same thing. You know, it's been an amazing boost to the entire religious community because our group which is interfaith, we are -- we have Jews and Muslims and Christians of all kinds and we have Jains and Hindus and Sheiks and they're all been working for all these years to try to implement change in terms of how the US responds to the climate problem. And with the Pope coming out, giving a statement that was essentially for all people of conscience, not just for Roman Catholics. We are exalted. I mean everyone is just jumping on this message to say "See, we told you so."

**Greg Dalton:** If the Pope says it must be true. And Sally Bingham, also there's some lapsed Catholics, tell us about a couple that wanted you to marry them.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** This was very funny, it happened recently. About three weeks ago, I got a call from a young man who wanted to be married at the Fairmont Hotel and couldn't find a priest to go to the Fairmont and marry them and would I do that, I said yes, I marry people on the beach and I marry people in the Muir Woods and then he talked to me for a little while and then he said, you know, I think my wife might have some difficulty with this too, but I'll let you know.

And three weeks went by and I never heard from him again. And then I got an email and it said, we've decided to be married by a Catholic priest, thank you very much for your help and it was pretty much over. In two days, I got a telephone call from the bride to be, the fiancée called and she said "You know, we love Pope Francis and we might even get back into the Catholic Church." So but while they're doing this, they're trying to find a Catholic priest who will go to the Fairmont and marry them but they couldn't find one so they have rehired me.

[Laughter]

So I'm now going to the Fairmont to marry this couple but they also think that they may start going back to church largely because of Pope Francis.

**Greg Dalton:** So you got a hired, fired and rehired okay --

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** That's right.

**Greg Dalton:** -- that's right, yeah, good. Sam Liccardo, you went to this big meeting of mayors in the Vatican and the Pope did this very deliberately, calling out mayors as an important area for action on climate change. So what did you learn there what happened, it must be pretty exciting to be there?

**Sam Liccardo:** It was exciting, it was a real privilege for me and I'm a big fan of this Pope. So it was certainly, doubly great opportunity. I was one of about 65 mayors or so from around the world to join this meeting. It was a great opportunity certainly for me to learn from other mayors of large cities that are out there innovating doing very creative things to try to move the needle in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the environment. So from that standpoint, just professionally it was certainly a lot of fun and exciting.

But certainly the opportunity to hear from Pope Francis. A group of us had an audience for about 30 minutes and spoke in Spanish and then I understood maybe two thirds of it but it was good enough for me.

**Greg Dalton:** They're pretty cool. One of the key tenants of his encyclical is integral ecology so Paul Fitzgerald, tell us about that and how new that is, what it means. Integral ecology is one of the key philosophical touchdowns of Pope Francis' encyclical.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Since the 1890s, the Catholic Church, Roman Catholic Church has had a series of encyclical letters come out from various popes starting with Leo XIII. And all of them and this Laudato Si by Pope Francis is the most recent in a long string of letters that each one builds on the last one. And they're based on a profound and fundamental insight that our religious convictions should inform every aspect of our life including our relationships with those whom we love, our participation in our city, in our church, in our world, and that everything is connected. This comes back again and again and again throughout the encyclical Laudato Si; everything is connected. And there's so much of modern life and Western culture that is fissiparous and it's fissiparous, everything is broken into small pieces and we think of our lives in this very small, discreet compartments, you know, with this group of people I behave this way, with this group of people, I behave that way.

When I'm at work, I dress this way, when I'm at home I dress a different way. And the danger is we become really schizophrenic, we're divided into so many different personas. And what the Pope is calling us to is simply to be profoundly persons of integrity and to close the largest gap ever measured by human beings, the 14 inches between the heart and the brain. So that what we know in our hearts, deep down, we know we can never lie to ourselves, in our hearts. With our brains alone, we can make up all kinds of excuses and rationales for any kind of bad behavior.

But what we know in our hearts and then what we understand with our minds, what we say with our words and what we do with our hands should all be the same thing. And so the way we inhabit this planet with all the human persons -- and he keeps calling us back to care for the poor but also then care for the other living beings and care for the ecosystems -- that's integral ecology but it's just an integrated human existence.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, one of the phrases in the encyclical says "Many things have to change course but it is we, human beings above all who need to change." He's asking us to do some hard

work, every individual.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Every individual and I think that he has invited us into the communion of life, that we are all part of a one big universe. And every one of our behaviors affects our neighbors who we're called to love, whether it's the coffee we drink or the clothes we wear or the energy we use. Every single thing we do affects another person and the planet.

**Greg Dalton:** Let me ask Sam Liccardo, how do you actually implement this in a city where you're running a big city, you know, what is this mean so I mean most politicians don't ask their voters to change. They say that you're going to deliver some right to do this but --

**Sam Liccardo:** Yes. Most voters would regard me as being the person on the stage with the least moral authority.

[Laughter]

Yeah, but building on Sally's point, you know, the Pope is not suggesting that this is a technological problem that needs a technological fix. He's talking about an adaptive problem that requires a complete shift in cultural paradigm and a revolution of sorts in how we think and act in our daily lives.

So that's not an easy sell in politics. And, you know, he's not looking for us to come out with the solution of spending more money on say, carbon sequestration and just solving this issue. I think the question is how can we as community leaders engage our community and actually doing the much harder work of understanding the extraordinary lifestyle shift that's required here.

**Greg Dalton:** Big lifestyle shift, in fact when Paul Fitzgerald says connectedness, use connectedness in Silicon Valley and I mean something totally different. I mean where's my Wi-Fi and why don't I have it, right and --

**Sam Liccardo:** Perhaps the opposite, right.

**Greg Dalton:** And Pope Francis comes out pretty strong challenging sort of the cult of technology. And Mayor Liccardo, you run the city that's the heart of Silicon Valley; he's taken a swing at Exxon and Apple.

**Sam Liccardo:** Yes. Yes. Perhaps in extreme view you might say I'm the mayor of Sodom in that sense. But the reality is we recognize that there's not simply a technological path out here. At the same time, I'm a mayor, I happened to have a bit of a bias in favor of technology. I think there's a lot we can do and certainly for example, if we're going to retrofit a city that's been built around the automobile to one that city that's built around people, technology is going to help. And there are things we can do certainly to help with that transition, but that doesn't take anything away from the fundamental truth that I think Pope Francis has hit here which is this is a moral issue. It's really, this is a symptom on something far greater and we all need to take a closer look at ourselves.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald, you run a university that's full of technology addicted students probably, how do they square this challenge of technology with their daily life and culture?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** So the University of San Francisco, we have about 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

1,200 full and part time faculty and another 1,200 full and part time staff folks, so we're a small town compare to San Jose, California, we're a very small town. But we've made the pledge as a

university campus to be carbon neutral by the year 2050 and we are well on our way, we're well below our, we're bigger than we've ever been and, you know, below our 1997 carbon footprint. So part of it is we just opened an office of campus sustainability and we have a person in the middle who's talking to facilities and to our faculty and to student life. So that we offer a holistic education by example as well as, you know, we have wonderful faculty in the classroom teaching on climate policy, teaching on, you know, what are the technological fixes. You know, Pope Francis is not Luddite, he's not asking us to go back to the back to the pre-industrial revolution. At the same time he warns us very clearly that, you know, if in our great, great generosity and love, we wanted to bring the rest of the human population up to our level of consumption, we would kill the planet in a week. One North American is as much weight on the planet as 250 Somalis. So, you know, ours -- here in North America, ours is not the normal typical common experience of human beings on the planet. The normal typical experience of humans on the planet is in a much, much poorer, much more modest, much more environmentally fragile system.

**Greg Dalton:** So how to address poverty without trashing the planet, Sally Bingham?

[Laughter]

In 30 seconds or less, yeah.

But I think the issue of poverty is such an important one and for the faith community because the people that are hurt the most by this big subject that we're all talking about which is climate change are the poor people. They suffer the worst first and we as almost responsible for the destruction and the sea rise and the droughts and the wildfires and the refugees that are having to move because of lack of resources in their homes. We are the folks that and I think this is what the Pope is calling on, that maybe disturbs some folks is that we have a moral responsibility to look after those folks. Put up money for adaptation, put up money for mitigation and help them develop -- I mean we can't, there are 300 million people in India who have no access to electricity. Now, we can't say, well that's too bad, you can't have the electricity the way we've had it in the United States and Western Europe. But what we can do is subsidize some renewable energy for the places in the world that maybe don't have to go through first coal and then oil and then fracking; that we could help out with renewable energy to start with, just the way many people in India have cellphones now but they've never had a landline.

Now perhaps we can go with wind and sun and help them do it though, they're not going to be able to do it on their own. So I think that we can certainly help the poverty situation by trying to supply the means to help these folks have electricity, have food, have water through the generosity of the developed world.

**Greg Dalton:** If you're just joining us, Sally Bingham is president and founder of Interfaith Power and Light, a religious response to climate change.

Other guests at Climate One today are Sam Liccardo, Mayor of San Jose, California and Paul Fitzgerald, President of the University of San Francisco. I'm Greg Dalton. Mayor Liccardo, there's also poverty in America, poverty in Silicon Valley, there's a great wealth gap in this country, it's probably the biggest issue in this country along with climate. So what are you doing in San Jose to address that underclass?

**Sam Liccardo:** Well, we're trying to do a lot and the reality is the larger force is beyond the power of city hall and that really constrains what we're able to accomplish. Last week announced that we're trying to engage regionally with fifteen cities and towns throughout the county to raise the minimum wage together so we don't just have a patchwork of different rules. We've -- just last year

and the prior years we've passed various fees on housing development so that we can generate funds to build more affordable housing. You know, there's a host of these kinds of policies that we put out and we think we're going to be able to help a few hundred folks, maybe a few thousand folks at the margin. The reality is that the gap between those who are prospering in this great boom and those who are being left behind is growing. And, you know, it may well be that more than half of us are the ones falling behind. And so this gives us a certain moral imperative to think more deeply about what exactly we can do from a policy standpoint to try to bridge that gap.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald, Pope Francis in his encyclical really goes after market capitalism which is driving a lot of what Sam Liccardo just talked about. But first tell us about Francis himself, he was quite a radical himself, you know, communed with flowers, perhaps the first flower child or hippie.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Was it Bernard loved the mountains and Dominic the valleys, Francis the small towns and Ignatius the big cities.

So at Jesuit University we like big cities. Francis of Assisi would go into little country churches and pick up a broom and sweep them out and clean them up. He would talk, he would preach to the flowers and to the birds and to the wolf of Gubbio. He had this profound sense that the Divine was within and underneath and present in every living being and in every beautiful vista. And so brother sun, sister moon, he had a spirituality which was deeply Christian and what we would call in fancy theological language panentheistic. So pantheism is that everything is God, panentheism is that God is in everything. There is no human person where the spark of the Divine is not within her soul. There is no living creature, there is no beautiful vista where this spirit of the Divine is not available to us to be encountered.

What Pope Francis is doing is most of all and Reverent Sally Bingham said this earlier, Pope Francis is suggesting a spirituality. And that's where the letter really comes together in the closing chapters is he's suggesting a spirituality, a way of us understanding our relationship with God, with our self and with all of creation that is loving and that is joyful and that is fulfilling. So many people these days even with great wealth, you know, we become distracted by our devices, we walked into poles, we go to the emergency room because we hurt our self.

[Laughter]

Kids at my university they're in the dorm room, they're back to back and they're texting each other rather than just turning and talking. And, you know, this technology can divide us and it can flatten out our lives. Adolfo Nicholas is the general superior of the Jesuits based in Rome. And he's talked about the globalization of superficiality.

The globalization of superficiality that comes with a poor appropriation of these, of the wonderful possibilities that are contained in high technology. Technology can do a lot of good things for us. But it can also do some bad things to us if we're not mindful about what's most important.

**Greg Dalton:** If you're just joining us, we're talking about Pope Francis and climate change. The Pope will come to the United States for the first time, his first time ever, learn from Paul Fitzgerald in a few days and address a joint session of congress.

Want to go now to our lightning round where we ask a couple of yes or no questions to each participant starting --

**Sam Liccardo:** It's tough on a politician.

[Laughter]

**Greg Dalton:** Good. That's why we do it. Sally Bingham, taking a trip to the Bay Area reef or to an Alaskan glacier to see it before it's destroyed is a selfish act that's not respectful of future generations. Yes or no?

[Laughter]

And I will say, I've been to Alaskan glaciers recently on a ship spewing fossil fuel.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** And I went to the Great Barrier Reef to see it before it disappeared.

**Greg Dalton:** I know. I didn't want to out you, but you just outed yourself, so.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** So, no. My answer is no.

[Laughs]

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo, you were tempted to lift a souvenir when you went to the Vatican, yes or no?

[Laughter]

**Sam Liccardo:** Yes, they had a lot of guards around the Sistine Chapel.

**Greg Dalton:** So you couldn't do it, okay. Paul Fitzgerald, Pope Francis is repairing the Catholic brand after it was damaged by the systemic protection of predator priest?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** Should Catholic bishops who sheltered predator priests face more accountability?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, the rapture is coming.

[Laughter]

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** No.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald, a condom is a better tool than wind turbines or solar panels to steward creation and heal the climate?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** No, because it's not about overpopulation, it's about the unjust distribution of resources and some people -- I'm not, this is like, like it's supposed to be a yes or no question but --

**Greg Dalton:** I expected more than one word on this one.

[Laughter]

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yeah. Again, the folks in the first world, us as individuals we are such a greater weight on the planet than folks in the third world.

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo, stabilizing the climate will require sacrifice.

**Sam Liccardo:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** Not many politicians will say that.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald, Pope Francis should fear for his life.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yes.

**Greg Dalton:** It's a long -- I looked on Wikipedia today there's a long list of popes who've died under suspicious circumstances. Sam Liccardo, politicians and business executives who deny that fossil fuels are disrupting the climate should repent.

[Laughs]

**Sam Liccardo:** Yes. That's easy for me to say, I'm a Democrat.

[Laughter]

**Greg Dalton:** Last one. Paul Fitzgerald, Jews who admire the Pope can respectfully call him Rabbi Francis.

[Laughter]

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Absolutely.

**Greg Dalton:** Alright, how do they do on the lightning round?

[Applause]

[Climate One Minute]

**Announcer:** *And now, here's a Climate One Minute.*

*Is Pope Francis a game changer? Former EPA chief Bill Reilly had an audience with the pontiff earlier this year. When he joined us back in June, Reilly said that this pope would be going far beyond what was expected from the Vatican, and that his statement would have significant impact on the arguments against climate change.*

**Bill Reilly:** *I think the surprise is that his message is on several planes. It's on the plane certainly of theology and morality. It also gets very close to the realm of policy and action. It calls out people who are not accepting climate change and suggests that indifference or excessive belief in a technical solution or just opposition to science is unacceptable on a moral plane. That's very consequential, I think.*

**Announcer:** *That was Bill Reilly, former EPA chief under the first president Bush, and a member of Climate One's advisory board. Now, back to Greg Dalton and his guests at The Commonwealth Club.*

[End Climate One Minute]

**Greg Dalton:** We're talking at Climate One about Pope Francis. With our guests, Sally Bingham, Sam Liccardo and Paul Fitzgerald. Sally Bingham, Muslim leadership recently came out with the first unified call on climate change. What did they say and what's the significance of that?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Well, the significance is that most of the religions, whether they are



evangelical, Christian, Roman Catholic, the Catholic Bishops, Rabbis who the Jewish community has come out all saying we need climate control and to cut carbon emissions. The Muslims have never done this; they've never had a statement where several Imams were in agreement and where it was an official Muslim statement. So it means a lot to the community, the entire interfaith community to have the Muslims on board with the rest of us and it is quite significant.

**Greg Dalton:** And when the Pope, when Pope Francis comes to Washington DC in a few days, you're going to speak on the national mall tell us on what's going to happen there when he's meeting with congress, there's something going on outside?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Well, the exciting thing that I get to do is be on the White House lawn when the Pope arrives. When he meets Obama the day before he does the joint session of congress. But what's going on outside and they're expecting between 200,000 and 500,000 --

**Greg Dalton:** Hold on. Is there going to be a papal helicopter? Are we going to see, does he have a helicopter?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** There's going to be -- he's going to be amplified on the congress wall.

**Greg Dalton:** Okay. Oh okay.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** And then he apparently is coming out to talk to somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000 people who will gather on the mall and they're having a rally and there are groups that have been invited to stand on that big stage, it looks like a rock star stage, and say a few words, and I've been given four minutes. But that's a lot for all the people that are going to be speaking. And then the hope is I'm still trying to see if I can get a ticket to actually be in congress when he speaks to that joint session. But each member of congress was given one ticket and I got in touch with my friend Nancy Pelosi and said who are you giving your ticket to?

[Laughter]

And she's giving it to her husband Paul.

[Laughs]

**Greg Dalton:** Yeah, it's tough to beat that, probably yeah.

**Sam Liccardo:** The switch boards are lighting up.

**Greg Dalton:** Yeah right and probably a Catholic not an Episcopal person she would give that to -- yeah.

[Laughs]

Paul Fitzgerald, some people think that this moral frame is very important for social movements.

Pope Francis has put climate change in a moral frame. How does that compare to other social movements and what's the significance of that?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** If we think about the civil rights movement, if we think about all those movements that have animated this country, giving women the right to vote, it's been about asking the people who are in a position of power and authority especially if they are a minority and hold lots and lots of power to voluntarily give that power up, share it more broadly. And that willingness to cede control and to enlarge the circle greatly takes courage but it also takes, I think, some sort of transcendent

inspiration. There has to be this recognition that these folks who have been previously excluded because of their gender, their skin color or nowadays because they live in the third world and they're not at the table in the first world where the big decisions are made, that we recognize their humanity.

And there's a certain shame in ourselves that we had denied their humanity so long. And that's why it's difficult, right, because, you know, when we enlarge the circle broadly and bring in people who had previously been excluded it means that we had been excluding and exclusive and unjust. And so, I think, there is a sense of conversion, a sense of repentance and then a sense of liberation and even joy that comes through that cycle. But I think the great social movements have involved, you know, both people on the outside asking to be in but also people on the inside opening the door and saying, yes, it's not you and us, it's us, all of us.

**Sam Liccardo:** But, you know, putting into action I think, you know, that the typical response of elected officials is to say, okay let's go pass an ordinance or measure that's going to change something. But the spirit of the encyclical and I think going to Paul's point is really that this is something that the entire community has to engage in. And engaging in community is much harder work and it requires an awful of opening up, certainly of education, and also admitting that you don't have all the answers and that's a hard thing for elected leaders to do.

So we are, right now, over the last several weeks we've been spending some time talking internally about how can we meaningfully engage the community in San Jose, both in terms of behavioral change but also about informing us about what might be a good path to follow as a community. Do we as a community choose, for example, community choice aggregation for deciding where our energy should come from or perhaps we should choose a path that is more determined by individual choices? Those are the kinds of things that it takes a lot more work and it's usually not a recipe for electoral success but I think it's certainly something we all need to do.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, speaking of electoral politics, how do you think Pope Francis changes the politics of climate in the United States? 30% of Congress is Catholic.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** I think there are 137 Roman Catholics in the Republican Congress. So I'm very hopeful that if they really are faithful Catholics and if they believe in the infallibility of the Pope, which I guess some still do, they will take this to heart. And when you opened and talked about Rick Santorum saying that he doesn't listen to his Pope for his economics or his --

**Greg Dalton:** Jeb Bush doesn't listen to the Pope for economic -- yeah.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Then perhaps it's time they did do that. But I do think that there will still remain the deniers who will dismiss the Pope because they don't want to go down the path of cutting our fossil fuel use. But I may be naively optimistic but I think it's going to make a difference. I think he's already made such an enormous difference in saying in the encyclical that we needed to cut back on fossil fuels. And the entire Green group, the big secular environmental organizations, are using Pope Francis now to make the changes or help make the changes that they've been preaching and teaching about for the last 25 years.)

And I think that he is breaking a lot of boundaries and I think that his message is going to seep through to enough people that we will see change.

**Greg Dalton:** Is there a risk of breaking too many boundaries? We have this church and state thing in this country that, you start to blend faith and politics that makes some people nervous. Sam Liccardo.

**Sam Liccardo:** I don't think we have to blur these boundaries. I mean, the good news is, is that the overall preponderance of scientific expertise out there just happens to agree with the church in this case. This is not the situation, say, with Galileo. We're in a position now where we've got a Pope who's saying, look, we get the science, now we it's a moral issue for us. So I think the good news is we don't have to somehow or another blur those lines. I think we can appropriately say the scientific issue has been largely resolved. Now, it's really a question how we will respond as a community.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald, the way some states are responding is to divest from fossil fuels. The state of California is in a process of selling its coal assets, divestment is a big issue on college campuses around the country mainly focused on coals, can move to oil. How about the University of San Francisco, is divestment an issue there and what is the school doing?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yeah, we have a \$300-million, well depending on the stock market, a \$300-million endowment.

[Laughter]

But, you know, we have some investment in power, in energy companies but those are with great portfolios and then, you know, we can do kind of activist shareholders and stuff to move them in the right direction. As I had mentioned earlier we're also working very hard to green our own campus.

And so in the encyclical towards the end of it, the Pope talks about these small simple gestures that we can do on an everyday basis, you know, a person who adopts a small urban space, a fountain that's been let go or, you know, someone who turns off the lights, and does, you know, these really small gestures which become habits, which become then a praxis and an intentional way of living.

So at the University of San Francisco what we're trying to do is create a whole culture where as we graduate our students, they gain this habitus, this habit of being environmentally very, very sensitive. And I hope they would choose then pathways that would make them change agents for the better, informed citizens, going into business world, going into public policy, going into science and healthcare but looking for ways for us in every practical way to lessen our carbon footprint. But doing so always against this really broad picture of well, what about the least advantaged human beings on the planet? And that's what the Pope -- I think one of the nice things about this letter is that I think this the first time in such a systemic way that a world thinker, a world leader is linking climate change and the necessary changes in our behavior to care for the poor, the global poor.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, California has some leading climate policies and there's concern in this state that California's cap and trade will hurt the people, the communities often of color in this state. And Pope Francis in his encyclical came out pretty hard against carbon trading and said basically it could be kind of a scam. Does that mean California should rethink its carbon policies?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** No, I don't think so. And I don't think that the Pope was saying cap and trade is not a good system. I think what he's saying is that it has to be watched very carefully so that there isn't a lot of fudging of the allotment on where the money is going to go. There's been talk that in Russia they have a cap and trade and it's been abused and there's been difficulty over what happens to the money when the carbon credits are traded or sold.

**Greg Dalton:** Shocking, yeah.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** But here in California the statistics are showing that it's actually working. And a great deal of the money that is being raised through the cap and trade is going back into poor communities. And that was part of the AB 32, was to make sure that, and I don't know the number you may know that it's 3% to 5% of all the money raised which is a substantial amount, goes

back into low income communities for adaptation, for subsidies for renewable energy, and if they're going to have higher bills, it's going to help the electrical bills for people in poor communities.

So I think what he is saying is if you're going to use the market to do the right thing, or I think maybe that's his complaint, that people should do the right thing and not necessarily have to be making money to do it. But if you're going to be making money and open up a market, then it's got to be watched very carefully that it isn't abused.

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo, fossil fuel companies will often say fighting climate change will raise energy cost for low income Americans, it will hurt the poor. Is that true? Can you fight climate and help the poor at the same time?

**Sam Liccardo:** I think you can fight the climate and help the poor but it can still also be true that it's going to raise energy costs. And I think we have to have the courage to accept the fact we've had really cheap energy in the United States for a very long time relative to other industrialized nations and we can probably live with a little higher energy cost in order to reorient our economy.

You know, I was disappointed that just yesterday I believe a deal fell apart in Sacramento that would have elevated gas price taxes. Believe it or not, just to pay for road repair, it wasn't like this was really a dramatic leftist notion here. But the very least we should be able to raise gas prices to pay for infrastructure and hopefully to transform our infrastructure.

**Greg Dalton:** There was a press conference a couple of years ago with the head of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the head of the AFL-CIO came out in favor where those guys don't usually get together but they came out in favor of the increase in the gas tax and that went nowhere. People don't like higher energy prices.

We're talking about climate and Pope Francis with the mayor of San Jose Sam Liccardo, Sally Bingham president and founder of Interfaith Power and Light and Paul Fitzgerald president of the University of San Francisco. I'm Greg Dalton.

We're going to go to audience questions in just a moment but I want to ask each of you when you think of climate and stewardship, is there a particular scripture that you think of, Paul? Paul Fitzgerald?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** I loved how Francis quoted Matthew, you know, the lilies at the field and the birds in the air, you know, are beautiful and God knows each one of them and invites us to have that same sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world around us. Something that, you know, as the climate has changed and the bay area has developed, you know, it's further from us -- it's further from me than it was 50 years ago in Los Gatos when birds and animals and nature seemed so much closer and so much more available.

**Greg Dalton:** It's a lost connection. Sally Bingham, a favorite passage.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Yeah, my favorite is the first commandment, to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. Because if you love your neighbor you're conscious of how your behavior affects your neighbors. And for me that's the -- I expand the word neighbor beyond the person that lives next door or sitting next to me, our neighbors are the next generation, our neighbors are the flora and fauna and animals.

And if we love our neighbors and operate out of love and understand that however we behave is affecting our neighbors, this is a wonderful scripture site for care for creation. Because creation is all of us too. I mean, it's everything. And if we care about everything and treat everything as a

neighbor and love it, it'll make a big difference.

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo.

**Sam Liccardo:** I know I won't be quite as good at this as my colleagues here.

**Greg Dalton:** The professionals here. I've got two professionals right here. Playing in the big leagues here.

[Laughs]

**Sam Liccardo:** Yeah, I just think about the sermon, blessed are the poor in spirit they shall inherit earth. There's a certain connection that Pope Francis makes between how we are treating the earth and how we are treating fellow human beings and a connection that he said that those who are the poorest are most deeply impacted by environmental damage as well. And there's -- I think that connection bears out as well in the sermon.

**Greg Dalton:** We're talking about Pope Francis at Climate One. The Pope will be in the United States in just a few days and talking about his climate crusade. I'm Greg Dalton.

Let's go to our audience questions. Welcome to Climate One.

**Male Participant:** Hi. This comment and question is directed to you Father Fitzgerald. My name is Gram Smith. I'm a recent alumni of USF with theology and religious studies degree.

Now that as of yesterday the whole UC system has divested its endowment from coal and tar sands, joining Stanford and SF state and California has divested its state pension fund from coal joining the city of San Francisco, it seems like USF, San Francisco's Jesuit university is lagging behind a little bit.

**Greg Dalton:** The question is when you're going to divest?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** So I'm happy to agree with you that the University of San Francisco will divest from coal and tar sands and we have a very small chunk of coal in one instrument and when that instrument matures we'll be done. So thank you.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's have our next question. Welcome to Climate One.

**Female Participant:** A lot of my friends and family are climate deniers and say that when change happens, we'll do something about it then. Is it possible to talk with them further or should I just give it up?

[Laughs]

**Greg Dalton:** Who'd like to tackle that? Sam Liccardo, you're in the trenches.

**Sam Liccardo:** Despite being a politician, I'm a big believer of proselytizing. And I think it is really important to not give up. Obviously, there is an artful way of doing it and there's an irritating way of doing it but I think it's critical that, you know, if we're going to have significant adaptive change around this very serious problem it's going to take education and that happens not from the top down but within the community among all the community members.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, do you have anything to add to that, talking to deniers?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** I completely agree with Sam. I don't think we should ever give up. I think we need to talk about it as much as we can with friends, family, politicians, even when they're deniers without ending up in an argument. And, you know, the same things that we would be doing to address climate change are things we ought to be doing for the economics reasons anyway.

Switching to renewable energy is going to create jobs and boost the economy, it's going to save our health and a lot of expense around the asthma and health reasons that people end up in the hospitals. It's just a good thing all the way around even if you don't think the climate is warming, a whole new industrial revolution around clean energy is going to help the economy.

**Greg Dalton:** One big area of resistance has been evangelical Christians. Is that changing? Are they softening? Many would say that the climate is God's domain, humans can't change it, it's blasphemy to say that. Is that still the case?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** The evangelicals are excellent on this subject now and they came into it because they're using the phrase that Jesus said which is, what you do to the least of us, you do to me.

And when they realize, and they do, that it's the poor people who are suffering the most, they are getting on board and helping out a lot with policy, with educating their own constituents and certainly I think making a big difference.

**Greg Dalton:** We're talking about climate change and Pope Francis at Climate One with Sally Bingham, Paul Fitzgerald and Sam Liccardo. Let's go to our next question.

**Male Participant:** This is a question for all three. Do you feel the rabbis, the ministers, the pastors on the ground at the local level of churches, do they have adequate knowledge and background in climate science to answer the questions of their parishioners and to provide the right answers to these complicated questions?

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, you deal with a lot of people, take that first.

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Well, I think in many cases they don't have the answers, they don't understand the science, and it isn't because they're stupid, it's because when they were in seminary nobody was studying environmental ethics. And they know how to be pastors, and deal with emergencies within their congregations. But they don't know how to deal with the science of climate change. Now, I've always said to these folks, go to our website and get our sample sermons where we have one of every denomination, many in lots of denominations. But you don't have to know the science of climate change to talk about the fact that we are the stewards of creation. And we are the people, God put Adam in the garden to till it and to keep it. And without having to go into how many parts per million of carbon are in the atmosphere, it's simply introducing the fact that you as a person of faith in a pew, are called to care for this creation.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's have our next question. Welcome to Climate One.

**Male Participant:** I guess my question would be when you do hear conservative preachers, conservative popes preach against climate change, preach against contraception, I feel like I really do hear the idea that there should be a separation between religious discussion and between politics and science. And that it seems to me that to a certain extent it's opportunism and this idea that he's on the right side now and that he is supporting the consensus so it's okay to take it more seriously. But do you feel like there's a little bit of hypocrisy there, that he is not an expert in the same way that the last Pope wasn't an expert in contraception or climate change or any other issue, and to just sort of treat differently, different religious leaders in terms of how valid their opinions are kind of

has a --

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham: Sally Bingham, are we infatuated, dangerous infatuation with this Pope?

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** In danger of it perhaps but I think he is genuinely extremely popular largely because of his humility and his care for the poor. And I think society is hungry for authenticity and honesty. And I believe that this Pope is bringing that to society. And there is I suppose the danger that he is some sort superficial hero who's, you know, coming in on a white horse to save us all. But I think he is.

[Laughs]

**Sam Liccardo:** I think it's important to point out actually his poll numbers dropped considerably in the United States after the encyclical. Some conservative Catholics perhaps were less enthusiastic about him.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Also just this thing about separation of church and state in the United States, it's very clear that it's about the government not restricting our religious freedom and the government not establishing one church and outlawing others.

But the citizens of this country have always been encouraged to form their opinions about matters of public policy based upon their deeply held faith convictions. So, you know, religion gets to have a voice in public affairs. Government doesn't get to have a voice in church affairs.

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo.

**Sam Liccardo:** Yeah, I agree wholeheartedly and we have a Declaration of Independence to prove it. We can't live our lives in a schizophrenic world in which we believe what we believe only on Sundays and the rest of the week then we're on our own. Regardless whether you're conservative or liberal, I think there has to be an integration of faith and action and it seems to me that's what this Pope is capturing.

**Greg Dalton:** On the Pope's poll numbers, I guess, okay, I never thought about that together.

[Laughs]

But yeah, the Pope's poll numbers, Paul Fitzgerald how much of the U.S. Catholic establishment, the bishops, are with him in his reform agenda and climate? Are they publicly supporting him and quietly opposing him?

**Paul Fitzgerald:** I think it was Stalin who asked how many divisions does the Pope have.

[Laughs]

And so now we're asking what's the Pope's poll numbers.

[Laughs]

You know, fortunately, he only had to stand for election once.

[Laughs]

And now he's in for as long as he wants to stay. I think that, you know, in the United States we have some bishops who are very much strongly in line with the Pope and teaching very actively. Others I think are a little more quiet. It goes back to a previous question too, a hundred years or 75 years ago at a typical Catholic mass, the priest was the best educated guy in the room. At a typical parish today, the priest is below average in terms of his education and his sophistication. So even as we have a Francis who is just so spectacular --

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** Speak for yourself.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yeah, I know.

[Laughs]

I got a room temperature IQ and I'm happy with it. You know, we have religious leaders who ask maybe pointed questions, but it's really important that the people in the pews, the lay folks who have expertise, the lay people who have experience, the laypeople who, you know, at least in the Roman Catholic world, the clergy exists simply to serve the laity who themselves have the authority and the responsibility to change the social milieu. That's from the second Vatican Council. The most important work that the Catholic Church does is change social structures to be more just, humane and sustainable and that is the responsibility of the laity. The clergy are just there to help.

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald is president of the University of San Francisco. Let's go to our next question at Climate One.

**Male Participant:** Hi. My name is Noel Castro. I work in energy policy and I'm also a Catholic. So I'm having a troublesome time connecting and practicing pantheism and seeing God in particular people, specifically very powerful fossil fuel interests who have acted against the principle of integral ecology that you described. How do we engage as a community with that very powerful but very small minority to act on climate?

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Well, I think Mayor Liccardo is probably better suited. But I would just say, you know, this kind of social change happens in the best way, in the most profound way when we love our enemies.

And we convert them by helping them to see that they need to care for their grandchildren and they need to care about their great grandchildren. And so there's a part of Pope Francis' critique of unbridled capitalism or thoughtless capitalism. You know, markets didn't end slavery. Markets didn't end child labor. Markets didn't end unsafe working conditions. Communities, you know, intervene in the market based on deeply held values. Markets are great for distributing goods and services and Catholic Church we fully support the power of markets but they need folks like yourself who are going to put some moral structures around those markets so that they serve us rather than us becoming slaves of this unbridled forces.

**Greg Dalton:** Sally Bingham, can you forgive fossil fuel executives or can you love them?

[Laughs]

**Rev. Canon Sally Bingham:** I can forgive them if they come to me for penance and repentance certainly because they wouldn't come for absolution unless they realize they've made a mistake. And if they come with a mistake in their hand, sure I can forgive.



**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo.

**Sam Liccardo:** Well, I'll stay away from the moral issue and go to the political one which is how do you confront a very powerful lobby. Look, there's a lot of examples in history, I'm a big believer that the arc of history does bend toward justice and we know that tobacco lobby has been very powerful in this country for many years. But really through a public health campaign ultimately people became educated about the dangers of tobacco and behavior shifted significantly. It wasn't top down, it was really bottom up change in behavior and I think ultimately that's where we'll go, hopefully soon enough.

**Greg Dalton:** Next question. Welcome.

**Male Participant:** My bottom line question is can the value of proper questions related to climate preservation and improvement be monetized to those money-oriented people who only look at it from the bottom line in terms of what does it mean to me financially. Has anyone tried to monetize it?

**Greg Dalton:** Sam Liccardo?

**Sam Liccardo:** Yeah, you know, I think the cap and trade system here in California is a good example of obviously many of us who believe and the need to take action in climate change, believe in the importance of putting a price on carbon. And I know Pope Francis is suspicious and has concerns about it, but I do believe that is an effective approach and it's certainly working here in California. And I think it is possible to move through the market. I don't think the market solves the more fundamental issue of the throw away culture that I think Pope Francis is condemning that is at the root of all of this. But I do believe that we can at least address some of the symptoms that way.

**Greg Dalton:** Let's go to our last question. Welcome.

**Male Participant:** Yes, I'm a graduate of the McLaren School of Business so I'm coming here with a little bit more of an economic perspective. My general question is relating back to the idea of the spiritual sense that, you know, President Fitzgerald said in his interviews, how do we get ourselves back to a point where we stop thinking about just looking at the bottom line money and start really begin to feel with a heart. How do we reconcile the thoughts with our heart?

**Greg Dalton:** Paul Fitzgerald.

**Paul Fitzgerald:** Yeah, you know, I spent a semester in Nairobi, Kenya teaching in the Jesuit school that was right on the edge of the Kibera slum. I lived in Paris for three and a half years while I was during my doctorate and every weekend I was up in public housing projects north of Paris. And, you know, I've been in these communities of poor people, the Pico-Aliso housing projects in Los Angeles, east LA, seven summers in a row. And oftentimes in these communities of poor people I found more community, I found more bonds of just human care, you know, a woman who's taking care of the old man who lives across, he's not related. He's not related but somebody needs to care for him. Oftentimes, people who have very little they have a great deal of love and they have a great deal of connection to other human beings. And I think that Pope Francis is asking us to do that a bit, you know, let's care more about each other and let's care more about the world and let's find that we're happier doing that than chasing ever greater wealth and ever greater comfort.

**Greg Dalton:** We have to end it there. We've been listening to Paul Fitzgerald president of the University of San Francisco, Sam Liccardo mayor of San Jose, California and Rev. Canon Sally Bingham president and founder of Interfaith Power and Light. I'm Greg Dalton. I'd like to thank you

all for listening here in the Commonwealth Club and online and on air. Thanks for joining us.

[Applause]