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CATHOLIC CARDINAL REFLECTS ON ECOLOGY WITH OHIO STATE COMMUNITY



Mershon Auditorium was nearly filled to capacity with a crowd that gave Cardinal Peter Turkson a standing ovation after his discussion about world ecology on November 2.

Turkson visited the campus of Ohio State University, talking to students who showed them their work in ecology, touring Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center, and capping off the day with a presentation on Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology, "Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home."

The community discussion on global sustainability included Turkson's explanation of the encyclical, released by the Roman Catholic Church this spring, and then a roundtable discussion with University President Michael Drake and Bruce McPheron, dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Questions were submitted by the audience via Twitter and Facebook.

"Sustainability is a reminder of the power of a place like Ohio State," McPheron said in his welcome address. "We are one of the world's most comprehensive universities – a place to discuss, debate and solve these grand challenges."

Turkson explained that, through the encyclical, the Pope is inviting all people into a dialogue about the similar concerns we have about our common home. "Every voice and every opinion deserves to be heard in this," he said, adding that the main thrust of the encyclical is to emphasize care for our creation — meaning both our environment and our population.

The worst impact of climate change, the Pope writes, will probably be felt by developing countries whose people have no resources to adapt.

"For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation," the Pope wrote. In addition to climate change, the encyclical also addresses water issues, loss of biodiversity, decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society, and global inequality.

We need to change our conversations and behavior about how we treat the environment, Turkson said, noting that even small changes such as turning off air conditioning and planting green plants can help.

Turkson, a Ghana native who is president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said he expects the encyclical will feed into the United Nations climate change conference later this year.

Responding to a question about how to inspire young people to become interested and involved in sustainability, Turkson said, "Today I saw students with innovative ideas and projects to solve problems I don't think we have any reason to doubt the competence or willingness of young people to embrace the challenges of the future."

Ticket proceeds from Cardinal Turkson's presentation will support urban gardening projects in Columbus and in Accra, Ghana, which are sister cities.

His visit to Columbus began over the weekend and included a presentation to the faith community during a conference organized by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Columbus and a Mass for members of the local Ghanaian community.

Cardinal Peter Turkson



Turkson's Ohio State visit was co-sponsored by the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, School of Environment and Natural Resources, Office of Energy and Environment, Humanities Institute, St. Thomas More Newman Center, Glenn College of Public Affairs, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, and additional partners and student organizations.



Related Links

Read the [Laudato Si, the Encyclical on Ecology](#) by Pope Francis

View the [full recording of event](#): How We Live in our Common Home, Reflections on Pope Francis' Encyclical on Ecology

See more [connections between Ohio State and Ghana](#)

View the video report: [Cardinal Peter Turkson visits Ohio State](#)

See the storify: [Cardinal Peter Turkson's Visit to Ohio State University](#)

Read about Cardinal Turkson's presentation at [#Turkson](#) and [#Turksonchat](#) on Twitter. Turkson also has his own Twitter account at [@CardinalTurkson](#).

See the university feature [Ohio State Sustainability in Action](#)

*Article by Joan Wall, Editor, Office of Energy and the Environment
Photos by Kevin Fitzsimons, University Communications*

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