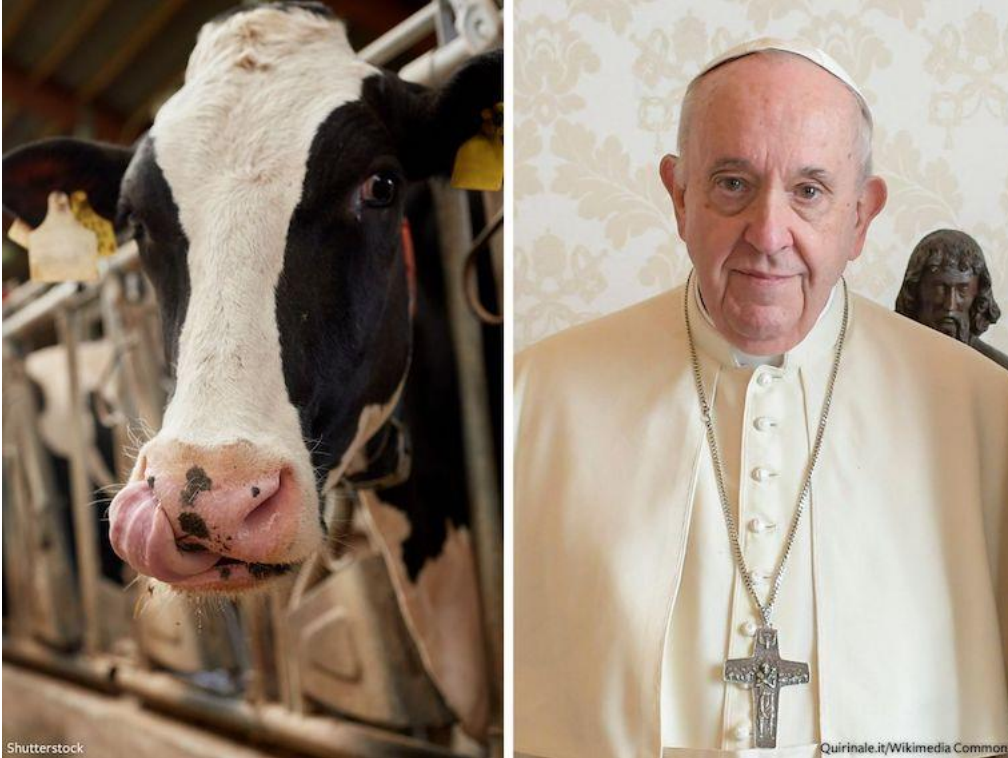


Interfaith Leaders Urge Pope to Include Kindness to Animals in October 4 Encyclical

From [Interfaith Vegan Coalition](#)

September 2023



VATICAN CITY (Sept. 21, 2023) — **In Defense of Animals' Interfaith Vegan Coalition** and **Plant Based Treaty** sent a letter expressing their hope that **Pope Francis** includes compassionate treatment of animals who suffer in animal agriculture in his upcoming ecological encyclical on October 4.

The letter is from over 50 people and faith-based organizations who seek to improve human attitudes towards animals and nature for the benefit of all life on Earth. They expect the follow-up to the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which already teaches humanity about the intrinsic value of all God's creatures, to define human interaction with animals and nature as the root cause of the climate and ecological emergencies facing our world.

Pope Francis says in the *Laudato Si'* Encyclical, paragraph 221: "We read in the Gospel that Jesus says of the birds of the air that 'not one of them is forgotten before God.' How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm?" Yet billions of hens are treated horrifically in factory farms each year.

The signatories caution that even if we end fossil fuel extraction today, greenhouse gas emissions from the food system alone would see global temperature rise above 1.5 C warming. Plant-based diets, which result in 75% less climate-heating food emissions, water pollution, and land use than diets which contain 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of meat per day, must form part of this new vision.

Plant-based diets can also cut the destruction of wildlife by 66% and water use by 54%. There cannot be integral ecology without repairing our relationship with animals and nature, say the undersigned.



The letter states:

We must end our violence to animals and stop killing them for food everywhere plant-based options are possible and readily available. We must not cause animals to suffer and die for our entertainment, useless scientific experiments, sports such as hunting and fishing, or any other way. We are called to show mercy, compassion and life-giving care to all God's creation.

We need to take an unusually significant step in the evolution of our morality and start to see animals and nature as their Creator sees them. This is the only way we can fulfill the responsibility ordered from us, humans' duty of stewardship to ensure that all life flourishes. Farmed animals make up 62% of the world's mammal biomass; humans account for 34%; and wild mammals are just 4%. We need to address this imbalance and reconnect the faith with concern for God's creatures. Like the early saints who lived in friendship with animals and all nature, we also need to live at peace with it. Only then can we realistically implement papal teachings on care for our Common Home.

Read the complete letter and full signatory list [here](#).

The letter is also available in [Italian](#) and [Polish](#).

“Our Interfaith Vegan Coalition is heartened by Pope Francis’ concern for our environment and hopes that his upcoming Encyclical will include mercy for animals who suffer on factory farms

that pollute our planet,” says Lisa Levinson, **Interfaith Vegan Coalition** Co-founder and Campaigns Director for **In Defense of Animals**.

Nicola Harris, Communications Director for **Plant Based Treaty**, says, “With the news that six out of nine planetary boundaries have been breached, risking the stability of Earth, the need for a plant-based food system is more urgent than ever.”

Barbara Niedzwiedzka, of **Christians for Animals - Poland**, says, “In the words of Albert Schweitzer, ‘Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living beings, humanity will not find peace.’ I would add that the compassionate and merciful attitude of Jesus should not be applied only to humans, but to all who are weaker and vulnerable. We should be to other creatures what Christ is to us. And, if we do not quickly change our attitude towards other inhabitants of the Earth, if we do not stop exploiting them callously and cruelly, we will not hinder the climate and environmental catastrophe. We will all perish, and God will judge us. Around the Judge's throne will sit... animals.”

Virginia Bell of **Catholic Action for Animals**, says, “If we accept St Francis of Assisi's exhortation, ‘Not to hurt our humble brethren (the animals) is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission: to be of service to them whenever they require it,’ then we must treat any animal in need as our neighbor.”

In Defense of Animals started the [Interfaith Vegan Coalition](#) to help animal activists and spiritual leaders bring vegan values to spiritual, ethical, and religious communities. The coalition provides [faith-based tools](#) to help all faith and secular wisdom traditions practice the ideals of nonviolence, lovingkindness, and harmlessness toward all animals. The coalition is composed of 43 [member organizations](#), 4 allied organizations, and one partner organization [Animal Interfaith Alliance](#) comprising 17 organizations, all working in harmony for a common cause.

As a companion to the UNFCCC/Paris Agreement, the [Plant Based Treaty](#) aims to halt the widespread degradation of critical ecosystems caused by animal agriculture, to promote a shift to more healthy, sustainable plant-based diets and to actively reverse damage done to planetary functions, ecosystem services and biodiversity.

Interfaith Vegan Coalition and Plant Based Treaty Letter to Pope Francis:

[English](#)

[Italian](#)

[Polish](#)

Interfaith Vegan Coalition Signatories:

- [Animal Interfaith Alliance](#)
- [A Prayer for Compassion Film](#)
- [All-Creatures.org](#)
- [American Vegan Society](#)
- [Animals' Prayer Flag Project](#)
- [Bhakti Marga](#)
- [Catholic Action for Animals](#)
- [Christian Animal Rights Association](#)
- [Christian Vegetarian Association](#)
- [Christians for Animals \(Poland\)](#)
- [Circle of Compassion](#)
- [Climate Healers](#)

- [Committee of Consciousness](#)
- [Compassion Consortium](#)
- [Compassionate Living](#)
- [Compassionate Spirit](#)
- [Concern for Helping Animals in Israel](#)
- [Creation Care Church](#)
- [Dharma Voices for Animals](#)
- [Green Islam](#)
- [Faith Action for Animals](#)
- [Fraternité pour le Respect Animal](#) (France)
- [God's Creatures Ministry](#)
- [In Defense of Animals](#)
- [Interfaith Vegan Alliance](#)
- [Jewish Veg](#)
- [Karuna Music and Art](#)
- [Main Street Vegan Academy](#)
- [Million Vegan Grandmothers](#)
- [One Love Animal Connection Ministry](#)
- [PETA Lambs](#)
- [Quaker Animal Kinship](#)
- [SARX](#)
- [Seeds to Inspire Foundation](#)
- [Shamayim: Jewish Animal Advocacy](#)
- [St. Francis Alliance](#)
- [The Black Vegan Experience](#)
- [The Spiritual Forum](#)
- [The Vegan Museum](#)
- [Together in Creation](#)
- [United Poultry Concerns](#)
- [Vegan Spirituality](#)
- [Vegan World 2026](#)
- [World Vegan Assembly](#)

Contacts:

- In Defense of Animals, Interfaith Vegan Coalition co-founder, Lisa Levinson, lisa@idausa.org, 215-620-2130
- Plant Based Treaty, Plant Based Treaty Global Coordinator, Anita Krajnc, media@plantbasedtreaty.org, [+1 416-825-6080](tel:+14168256080) and Communications Director, Nicola Harris, nicola@plantbasedtreaty.org, [+44 7597514343](tel:+447597514343)
- Christians for Animals - Poland, Prof. Barbara Niedzwiedzka, mxniedzw@cyf-kr.edu.pl, [+48 608 376 667](tel:+48608376667)