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"The climate issue is no longer an academic matter for a few intellectuals or environmentalists. The climate crisis is now extremely serious and threatens humanity.

—President Luiz Lula da Silva
Press Statement at COP30
November 19, 2025

The mission of the Carmelite NGO is to actively participate in creating a more peaceful, just and loving world by advocating and caring for the spiritual and material needs of the human family and the environment. The NGO provides the Carmelite perspective on issues before the United Nations and focuses specifically on freedom of belief, human trafficking, education, and sustainability.



The 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference - COP30

The Carmelite NGO Joins the Global Stage in Belén, Brazil

Dr. Renato Rallo

Collaborator, The Carmelite NGO - Mechanical Engineer in Energy Resources and Environment

When I return from COP, I always wait a while before writing. I want to let my ideas settle, read analyses by professional commentators, and combine their ideas with my own in a corner of my brain that continues to think about those two weeks, the next two, and those that will still be needed to incrementally save a little more of the climate, one hundredth of a Celsius degree at a time.

COP has become such a global stage for all the injustices in the world that it is difficult to remember what the initial problem was. It has become so for a clear and understandable reason: as we have conceptualized it, energy is the spirit of the world. Without energy the world would be immobile, dead matter. The form of energy that civilization on planet Earth has relied on over the last two centuries to develop in all directions, from life expectancy to the ability to travel and transmit information, is still based, for about 80%, on fossil fuels, i.e., energy sources that have accumulated underground over millions of years and emit CO₂ when burned. So, for 30 years, countries have been meeting at COPs (Conferences of Parties) to commit themselves in front of other countries to emit less CO₂.

Let's get straight to the negative part: this COP30, from the point of view of CO₂ emission commitments, has not made any progress. But the disappointment on this front did not come about during the two weeks in November, but rather throughout the previous year. It was the year in which all countries were

supposed to sign their commitments, the NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions), and only a very few countries did so by the deadline and in an “ambitious” manner, as they say in these circumstances. The reason is quite easy to identify: the wars of the last year, and Trump’s new withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement (the platform on which this whole mechanism is based), together with everything Trump has done (tariffs, daily outrage against multilateralism) had understandably prompted all states not to take steps that risked leaving them alone. So, on the main quantifiable aspect in terms of climate, no progress was made in 2025 or even in Belém—everything was postponed.

The other disappointment, more closely linked to the two weeks of COP30, is that despite starting with very low expectations, the Brazilian presidency immediately proved to be strangely pragmatic. While everyone arrived at this ritual somewhat sleepy, in a year when the ritual seemed particularly empty, the presidency seemed to have some tricks up its sleeve. In particu-

“From the point of view of CO₂ emissions this COP30 made no progress”

lar, during the first week, rumors began to circulate that there might be a draft final declaration that would even mention a “roadmap for an orderly exit from fossil fuels.”

This brings us to the symbolism of the COP, which is worth mentioning because it has become (rightly or wrongly) just as central as what is measurable. What the media around the world tell the public, who will then vote or push their politicians to implement policies that are even more (or even less) climate-friendly, this ‘newsworthiness’ of the COPs is not only linked to numbers, i.e. the concrete commitments of individual states, but is also closely linked to the political, verbal, and policy decisions that emerge from each COP. For this reason, COP28 in Dubai remained in the hearts of many, especially those who follow COPs as a distant and rather alien event. That COP, hosted by one of the countries that most represents the interests of the fossil fuel industry, ended with a resounding and unprecedented statement: ‘transitioning away from fossil fuels’. As a result, for a year—that is, until the disappointing COP29 in Baku—public opinion viewed the transition in optimistic terms. This optimism was not based on numbers, we repeat, but on words—which are also very important.

Well, the words with which the Brazilian presidency of COP30 tried to convince all countries—a kind of *roadmap* for this “transitioning away” that had remained suspended in the collective memory—were not found. There was no agreement on this point. So the final decision, which concludes every COP, was essentially weak and disappointing.

Another lukewarmly bad, or neutral, piece of news was the role of China. Another truth that the COP confirmed is that China will do nothing unless forced to. The international community should leverage the (tragic, very sad) absence of the US, at least until 2028, to try to turn this void to good account. China’s role in climate change is still ambiguous: it is by far the largest installer of new renewable power and, at the same time, the largest emitter of CO₂, with plans to slow down still timid. In this window of opportunity, and with the space Trump is leaving, the international

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Related Websites:

UN Climate Change Conference – Belém, Brasil (UNFFCC)
unfccc.int/cop30

COP30 Brasil Amazônia – Belém, Brasil 2025
cop30.br/en

Message of Pope Leo XIV to COP30
vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20251107-messaggio-cop30.html

Transcript of President Lula's Address to COP30
cop30.br/en/news-about-cop30/transcript-of-the-press-statement-by-president-lula-at-cop30-19-november-2025

BBC Report: Five Key Takeaways from a Deeply Divisive Climate Summit
bbc.com/news/articles/cp84m16mdm1o

UN Website on COP30
un.org/en/climatechange/cop30

Previous UN Climate Conferences
un.org/en/climatechange/un-climate-conferences

Catholic Climate Covenant
catholicclimatecovenant.org/

Environment Organizations
cbcew.org.uk/environment-organisations/

Laudato Si Goals
laudatosiactionplatform.org/laudato-si-goals/

community should offer China the chance to take the lead, but on condition that it is serious leadership. For example, transition plans should include some resource sharing, given that China currently controls most of the extraction and processing of critical raw materials for renewable energy plants. This international pressure, which China is currently doing everything it can to avoid and keep dormant, is necessary, and the ideal window of opportunity is right now, with the US pulling out and explicitly renouncing its role in this game. At the moment, however, this scenario seems far from happening: China remains silent, unwilling to be put in the spotlight. It is doing what it planned to do, no more, and certainly not to do others a favor. Its point of view is entirely understandable and in line with a millennial empire that moves very slowly. The problem is that if the United States rows against the climate—and it manages to do so even without physically participating in the COP, through its loyal petro-state allies—other powers would be needed to row in the “right” direction. For now, the alliance of the willing seems to bring together a galaxy of countries with little influence, whose most emblematic ‘power’ is Europe itself. Part of this coalition – currently 24 countries – has decided to meet for the first time in history at a new conference in Colombia in spring 2026: The International Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels. The experiment seems interesting and deserves to be followed, even if such a conference – which does not involve the whole world but only those willing to make the transition – risks multiplying the number of tables and weakening the collective effort. We will see.

So what is the good news? To be honest, I answer this question—which I ask myself before, during, and after every COP I have the great honor of attending—on two levels: one concerning method, and one concerning merit. On method: COPs have truly become the assembly that seeks to resolve – through the prism of climate and energy – all the injustices in the world. So, first of all, it is good news that this assembly still exists and that (almost) all the countries in the world still consider it worthwhile to participate. There are years when world harmony seems to improve and years when it worsens. And if 2025 seemed like a year when it worsened, unfortunately I cannot surprise you: even the outcome of Belem confirms the trend we have seen around the world.

On merit, the good news is something we already knew, but it was confirmed with a little number a few weeks before the COP (blessed be the little numbers that bring good news). Before the Paris Agreement, the world was on a trajectory of 3.8 degrees by 2100, whereas now we are at 2.6 degrees. It is still a lot, and we still dream of reaching a maximum of 1.5 degrees, but this shows us that the fate of the world is almost never black and white, but rather an infinite scale of grays. And so, barring any surprises, delegations from around the world will meet in November next year at COP31 in Turkey to save a little more of the climate, one hundredth of a Celsius degree at a time.



We Are Guardians of Creation, Not Rivals for Its Resources

Dr. María del Carmen Molina Cobos - Carmelite NGO Observer
Chair of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid

COP30, held in the heart of the Amazon, is shaping up to be the decisive summit for addressing the climate and social crisis that threatens life on the planet. World leaders, local communities, and religious voices agree that the time has come to move from words to action.

At this conference, Cardinal Pedro Barreto, president of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon (CEAMA), evoked the spirit of the historic 1992 Rio Summit, where more than 160 countries agreed that sustainable development should place human beings, in their full dignity, at the center. However, progress has been insufficient. He stresses that we may

soon be at a point of no return and calls for this moment to be embraced as a *kairos*, a favorable time to sow hope and justice. A time when an opportunity for conversion, justice, transformation, and the Kingdom opens up. “The time for letters of good intentions is over,” the cardinal emphasized, finally recalling that “in the wounded face of the poor we find the suffering of the innocent and, therefore, the very suffering of Christ.”

Voices from the Global South: climate justice and historical reparation

Cardinal Felipe Neri, representing the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences (FABC), called for an ethical and equitable vision for the climate crisis, highlighting that Asia and the Global South are the most



COP30 Side Event Participants -- On the left, Dr. Emilce Cuda (Vatican Pontifical Secretary of the Latin American Commission); in the middle with cross, Cardinal Jaime Sprenger, president of the Latin America and Caribbean Bishops Council, CELAM; on the far right, Eduardo Agosta Scarel, O. Carm., vice president of the Carmelite NGO. The others are invited leaders of the Energy and Mining Industry.

affected despite having contributed minimally to the problem. He proposed five “non-negotiable” changes to achieve climate justice:

- + Fair and transparent financing, based on grants directly accessible to vulnerable communities.
- + Inclusive governance, with the real participation of indigenous peoples, women, and young people, recognizing their traditional knowledge.
- + Equitable transfer of technology from the North to the Global South and strengthening of local capacities.
- + Historical reparation and procedural equity, with global mechanisms that protect people and the planet.
- + Recognition of female leadership, key to climate resilience.

“Building climate justice is a transformative agenda that requires global collaboration and a holistic vision to protect our common home,” she concluded.

Amazonia: Ecological Debt and Indigenous Dignity

For his part, Cardinal Leonardo Steiner, Archbishop of Manaus, denounced the exclusion of indigenous peoples from climate policies: “Although they are the first inhabitants, their lands often do not belong to them. It is a climate injustice.” He also called for addressing the ecological debt that rich countries owe to the Global South and warned about destructive practices such as polluting mining, predatory fishing, and microplastics in food. The cardinal addressed an environmental ethic that emphasized the intrinsic value of nature itself, a value far removed from the utilitarian ethic to which we are accustomed, where creatures become a resource for anthropic benefit. “Climate justice must include all creatures, because they are all children of the same love,” he said. This is a clear allusion to the theology of creation, where creatures are created by Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, and Christ is their ultimate end, not humanity, which is, in reality,

their guardian and custodian. If we lose sight of the unique value of each creature, creation is compromised. Benedict XIV in Caritas in Veritate emphasized this reality: “If creatures are deprived of their reference to God, they are left at the mercy of man’s discretion and become objects of abuse.”

Pope Leo—as guarantor—confirms his cardinals at COP30 and exhorts political leaders

Finally, in a video message from Rome, Pope Leo XIV confirmed his cardinals and exhorted world leaders gathered at COP30 to move from words to deeds in the face of the climate crisis.

“There is still time to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C, but the window is closing,” he warned, lamenting the lack of political will on the part of some governments.

In his speech, Leo XIV also recalled that the climate crisis hits the poorest hardest: “Creation cries out in floods, droughts, storms, and relentless heat. One in three people live in great vulnerability because of these changes... To ignore them is to deny our shared humanity.” The pontiff did not miss the opportunity to invite nations to send a clear global message of unity and solidarity in the face of the climate crisis and defended the Paris Agreement as the most powerful tool to protect people and the planet, but he was emphatic: “It is not the Agreement that is failing, but our response.”

The Pope also recalled in clearly prophetic language that “we are guardians of creation, not rivals for its goods. Let us act quickly, with faith and hope, to protect the gift that God has entrusted to us.”



Resources Available on the Carmelite NGO YouTube Channel

Six videos are currently available for educational purposes or general knowledge. We would appreciate your feedback. More videos will be developed in the coming year.

Sustainability - Environment

- Rising Seas in Indonesia (English with Spanish subtitles)
- Rising Seas in Indonesia,
- The Rising Seas: A Global Challenge
- The Pope's Climatologist on Faith and Climate Change
- Using Laudato Si' to Inspire High School Students
- Curriculum on Laudato Si': Laudato Si' Can Change the World

Human Trafficking

- Agape Leona Helps Human Trafficking Survivors in Africa
- Mercy House: The Carmelite NGO Offers Love and Hope in Indonesia

Understanding the Carmelite NGO

- Carmelite NGO at the United Nations
- Indonesia's Mercy House Dedicated to a Dutch Carmelite Saint

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