

Sacred Guidance for a Planet in Crisis: A Call to Justice, Compassion, and Hope

Reflections from the September 3, 2026 Tri-Abrahamic Dialogue on the Climate Crisis

September 24, 2026

The Tri-Abrahamic Dialogue on the Climate Crisis is a five-part webinar series organized by the Parliament of the World's Religions and sponsored by the First Analysis Institute of Integrative Studies. Each session brings together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim speakers; the first explored how foundational religious texts can inspire climate action. The second session, held September 3, 2026, drew on *Laudato Si'*, *Laudate Deum*, *Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth*, and Jewish teachings on creation and justice to ask what a just and faithful response to the crisis looks like. The panelists were Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, Imam Saffet Catovic, and Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., with Dr. Erin Lothes moderating. Each brought an emphasis that complemented the others: Rabbi Cardin spoke from care for creation itself and the duty to keep the Earth habitable, Imam Catovic from the revealed teachings and sacred law of Islam, and Bishop Stowe from love and solidarity with the most vulnerable.

Dr. Lothes began with the devastating floods that had just struck Nepal and Tibet. Such disasters, she said, can leave us feeling grief, fear, and helplessness; faith offers hope in God's care, but that hope cannot excuse us from our own responsibility. She asked how each tradition holds these together. Rabbi Cardin answered the helplessness first: hope is a foundational Jewish value, and without it we would never be moved to change anything. On trust, she turned the question around. The real question is not whether we can trust God, but "can God trust us?" In Genesis, the first human is placed in the garden to work it and to protect it, and with no one else yet on Earth, that protection could only be from ourselves. She then shared a midrash: Noah emerges from the ark and complains about the destruction, and God answers that the years of building were given so Noah would challenge the flood, as Abraham later challenged God over Sodom. Noah never did. Today, she said, it is up to us to speak and act and say "not on our watch."

Imam Catovic agreed there is much to grieve: today's extreme weather reflects a climate emergency driven by fossil fuels and worsened by militarism and the war economy. He cited an actuarial report warning that 3°C of warming could cost billions of lives by 2050. Islam, he explained, holds grief, trust, and hope together through *sabr*, patient perseverance in action. The Prophet wept at loss, but formal mourning lasts three days, after which the community returns to the work of making the world better for those who come after. Trust in God is not fatalism; the Qur'an teaches that God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves. He closed with the Prophet's teaching that even if the end of the world arrives, one should still plant the seedling in one's hand.

Dr. Lothes then asked Imam Catovic what Muslims bring to faith-based environmental conversations, which in the West have often been framed in Christian terms such as stewardship. He named four emphases. The first is *mizan*, the balance God set in creation, which humanity has broken. The second is *khalifa*, the human as guardian and caretaker rather than master. The third is

Sharia, which makes waste and needless harm not merely unethical but religiously prohibited. The fourth is an economic critique that calls on wealthy and oil-producing nations to lead the phase-out of fossil fuels. He urged that the Islamic vision not be reduced "to a mirror of Christian environmentalism," while noting that *Al-Mizan* and *Laudato Si'* complement each other and that Muslims, Christians, and Jews need to stand together.

Bishop Stowe, returning to the opening question later in the session, also shifted the focus to human responsibility. The theologian Jon Sobrino, asked after an earthquake in El Salvador why God allows such things, called it a first-world question, since the poor he served never assumed tomorrow was guaranteed. Citing Pope Francis, Bishop Stowe noted that those same vulnerable communities, who have benefited least from the exploitation of the Earth, suffer most from its consequences. Belief in God's majesty, he said, should therefore move us to work for justice and to take responsibility for what is ours. Because we grieve for Nepal and Tibet, he said, we ought to want to make a difference, and that means overcoming our fear of politicizing the issue and acting through policy, law, and the choice of leaders: "Beautiful theological language should inspire, but it should also move us to action." He then described how the Diocese of Lexington, in Appalachian coal country, asked all 59 of its parishes and missions to write their own *Laudato Si'* action plans. Knowing that attacking people's livelihoods would get nowhere, the diocese spoke about creation and the good of workers rather than climate politics, and let each community tell its own story rather than imposing a plan from the top.

Asked what the Jewish traditions of Sabbath and limits can teach, Rabbi Cardin confessed to "religion envy": Catholics have *Laudato Si'* and Muslims *Al-Mizan*, and she is working with Jewish leaders globally on a comparable statement. She offered the Hebrew *shomer*, guardian, as a counterpart to Imam Catovic's caretaker. She lifted up *yishuv olam*, the commandment to preserve a habitable world, which one medieval scholar called the foundation of all the others. From her work on an ethic of enoughness, she shared principles such as: we are guests on this Earth and one link between generations, we may not waste, we may not harm some communities for the benefit of others, and we should learn to live with enough.

Finally, each panelist offered a line for a protest sign. Imam Catovic offered "Care for the Earth is care for God's trust," or more simply, "Protect God's creation, divest from fossil fuels." Rabbi Cardin quoted Liberty Hyde Bailey: one does not act rightly toward one's neighbor without acting rightly toward the Earth. Bishop Stowe chose *Laudato Si'*'s image of the world as "a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise" and *Laudate Deum*'s call for an energy transition that is "efficient, obligatory, and readily monitored." Brother Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap., of the Parliament's Climate Action Task Force, ended the session by urging participants to move from conversation to collaboration and from faith to action. The climate crisis is a common challenge, he said, and the Abrahamic faiths share a common moral foundation from which to offer a common witness.

Watch the recording on [YouTube](#), or see the [Parliament's event page](#) and FAI's [Tri-Abrahamic Dialogue on the Climate Crisis](#) page.