UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE UK 2021

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Although not confirmed by the Vatican, the idea of Pope Francis making a daytrip to Scotland in early November to attend the U.N. Climate Change Conference is heating up.

The "World Leaders Summit" of the two-week conference, known as COP26, will take place in Glasgow Nov. 1-2.

"Scotland's Catholic bishops have welcomed the prospect of a meeting with Pope Francis when he attends the COP26 Conference in Glasgow in November," said a press statement from the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

"Having written to the Holy Father to assure him of a warm welcome should he attend the conference," the bishops "are delighted to hear that he does hope to attend and would be glad to meet with them in Glasgow," said the statement signed by Peter Kearney, director of the Scottish Catholic Media Office.

"The pope will be in Scotland for a very short time, most of which will be spent participating in the COP26 conference," the statement said. "While many pastoral, ecumenical and interfaith gatherings would be desirable while he is with us, time constraints, sadly mean such a full program will not be possible."

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Pope Francis is expected to host about three dozen religious leaders from around the world at a meeting at the Vatican and in Rome Oct. 4 in preparation for the summit. Speaking to a group of Orthodox clerics June 28, Pope Francis said he was looking forward to an October meeting with Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, an early leader in the Christian ecology movement.

The faith leaders' summit will cap a series of online meetings they have been having since February to draft a statement to government leaders who will gather in Glasgow in November.

At a news conference announcing the October meeting, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Vatican foreign minister, said he could not comment on reports that Pope Francis

would travel to Glasgow for COP26.

"If the Holy Father goes, it's in the competence of the trip organizers and that ain't me," he said with a chuckle. "I have to leave it at that, I'm afraid."