



People have forgotten that “we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”(LS2).



“Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous! The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good... (LS84) ...God has written a precious book, “whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe” (LS85)

The Spirituality Enrichment Group called for by the Brigidine Forum 2011, aims “To deepen within each sister a spirituality which embraces the interconnectedness of life and the sacredness of all creation” and support the Care for the Earth / Cosmology groups across the Congregation.

Laudato Si’ Encyclical takes its name from the invocation of Saint Francis, “Praise be to you, my Lord” in his *Canticle of the Creatures*.

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are growing up now ?” (LS160). This is the question at the heart of the encyclical!

“Theological and philosophical reflections on the situation of humanity and the world can sound tiresome and abstract, unless they are grounded in a fresh analysis of our present situation...”(LS17)

CALLED TO CONVERSION—INDIVIDUAL and COMMUNITY

Pope Francis says: As Christians, we are also called,

“to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale. It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet.” (LS18)

“Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.” (LS19)

“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco-systemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited.” (LS25)

“When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society...”(LS82) Francis calls for conversion. Firstly a *personal*, spiritual change in people, “whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (LS217). Also as community, “*The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.*” (LS219).

As we continue our preparation for the Congregational Forum 2016, how do we integrate Laudato Si' into our living, reflecting, praying, acting? How does Pope Francis call us to transform our culture in order to care for our common home? What change is required of us, individually and collectively?

Read /study/ reflect on *Laudato Si'* with others. Do this in conjunction with the reflections in FOCUS Oct 2015 and the Forum documents, This Graced Moment

“Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans and foreigners in their midst: ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after the harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner.’ (Lev 19:9-10). (LS71)

“Whether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. For believers, this becomes a question of fidelity to the Creator, since God created the world for everyone. Hence every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged. The principle of the subordination of private property to the universal destination of goods, and thus the right of everyone to their use, is a golden rule of social conduct and ‘the first principle of the whole ethical and social order.’ (LS93)

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“Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. ‘The earth is the Lord’s’ (Ps 24:1); to God belongs ‘the earth with all that is within it’ (Dt 10:14). Thus God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: ‘The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me.’ Lev25:23). (LS67)



“When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of ‘might is right’ has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. As he said of the powers of his own age: ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant.’ (Mt 20:25-26). (LS82)

A ray of hope flows through *Laudato Si'* with a clear message:

‘Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.’(LS13).

‘Men and women are still capable of intervening positively.’ (LS58).

‘All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.’(LS205).

The call to dialogue—to right relationships with God, others, and all creation—is a constant plea within *Laudato Si'*.

Francis proposes especially, ‘to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.’ (LS3).

“I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (LS14)

The United Nations Climate Change Conference, to be held in Paris next month December, 2015 will be an important milestone for the whole Earth. Pray that those gathering at this conference will have the courage to act for the common good for our common home.