

Caring for Creation Retreat

Mission Statement

Rooted in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching and guided by the principles of Laudato Si', we affirm our commitment to environmental stewardship and seek to:

- Inspire a reverence for God's creation and an appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life
- Educate ourselves and others to increase awareness of our impact on the environment
- Encourage practices of daily living that conserve natural resources and enhance the quality of our natural environment
- Advocate in our parish, community, nation and world for policies and practices that support environmental sustainability

What is Laudato Si'?

Laudato Si: On care for Our Common Home is the second encyclical of Pope Francis. In it, the pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action."

In his encyclical Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home, Pope Francis voices deep concern about the state of the planet. He raises a number of environmental issues including climate change, air and water pollution, deforestation, the destruction of ecosystems, and the loss of biodiversity. The Pope's concern for creation is not limited to the natural environment. He is also speaking about "the intimate relationship between the poor and fragility of the planet" (§ 16, Laudato Si). He wants us to keep in mind that those who are suffering the most from the impact of environmental degradation are the poorest, most vulnerable in society. He reminds us that we have a responsibility to our children and future generations to do something about it. Following the precautionary principle, the Holy Father says that this is not simply a matter of what some people think is happening but is based on "solid scientific consensus that indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it" (§23, Laudato Si').

“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”

Laudato Si’, §160, Pope Francis, May 2015

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. Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home, §6

Integral Ecology and Mercy

Pope Francis’ call to care for creation is grounded in the interconnectedness of the planet. Through the lens of integral ecology, he urges us to understand that all aspects of life, environmental, social, cultural and economic are interconnected. “We are a part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it” (§ 139, Laudato Si).

In order to address the challenge of caring for creation, Pope Francis calls on us to change. “Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. This change begins by addressing our consumerist lifestyle and combatting the culture of indifference. We must move away from a ‘throwaway culture’ of consumerism towards one that reflects a ‘culture of life’ in all its manifestations. When we begin to understand that we are our brother’s and sisters’ keepers, we begin to live in solidarity with them. Pope Francis calls us to “see the misery in the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters, who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help” (§15, Misericordia Vultus). We are called to build a “culture of care” that permeates all of society” (§ 231, Laudato Si).

Hope for the Future

Together we can make a difference. Pope Francis is hopeful that we will respond to the urgent Challenge of protecting our common home. “The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage, and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. (§ 13, Laudato Si’).