



LAUDATO SI'

Care For Our Common Home

SUGGESTED SETTING: Display a variety of pictures of nature, the poor, and people of all races. These can be taken from magazines and/or personal photographs. Participants can be encouraged to bring pictures to place on display!

LEADER:

“Laudato Si’ mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord.” In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.” (no. 1)

This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in our soil, in the water, in the air, and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and mistreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Romans 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (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. (no. 2)

I do not write the Encyclical without turning to the attractive and compelling figure, whose name I took as my guide and inspiration when I was elected Bishop

of Rome. I believe Saint Francis is the example par excellence of the care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically. He is the patron saint of all who work and study in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians. He was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and the outcast. He loved, and was deeply loved for his joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness. He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between, concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. (no.10)

SONG: Canticle of the Sun – YouTube

REFRAIN:

The heavens are telling the glory of God.
And all creation is shouting for joy!
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,
And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Praise for the sun the bringer of day,
He carries the light of the Lord in his rays;
The moon and the stars who light up the way
Unto your throne. (Refrain)

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees,
The seas' mighty storms, the gentlest breeze;
They blow where they will, they blow where they please
To please the Lord. (Refrain)

Praise for the rain that waters our fields,
And blesses our crops so all the earth yields;
From death unto life her mystery revealed
Springs forth in joy. (Refrain)

Praise for the fire who gives us his light,
The warmth of the sun to brighten our night;
He dances with joy, his spirit so bright,
He sings of you. (Refrain)

****The following are four points of reflection/discussion** for your gathering. You can select to focus on one or more. The excerpts are taken from Pope Francis' encyclical, **Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home**.....followed by questions.

"I urgently appeal....for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenges we are undergoing and its human roots, concern us all."
(no. 14)

Pause to Reflect and/or Discuss

Can you name three places – abroad, in the United States, and close to home – that have been affected by climate change?

"Whether believers or not, we agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone." (no. 93)

"Disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God, and with the earth. When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered." (no. 70)

Pause to Reflect and/or Discuss

When we fail to care for creation, what impact does this have on our relationship with ourselves, others, God, and the earth?

“Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.” (no. 91)

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

Pause to Reflect and/or Discuss

Pope Francis encourages us to listen to both the cry of the poor and of the earth. What happens when we only focus on one another?

“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 ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing, and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate changes or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is limited. For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave homes, with great uncertainty for the future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation.... Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.” (no. 25)

Pause to Reflect and/or Discuss

What can we do to respond to these tragedies?

When have you personally experienced creation itself as poor and vulnerable?

SONG: Touch the Earth Lightly (YouTube) – Shirley Murray & Tony Alonso

Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,
Nourish the life of the world in our care;
Gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,
Trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger, who create hunger,
Agents of death for all creatures that live,
We who would foster clouds of disaster,
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening, birth from the burning,
Water that blesses and air that is sweet,
Health in God's garden, hope in God's children,
Regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living, God of all loving,
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,
Teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,
Using us gently, and making us one.

INTERCESSIONS: Taken from - A Prayer For Our Earth

RESPONSE – God of creation, hear our prayer

Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

RESPONSE

Oh God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes. RESPONSE

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. RESPONSE

Touch the hearts of those who only look for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. RESPONSE

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey toward your infinite light. RESPONSE

We thank you for being with us each day. RESPONSE

Encourage us we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace. RESPONSE

CONCLUDING PRAYER:

ALL: God of our past, present and future. We know that we do not travel alone, for you are with us and within us. You are the God of seasons and sojourns of passage and pilgrimage. Be companion to us all the days of our lives. Guide our steps along the path of goodness and growth. Be gentle with us through the seasons and the years. Give us power to serve others in self-care, compassion, mercy and love. Help us appreciate and find ways to preserve our land that you have given to us to use and protect. Draw us to you in the eternal season of forever with the still point and the turning point of all seasons past and yet to come. Amen.

***Any use of (no.#) indicates the number of the paragraph from Laudato Si

