



Our Common Home

Dominican Sisters of San Rafael ~ Engaging *Laudato Si*

Issue 12-1-2015

Earth Charter Implementation Committee

Laudato Si - Chapter 2: Our Present Reality

Pope Francis reminds us that:

- ◆ “**Science and religion**, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both.” [62]
- ◆ Christians are called to recognize **our responsibility within creation**; our duty toward nature and the Creator are an essential part of faith. [64]
- ◆ The **wisdom of biblical accounts** details the intimate relationship between the Creator and Creation. Pope Francis rejects those interpretations that have been used to justify domination and/or exploitation of Creation and Earth’s inhabitants, while pointing to God’s consistent efforts to guide humanity to a renewed relationship with all of Creation.
- ◆ Creation is an expanding reality, expressing the great **creative energy of an unfolding universe**.
- ◆ The **ultimate destiny of the universe** is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things. [83]
- ◆ Jesus, in the fullness of his humanity, **lived in harmony with all Creation**.
- ◆ Nature as a whole not only manifests God but is a **locus of God’s presence** in which everything is interconnected; creatures exist only in dependence on each other. [88]
- ◆ Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a **sincere love for our fellow human beings** and **an unwavering commitment** to resolving the problems of society. [91]
- ◆ The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, **something new** can always emerge.

Implications and Challenges

- ◆ The natural environment is a collective good, the inheritance of all humanity and the responsibility of every person.
- ◆ A **sense of deep communion** with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.
- ◆ It is inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking. [91]
- ◆ **The Christian tradition** has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property.
- ◆ **Our challenge** is to internalize Francis’ message and renew our hope that something new can emerge for the healing of our common home through the work of the Spirit.

Response – Reflect, Discuss, Pray, Act

Since all Dominicans are teachers, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to share some aspects of Laudato Si with those we know — friends, family and ministerial partners. You might:

- ☞ **Share something** you’ve learned from the encyclical, noting what surprised you, disturbed you and raised moral and ethical insights.
- ☞ Consider making the encyclical part of your **Christmas giving**.
- ☞ **Invite** one or more persons **into conversation** about the Pope’s encyclical, the Paris 2015 conference opening on 11-30, or climate change and its current and long-term impacts for us all.
- ☞ Use the enclosed **prayer service** individually, in your local community or with a group you convene.

Each month from now until May, the Earth Charter Implementation Committee (ECIC) will offer a new issue of this newsletter - *Our Common Home* - considering the encyclical chapter by chapter. Please keep your copies in the green folder provided. We will use these materials at the March Assembly.