



Our Common Home

Dominican Sisters of San Rafael ~ Engaging *Laudato Si*

Issue II-I-2015

Earth Charter Implementation Committee

Laudato Si – Chapter 1: Our Present Reality

Pope Francis reminds us that:

- ◆ **We cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throw-away culture in which we live.**
- ◆ We can no longer sweep under the carpet the questions that are troubling us today:
 1. **Pollution:** Hundreds of millions of tons of toxic radioactive waste flood our life systems each year .
 2. **Warming of the climate:** Its effect is accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level, threatening the most vulnerable of all living systems, human and otherwise.
 3. **Water poverty:** It prevails in the poorest nations where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water.
 4. **Loss of biodiversity:** Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know again.
 5. **Breakdown of human society:** “Progress” has not led to an integral development and an improvement in the quality of life.
 6. **Global inequality:** A true ecological approach always integrates questions of justice with concerns for the environment so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*

∞

Implications and Challenges

- ◆ Our current “throwaway culture” affects the entire planet and has implications for our own lives.
- ◆ We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide; still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.
- ◆ We can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point due to the rapid pace of change and degradation. The present world system is certainly unsustainable.

Response – Reflect, Discuss, Pray, Act

*“Hope would have us recognize that there is **always** a way out, that we can **always** redirect our steps and that we can **always** do something to solve our problems.”*

- ∞ Do I recognize the “throwaway culture” in my own experience? How do I buy in? How do I resist?
- ∞ How do I understand the notion “the climate is a common good”?
- ∞ What specific efforts am I / are we making to respond to the seriousness of the threat to *Our Common Home*?
- ∞ Pray for a **binding agreement on greenhouse gases** at the *Paris Climate Summit*, November 30 – December 11.

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.