



# Our Common Home

Dominican Sisters of San Rafael ~ Engaging *Laudato Si*

Issue 2-I-2016

Earth Charter Implementation Committee

## Laudato Si - Chapter 4: Integral Ecology

Pope Francis reminds us that:

- ◆ When we speak of the “environment,” what we really mean is the **relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it**.
- ◆ It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems.
- ◆ Strategies for a solution demand an **integrated approach** to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.
- ◆ When we speak of “sustainable use,” consideration must always be given to each **ecosystem’s regenerative ability**.
- ◆ “Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment” - social ecology extends to the **whole of society**. [142]
- ◆ Ecology also involves protecting the **cultural treasures of humanity in the broadest sense**—that which is inherited from the past and that which is the living, dynamic and participatory present reality. This is cultural ecology. [143]
- ◆ Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of life — addressing concerns of extreme poverty, exploitation of people and the environment, overcrowding in cities, lack of open space and lack of access to housing.
- ◆ Human ecology implies another profound reality: the **relationship between human life and the moral law**; the ethical imperative to be in solidarity with the poorest of our brothers and sisters and the call to renew our efforts to work for the common good.
- ◆ An integral ecology is **marked by this broader vision**, i.e. intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations.

## Implications and Challenges

- ◆ Challenges include the need for integrated urban planning that takes into account the quality of life for all inhabitants and that promotes the growth of community and the opportunity for a coherent and meaningful framework for their lives.
- ◆ The lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world, including Marin County.
- ◆ The systems of transportation are often a source suffering bringing congestion, pollution and consumption of non-renewable resources
- ◆ An understanding of human ecology calls us to the necessity to create a more dignified environment for the common good.
- ◆ The common good extends to this moment and to future generations.

## ◆ Response – Reflect, Discuss, Pray, Act

- ☞ **Reflect on and discuss with your local community Pope Francis’ pointed questions:**
  - ☞ What is the purpose of our life in this world?
  - ☞ Why are we here?
  - ☞ What is the goal of our work and all of our efforts?
- ☞ **Consider you local area:** is there anyone I see in my daily surroundings that is vulnerable and desperate. How might my/our actions be able to make a difference?
- ☞ **Lack of affordable housing** is impacting increasing numbers of people in our midst: our own lay employees, teachers in our schools, the elderly in our midst. What more might we do to effect change through our advocacy and/or assistance?

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.