Laudato Sí – 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.