

Our Common Home

Dominican Sisters Conference ~ Engaging Laudato Si'



The Dominican Sisters Conference is happy to share this monthly study series that was prepared by the Earth Charter Implementation Committee (ECIC) of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael. We are grateful for the generosity of the ECIC in sharing the fruits of their study with all of us! We will also have these studies available on the DSC and Paris 2015 and Counting websites.

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]

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 —

- 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.

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.

October 11, 2016

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