

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 5: Lines of Approach & Action

Pope Francis offers us a **framework for dialogue and consensus building** based upon a conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home.

Major paths of dialogue which can help us escape the spiral of self-destruction follow. **Dialogue:**

~In the international community

- **Positive experiences** are characterized by a unanimity of goals, systems of reporting, standards and controls.
- **Failures** are determined by a lack of political will when nations place their interests above the common good, and when there is a
- **Lack of suitable mechanisms** for oversight, periodic review and penalties for non-compliance.
- Costs involved require developed countries to assist poorer ones by contributing/funding appropriate technologies.
- **Enforceable international agreements** are urgently needed.

~Between politics and the economy

- Efforts to promote a sustainable **use of natural resources** are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits.
- A matter of **redefining the notion of progress**: Can a technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life be considered progress?
- A strategy for real change calls for rethinking processes in their entirety. **A healthy politics needs to be able to take up this challenge.**

~Of religions with science

- Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world **if humanity loses its compass**, if we lose sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony.

Response - Reflect, Discuss, Pray, Act

- **The plight of the poor and the plight of the planet** flow from the same consumptive economic culture.

~For new national and local policies

- Local individuals and groups can make a real difference in shaping environmental decisions because of a greater sense of responsibility for the immediate environment and a strong sense of community.
- Results, even locally, take **time, energy and commitment**, as well as cultivating political will.
- In the absence of pressure from the public, political authorities focus on short-term gains which dominate present day economics and politics. **A healthy politics is sorely needed.**

~With transparency for decision-making

- Any given project, business proposal or policy must take into account in the beginning stages the environmental impact on planet and people.
- The local population should have a special place at the table.
- Decisions must be made based on the comparison of the risks and benefits foreseen for the various alternatives.

1. Francis speaks of the need for a global consensus for confronting problems. Discuss with others: Why is such a global consensus needed? And how might such a consensus be achieved?(164)
2. Identify the actions you can take on your local level to impact political decisions affecting your local community and the health of the environment. (179, 180)
3. Take 10 minutes at your next house meeting to reflect and share your thoughts on the following sections of Chapter 5:
 - What is your response to articles (189-190?)
 - What role does profit play in a robust economy?
 - How does "profit at any cost" contribute to the degradation of the environment? (199-201)