

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 6: Ecological Education and Spirituality

Pope Francis puts before us *“a great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge.” It requires “an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging and of a future to be shared with everyone. . . . It will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.”*

~Towards a new lifestyle

- Pope Francis challenges us to embark on new paths of **authentic freedom**, appealing to us to remember the dignity that is ours.
- Compulsive consumerism is one example of how the techno-economic paradigm leads people to believe they are free as long as they can consume.
- A consumerist lifestyle, when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction.
- Today the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle.

~Educating for the covenant between
humanity & the environment

~Civic and Political Love

- **Social love** moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a **“culture of care”** which permeates all of society.

Implications and Challenges

- Pope Francis turns to the closing of the **Earth Charter**: *“As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. . . . Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.”*
- **Pope Francis’ Prayer**: *“All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe. . . . Teach us to discover the worth of each being, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey toward your infinite light.”*

Response - Reflect, Discuss, Pray, Act

Reflect: *How can I encourage a “Culture of Care” in my community?*

- An awareness of the gravity of the cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into **new habits**.
- We are faced with an **educational challenge** for ourselves, our youth, and the entire human community, an education that seeks to establish harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and all living creatures. This educational effort is crucial to human survival.

~Ecological Conversion

- *“The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.”* For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound **interior conversion**.
- Such conversion rests in the conviction that God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore.

~Joy and Peace

- **Christian spirituality** proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little, knowing how to limit some needs and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer. An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with Creation and with the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us.

Action: Jot down one or two ways your own spirituality can or does motivate you to a more passionate concern for the protection of the world. What are those ways/concerns? Share your thoughts with another sister or friend.

Reflect: *Looking back over the entire Encyclical, what were its most striking points for you? What two or three key thoughts or insights do you take away from this study?*

Action: What action has this study led you to consider taking? Share this action, if you will, by sending it in to the Earth Committee by way of Sr. Colleen.

Action: Pray for ourselves that I/we will treat all Creation as Sacred!