

Living Social Justice.....Laudato Si

Autumn Focus: *Bringing a Theological Lens to Environmental Issues*

“ *Laudato Si*” brings a theological perspective to environmental issues. Dialogue on these issues has been framed mainly with political, scientific and economic language. With this encyclical the language of faith enters the discussion in a clear, decisive and systematic manner. It invites all to listen to a religious point of view, particularly its understanding of creation as a holy and precious gift from God to be revered by all men and women. Pope Francis at the beginning of “*Laudato Si*” provides an overview of the current environmental crisis and then combines Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching with the findings of experts in a variety of fields to reflect on modern day problems. He points especially to St. Francis of Assisi who shows how “inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace”. (10)

Ponder:

- Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself.(66)
- The responsibility for God’s earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world.(68)
- When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. The vision of “might is right” has engendered immense inequalities, injustices and acts of violence

against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful. Completely at odds with this model is the ideal of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus.(82)

- Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.(92)

Pray:

The Canticle of the Sun written by St. Francis of Assisi to deepen your spirit of relationship with and reverence for all of Creation. (Christian Prayer, pp. 2057-58)

Take a walk or gaze out your window to notice the special beauty of the autumn season and offer a spontaneous prayer of praise and gratitude throughout your experience.

Pay special attention to Psalms in the Liturgy of the Hours that Praise God the Creator. (Psalms 8, 65,104, 148, and others).

Practice:

Be attentive to recycling as much as possible. Don’t let convenience dominate your choices.

Notice the plant life in your home, appreciate it, increase it, and care for it.

Evaluate your daily practices and eliminate habits of wastefulness.