

BASIC COURSE ON “LAUDATO SI”

For the Formation of a Creation Care Team

We suggest that every member of your Creation Care Team have his/her own copy of “Laudato Si”. Have your own copy of this questionnaire in hand as you read through the encyclical and underline or highlight what you find that can answer each question in the paragraphs cited.

In your meetings each Team member can share his/her findings and contribute to the discussion by your Team.

STARTING SESSION:

Session One:

Introduction:

- 1-What does the title of the encyclical “*Laudato Si*” mean and where does it come from? (Paragraph 1)
- 2- Can you give one idea mentioned by: Pope John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI? (Par.s 3, 4, 5, and 6)
- 3- What did Patriarch Bartolomew say about contamination of our air, water and land? (Par. 8)
- 4- What did St. Francis see in nature and it’s creatures. (P. 12)
- 5- What teaching authority does an encyclical have? (15)

*Our objective and vision: What would you like to learn from “*Laudato Si*” and as a member of this Creation Care Team?*

Session Two:

Chapter I- “*What is Happening to our Common Home*”

- 1- What are some of the forms of pollution being caused by human activity and what causes it? (20, 22 & 23)
- 2- What does the melting of the polar ice cap mean and whom does it affect? (24 & 25)

- 3- What is meant by the loss of biodiversity? (33, 35, 38 & 41)
- 4-What are some of the chief contributors to the decline in the quality of human life? (43, 44, 47)
- 5- What effects does global inequality and food waste have on the population? (48, 49, 50 & 52)
- 6- What is the relationship between politics, economy and technology and what is the role of the church? (54 to 58)

Summary: “*What is Happening to Our Common Home*”

Session Three:

Chapter II- “*The Gospel of Creation*”

- 1-What role does faith play in a Christian’s responsibility toward creation and what disrupts this role? (64 & 66)
- 2- How does “Laudato Si” define the two mandates of the creator in Genesis 2, 15 “*tilling*” and “*keeping*”? (67)
- 3- What does the Bible mean by “tyrannical anthropocentrism”. (68)
- 4-Describe the difference between the business viewpoint of “other living beings” (non-human) and the viewpoint of Jesus? (82 & 87)
- 5- What are the inequalities that Pope Francis says should make us “indignant”? (90 & 91)
- 6- What is the “*golden rule*” governing all private property and what purpose does all private property serve? (93 & 95)

Summary: What is: “*The Gospel of Creation*”

Session Four:

Review:

- 1-What is your impression so far of “Laudato Si” or what thought or statement most struck you?

2- Looking at the CHECKLIST of things to do:

What thing or things on the list do you already do?

What new action can you commit to doing?

At the beginning of the next session have each person can explain how their new commitment is progressing.

Session Five:

Chapter III- *“The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis”*

1-What are the ‘primary causes’ of our ecological crisis? (101, 102 & 104)

2- What other factors must be employed so that human power produces positive developments? (105)

3- What is the principal motive of the technological way of thinking and what influence does that thinking bring? (106, 108 & 109)

4- Pope Francis recommends a “distinctive way of looking at things”. What makes up this mentality? (111 & 114)

5- How would you describe the difference between absolute dominion (anthropocentrism) and responsible stewardship? (116, 117, 118 & 119)

6- What are the effects of relativism on society and why is a cooperative a model to follow? (123, 123, 128 & 129)

Summary: What are *“The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis”*

Session Six:

Chapter IV- *“Integral Ecology”*

1-We humans are part of nature (creation) and Pope Francis says we have “one complex crisis” and must take an “integral approach” toward a solution: What does this integral approach include? (139)

- 2- What does a “*sustainable use*” ecosystems and why is protection of the environment a part of development? (140 & 141)
- 3- Why is our consumeristic vision of the global economy a threat to cultures, such as that of the indigenous? (144 & 145)
- 4-What is lacking in the current global system of development that leads to areas of poverty and how can city planning help? (149, 150 & 153)
- 5- Thinking that we have absolute power over our bodies leads to the thinking we also have absolute power over creation: What factors are missing to develop a positive and human ecology? (155)
- 6- Wat is the meaning of the “common good’ an why is sustainable development necessary for future generations? (156 & 159)

Summary: What is “*Integral Ecology*”

Session Seven:

REVIEW:

- What would you describe as the ROOTS of the ecological crisis (from chapter three)?
 - What are the elements of an INTEGRAL ECOLOGY (from chapter four)?
- Take another look at the CHECKLIST of “Things-To-Do” for possible actions in the parish or community.
- DISCUSS in group what possible action steps you could take as a Team in your parish or surrounding community.
- PLAN an activity and maybe take your next meeting to prepare materials and the role of each Team member in carrying out that activity.

Session Eight:

Chapter V- “*Lines of Approach and Action*”

- 1-Why is the fact that we are one people living in a common home a goal for reversing global warming? (164 & 167)

- 2- What countries put their national interests above the common good and therefore should take more of a responsibility for providing a solution to global warming and helping developing countries? (169, 170 & 172)
- 3- What are some of the global problems that make it difficult for nation states to achieve their political goals and require a world political authority? (173,174 & 175)
- 4-What role can cooperatives and citizens play in regard to political power, protecting the environment and controlling a consumeristic economy that harms the environment? (178, 179 & 181)
- 5- Given the dominance of technology and market forces over the economy and politics, what new type of thinking is needed and what is the role of Christians and the Church in this? (188, 189, 190 & 191)
- 6- When maximization of profits becomes the sole motive, what important concerns are forgotten to protect the common good of all of creation? (195, 196, 200 & 201)

Summary: What are some “*Lines of Approach and Action*”

Session Nine:

Chapter VI- “*Ecological Education and Spirituality*”

- 1-Beyond the challenge faces humanity what are some of the positive effects that a change in lifestyle can bring to our world? (202, 204, 206 & 208)
- 2- What are some of the steps to be taken as part of the educational challenge and what important message can families and the Church convey to form a new ecological citizenship? (209, 210, 211,213 & 214)
- 3- To practice new habits, what important conversion is needed first our and what individual actions are needed to realize a universal communion with our common family? (215, 216, 217, 219 & 220)
- 4-What attitudes or values does Christian spirituality and prayer teach us? (222, 223 & 227)

5- What mentality, virtue or principles does the Judeo-Christian tradition teach us about love for society, the common good leave and our lifestyles? (231, 232, & 237)

6- What does the relationship of the Trinity, Mary and Joseph as models teach us about global solidarity and our lives? (240, 241, & 242)

Summary: What is “*Ecological Education and Spirituality*”

Session Ten:

CONGRATULATIONS you have finished the basic learning course making you a Creation Care Leader.

You will receive a “Laudato Si” diploma and are now qualified to wear a Creation Care Leader button.

Possible follow-up steps:

-Recruit a new group and duplicate with them the basic course and form a new Creation Care Team.

-Consider writing an article for a local publication or for your parish bulletin.

-Make some telephone calls to local representatives regarding the declaration of an “environmental emergency” to lower fossil fuel emissions or organize a phone bank to do the same.

-Plan a walk or march with posters announcing sustainable practices.

-Visit as a group a local school or another church to encourage them to study and act to protect creation and our environment and to learn new initiative from their experiences.

-Plan a field trip to a conservatory, wetlands protection program, or a walk along a nature trail

-Ask other members of your CCT what activities they would like to organize or participate in, then plan an event.

CHECKLIST – INDIVIDUAL & COMMUNAL

Individual / Family I/we can make these changes in my life / my family's life:

- 1-**Increase efficiency:** Turn lights off or don't turn on if there is natural lighting. Replace inefficient light bulbs with LED or other efficient lighting. Consider insulation, more efficient windows or other home improvements. Conserve water.
- 2- **Eat wisely:** Buy organic and locally grown foods. Grow some of your own food. Home cook more meals. Eat low on the food chain – at least one meat-free meal a day – since 18% of greenhouse gas emissions come from meat and dairy production. Food writer Michael Pollan sums it up best: “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” Use less chemical fertilizers or sprays.
- 3- **Travel wisely:** ride your bike to local destinations, take public transit where possible, work from home, carpool, try a staycation, fly less. Buy an electric or hybrid car.
- 4- **Reduce waste:** Use washable dishes. Use a home filter instead of bottled water. Reduce food waste. Choose products with less packaging. Recycle paper, plastics, bottles and aluminum cans. Buy only what I need: food, clothing, furniture, technology etc. Rid of Styrofoam, and I use plastics use paper.
5. **Conserve water** by taking shorter showers, planting a “desert” garden, or using artificial turf
6. **Go renewable:** Consider rooftop solar, solar hot water, or other renewable choices.
- 7- **Talk to friends,** colleagues and family about what you are doing to pollute less and be sustainable.

School, Parish or Community:

We can join with others in our school, parish or community to advocate for or make these changes:

- 1-**Educate** congregation and community members – which areas do you want to go deeper into? Refer folks to an appropriate speaker or guest preacher. Teach school students of the need to conserve energy and natural resources.
- 2- **Use prayer** as a sacred moment to reflect on the oneness of creation; water, earth and sun. Form an ecological spirituality: we are one family in a common home. Ask parishioners to sign St. Francis Pledge.
- 3- **Increase efficiency:** Inventory energy use and explore opportunities for efficiency, such as efficient lighting, insulation, windows, and low flush toilets.
- 4- **Go renewable:** Encourage rooftop solar for your facility. Repair, Reuse or Recycle (the 3 R's).
- 5- **Encourage** low-carbon snacks and meals; less red meat and fried food, more fruit and vegetables.
- 6- **Organize** car pools for community meetings and activities and include transit information in event directions. Organize workshops or a study group on “Laudato Si: and a Creation Care Team in the parish.
7. **Meet or correspond with** people from other schools, or communities to learn and share activities.
- 8- **Join** fund or support a local community group working on climate change and sustainability.

“Live simply, that others may simply live”