



Resource Guide

LAUDATO SI'



School Sisters of Notre Dame



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WHAT IS LAUDATO SI'?

Laudato Si' is the name of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical published in 2015 that has inspired and urged the world's Catholics and all people of good will to take urgent action to address the climate emergency and ecological crisis, to protect the poor and future generations. The earth is being assaulted, the climate is in crisis, greenhouse gases are warming earth at an alarming rate, and everyone is affected, particularly the poor and marginalized.

Although the climate emergency is a human-made problem, we have the resources to take action. By making changes to our daily actions and decisions, we can protect our common home and future generations.



“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

-Pope Francis (LS #139)



Ecological Conversion

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis identifies our current ecological crisis as a “summons to profound interior conversion.” What everyone needs, he writes, is an “‘ecological conversion,’ whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (LS 217). In essence, ecological conversion is not just changing our actions, but changing our hearts to where we see the intimate connection between God and all beings so we can more readily listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

According to laudatosimovement.org, an ecological conversion involves four steps:

1. Recognizing that we have harmed creation
2. Repentance and turning to the Creator
3. Commitment to change and becoming good stewards of creation
4. Community conversion

Ecological conversion takes place at the personal level, but as Pope Francis notes, a community conversion is equally important: “Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion” (LS 219). *Laudato Si'* is not just an encyclical; it is a movement.



How is Laudato Si' connected to...

Catholicism

Care of God's Creation is one of the seven key themes of Catholic Social Teaching. We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored. (Text drawn from United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

God created the world and entrusted it to us as a gift. Now we have the responsibility to care for and protect it and all people, who are part of creation. Protecting human dignity is strongly linked to care for creation.

School Sisters of Notre Dame

The School Sisters of Notre Dame has a long history of working for the care of creation and protecting the poor and marginalized. In May 2021, SSND made the following commitment:

The Triune God impels us into the heart of the world to be women of peace, hope, and love. As a Laudato Si' congregation, we embark on a seven-year journey towards an integral ecology. In fidelity to our charism and the mission to bring all to oneness, we commit to live more simply, responsibly, and sustainably and to educate, advocate and act in collaboration with others for the dignity of life and the care of all creation. Called to live our mission prophetically, we School Sisters of Notre Dame live and minister with the conviction that the world can be changed through the transformation of persons.

The commitment is not a new direction. It is a clear reflection of existing SSND values and priorities rooted in *You Are Sent*, the Constitution of the School Sister of Notre Dame, and *Love Gives Everything*, the directional statement from the most recent General Chapter. It builds upon actions SSND has already taken and deepens the desire and commitment to live ever more simply, responsibly and sustainably.

"As members of an international congregation, we recognize our obligation and opportunities to develop a world vision and a sense of global responsibility."

~ *You Are Sent*, C 26



Laudato Si' Action Platform

In response to Pope Francis' call for healing of our relationship with God, our neighbors and our Earth, the Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP) was developed. This seven-year journey to global sustainability and spiritual conversion offers resources to help organizations all over the world and “all men and women of good will” to generate plans to accomplish the seven Laudato Si' Goals.

These holistic goals reflect the gamut of Catholic social teaching. Each goal focuses on sustainability — meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs; maintaining the conditions under which all the earth's communities exist in right relationship with one another.



01. Response to the Cry of the Earth

A call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.

examples: adoption of renewable energies and energy sufficiency measures, achieving carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture, and guaranteeing access to clean water for all.



02. Response to the Cry of the Poor

A call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth.

examples: projects to promote solidarity, with special attention given to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, and children at risk, analysis and improvement of social systems, and social service programs



03. Ecological Economics

Acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home.

examples: sustainable production and consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any activity harmful to the planet and the people, supporting circular economies, and prioritizing care labor and protecting the dignity of workers



04. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.

examples: reducing waste and recycling, opting for a more plant-based diet and reducing meat consumption, greater use of public transport, active mobility (walking, cycling), and avoiding single-use items



05. Ecological Education

Re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.

examples: ensuring equitable access to education for all and promoting human rights, fostering Laudato Si' themes within the community, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities



06. Ecological Spirituality

Springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things,” both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.

examples: promoting creation-based liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats and formation programs



07. Community Resilience and Empowerment

Envision a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

examples: promoting advocacy and developing people's campaigns, encouraging rootedness and a sense of belonging in local communities and neighborhood ecosystems



The most vulnerable

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE



The effects of climate change disproportionately impact the poor and marginalized even though they are the least responsible for causing changes to the environment. These underserved communities have the fewest resources to prepare or adapt for climate disasters and similarly, limited ability to recover from them.

Families living in poverty typically live in undesirable locations due to climate hazards (threat of mudslides, flooding, extreme heat). Climate change has the potential to worsen their situation because they lack the resources to move to safer areas. Furthermore, extreme weather events can make it more difficult to grow food which can also cause prices to increase. Unusual weather patterns can also reduce access to drinking water.



Improve Your Climate Change Vocabulary

Integral ecology

Emphasizes the deep connections between our relationships with each other and God as members of His One Body, as well as all creation. Recognizing the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world.

Ecological conversion

A transformation of heart and mind, leading to authentic changes in the way we live and behave. While it is easy to change one's mind, changing one's heart refers to the source of our decisions, passions and motivations.

Carbon footprint

Total amount of greenhouse gas (including carbon dioxide and methane) emissions caused by our actions.

Sustainability

The ability to create and support the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations.

Climate change

Long-term change in average weather patterns and global climate conditions, caused mainly by human activities.

Environmental degradation

The deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil. The five most common forms of environmental degradation are deforestation, rising sea levels, desertification and drought, land degradation, and finally, water and air degradation.

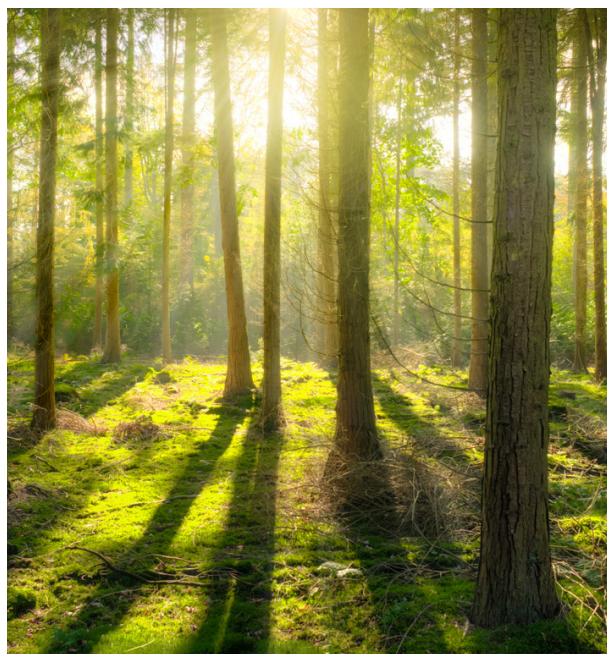




TAKING ACTION

While individual actions are important, they are not enough. True change requires collaborative systemic engagement to make a difference. Here are some ways you can take action right where you are:

- Changes to lifestyle and consumption habits
 - Avoid single-use items
 - Be more conscious of water usage and waste disposal
 - Eat a meat-free meal at least once a week. Or better yet, consider a flexitarian (limited inclusion of meat) or vegetarian lifestyle.
 - Choose food from local sources and eat seasonal produce as much as possible.
- Make changes institutionally at your parish, school or workplace
- Support local efforts to solve environmental problems
- Raise awareness, including your own, about the interconnectedness of the health of the planet and that of humanity.
- Contact your Members of Congress or Members of Parliament (advocacy)
 - Use SSND's Voter Voice tool



Integral Vision Series

Woven throughout the SSND constitution, *You Are Sent*, as well as *Love Gives Everything*, the Directional Statement of the 24th General Chapter, is an invitation to oneness. As we engage intentionally in contemplative dialogue we incorporate Congregation-wide theological reflection, contemplative dialogue, visual and verbal input, discussion, dialogue, and discernment. Each video includes reflection resources. Each phase of reflection builds upon those preceding.

<https://atlanticmidwest.org/integral-vision-series>



Pope Francis

PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.



RESOURCES

Websites

SSND Laudato Si' website: <https://ssnd.org/shalom/laudato-si/>

- Atlantic-Midwest Province: <https://atlanticmidwest.org/laudato-si-congregation>
- Central Pacific Province: *coming soon*
- Province of Africa: <https://africassnd.org/about-us/shalom/care-of-all-creation-laudato-si>

Laudato Si' encyclical:

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Laudato Si' Action Platform: <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/about/>

SSND commitment to Laudato Si': <https://gerhardinger.org/ministry/global/shalom-networkjp/c/commitment-to-the-laudato-si-action-platform/>

Reflection on Laudato Si' goals: <https://atlanticmidwest.org/posts/reflections-laudato-si-goals>

Laudato Si' discussion guide: <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-discussion-guide.pdf>

Laudato Si' movement: <https://laudatosimovement.org/>

Catholic Climate Covenant: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

LCWR Global Concerns Committee:

<https://lcwr.org/resources/publications/climate-change-we-must-change>

Top 10 takeaways from Laudato Si': <https://ssnd.org/shalom/laudato-si/>

Videos

Integral ecology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TReVkrHEV8>

Ecological conversion: <https://eco-catholic.com/ecological-conversion>

The Letter: <https://www.theletterfilm.org/watch/>

