

Celebrating the Year of Laudato Si'!

“*Living Laudato Si'*” is an invitation from the Integral Ecology Working Group to CLC members to nurture a deeper awareness of our interconnectedness as the Body of Christ as we take practical steps of realizing this discerned frontier area of mission.

In using the phrase *integral ecology* in *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis was raising our awareness that the environmental crisis is not simply about non-human creation, but one complex social and ecological crisis that concerns every aspect of our lives. It is a building up of the Body of Christ.

Action for environmental justice needs to arise from a deep sense of connectedness with all of creation, a oneness. From this awareness arises a clearer vision of how we are to respond. We begin to see ourselves as active participants in the Body of Christ. Until we have some sense that what goes on in the Amazon has an impact on us and that our choices have an impact on the Amazon — or the Arctic, or the ocean, or the air — we will not have the context needed to make discerned choices.

We hope *Living Laudato Si'* offers suggestions for living this out together as a national CLC and beyond. There are three steps: Deepening, Sharing, Going Forth.

Deepening: Even in normal times, we often feel disconnected from nature. Our food comes wrapped in plastic or cardboard, and little resembles the fresh produce taken from the ground. The neighborhoods we live in are lawn monocultures. The air we breathe and water we drink don't reflect the freshness found in mountains and streams. We are often unaware of the environmental and social impact so many of the products we use have. In this time of pandemic, we may feel even more isolated from nature since we may be limited to being indoors. For some looking out our window is as close to nature as we can get.

But “*Living Laudato Si'*” is an invitation that despite the limitations, we make the opportunity to connect with creation. If we can't actually get outdoors, perhaps there is a potted plant you enjoy, a beloved pet, a favorite tree outside the window, birds, squirrels or butterflies that you can reflect with.

Sharing: “*Living Laudato Si'*” also invites you to share this with others—your CLC, your parish, friends, other residents in your building. Some resources for this are listed, but there are many others available. Perhaps you can connect with a local group. Included in this section is a card that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has put out that can be printed out and shared. *Spiritual Conversations* is a guide for specific meeting agenda that can help local CLC groups take this to the next step and respond in some concrete way.

Going Forth: The final step is discerned communal action and we've provided a way for us to share in an interactive way these actions with one another across the country.

This coronavirus epidemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have revealed how interconnected we are. May we as discerning communities read the signs of the times and respond in ways that work to build the Body of Christ.