Dear Brother Priests and Deacons:

One year ago, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, issued his historic encyclical, Laudato Si, calling on every person in the world to act now to care for Creation. He acknowledged that global warming and climate change are real, and that they are caused by human beings. He said that all life systems are now threatened and asked each one of us to join together to protect the earth. And, he said that the poor are already suffering the most from the impacts of climate change, making this an issue of justice.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I invite your parish to answer the call made by our Holy Father on behalf of all life on earth. We are offering a concrete program that will help parishes, families, and our tri-county area of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito participate in hopeful, inspiring, and practical activities.

“As stewards of God’s creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling.” - Pope Francis

This is our common home. We, as people of God and in Jesus’s name, must protect it from ourselves.

It is with this in mind that I invite you to actively participate in supporting the creation of ‘Green Teams’ within your parishes. These teams will take on the task of helping and inspiring parishioners and the parishes themselves to reduce their electricity consumption, live more simply and sustainably, and move towards the use of renewable energy. Lowering carbon levels is now imperative to protect the earth.

In support of this, the Diocese of Monterey is working with the Romero Institute to host a training and inspiration event on Sunday, July 17th at Resurrection Church in Aptos from 12pm until 4pm. The day will be focused on providing attendees with the knowledge and inspiration they need to take immediate steps to answer Pope Francis’s call in their parishes and their own lives. We would like to invite you to join us in ushering in a new era of green community culture where our parishes become a guiding light in sustainable, eco-friendly living.

As we prepare for this historic launch event on July 17th I would like to introduce you to our partner non-profit organization - The Romero Institute (www.romeroinstitute.org). The Romero Institute is on the steering committee of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), a group that was instrumental in getting 1.8 million signatures, including Pope Francis’s, to the Paris climate change talks last year. The Romero Institute will be assisting...
parishes with the Green Team formation process and will be available to advise each of you on what next steps you can take.

An advisor from Romero will be contacting you shortly to arrange a meeting with your leaders to answer any questions you might have on “going green” and on the July 17 inspirational training event.

Please expect to receive posters/flyers to advertise the formation of Green Teams and the July 17th event within the next few weeks.

My representative for environmental justice issues is Deacon Warren Hoy, Director of Family Life and Social Concerns. Please contact him with any questions or ideas you may have, at (831) 645-2845 or whoy@dioceseofmonterey.org.

With deep appreciation for your service to our Diocesan community and to our Common Home, our planet Earth.

Mercy and kindness,

+ Most Reverend Richard J. Garcia, DD
Bishop of the Diocese of Monterey