

CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

LAUDATO SI WEEK 2021

We are within the Laudato Si Week 2021 running from 16th to 25th May. In this week we celebrate the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion. The title of Pope Francis' encyclical, "Laudato Si', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord," is the often repeated refrain by St. Francis in his *Canticle of the Creatures*. This encyclical has come at this critical time, not only for our planet, but for its people as well. In this encyclical the Holy Father brings the following remarks:

"A sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly."

We seem certainly cannot substitute the created beauty of the earth with what we create with our technologies. We, the people of faith must rally behind the Pope because there are a lot of people of good will out there who will join in to find solutions for the damage we have done to the planet. Pope Francis had only added a significant, voice to the many others who have been critical of our destructive models of industrial production and consumption. As a result of industrial production havoc has arisen upon the very systems that support life on the planet. His encyclical introduces a uniquely spiritual perspective, one that identifies the planet as a sacred reality to be protected and cared for as our common home. Combating poverty in the world must be integrated with the protection and restoration of the natural order. We cannot not properly address the groans of society if we do not listen to the groans of the earth.

The pope draws us to see where we have gone wrong, and how we might go right. He describes how we forget that we are not gods; we try to control everything ourselves. The world is not there for us to manipulate. Laudato Si' reminds us insistently that 'everything is interconnected.' We have learnt that lesson from biologists: ecology is the science of the interconnectedness of life. The recent popes have taught that there is also a human, social ecology; and that this is inseparable from natural ecology. Indeed, a healthy personal and social morality, economics, politics and finance are all intermeshed with the well-being of the environment. Laudato Si' calls us to action. But before all else, we need 'ecological conversion', an inner, spiritual confession of sin, responsibility, praise and gratitude that changes our attitude and transforms our practice. This is indeed challenging. It calls for living more lightly and more generously. We Catholics should be inspired by, not ashamed, of our

faith. It gives us all that we need to live lightly on the planet.... Let us pay attention to a moral tradition that honours simplicity, justice, unselfishness and peace. In our small ways we can contribute to saving the planet. We cannot do this by ourselves. We don't need to. We are not alone. We are interconnected, with God, with each other and with our world.