

Dear Reader

Laudato Si' week - 16-24th 2020

Laudato Si' week, May 16 -24th, is fast approaching. It is an opportune time for us, during 'social distancing', to revisit Laudato Si' on its 5th anniversary. In the encyclical, Pope Francis urges us to hear the cry of the poor, the cry of the earth and to respond to the ecological crisis. His reminder that everything is connected should impel us to engage with the document and take what small steps we can, to conserve the earth – our common home. The mandate to 'stay at home' could give us ample scope to do just that. Attached please find a pack that may encourage your exploration.

May it be a rewarding experience.

Anna Byrne – Daughter of Charity.

Time to Remember and Implement Laudato Si' – on its 5th anniversary

The earth our common home is suffering. Misuse, often through lack of reverence and thought, has impelled us to seek profit rather than to care for God's earth - our most precious gift. We have taken our beautiful home for granted which in the words of Pope Francis is 'looking more and more like an immense pile of filth' (Paragraph 20). May 24th this year marks the 5th anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si'*. This encyclical has contributed considerably to the Church's social teaching 'on care for our common home.' Jeffery Sachs called it a 'great and timely gift to humanity'¹ and Pope Francis called for a prompt and global response. Unfortunately, our response over the five years has been neither prompt nor globalised. Surely, now is our opportunity when coping with the Covid-19 imposed restrictions and the frequent reminders that we can expect a very different world, to 'seek a new beginning' and encourage a culture of care for the earth. This will involve above all responding to the cries of people struggling with poverty because of global economics.

Laudato Si' is a long but rewarding read. The first part outlines how and why our earth and the majority of its population are suffering. The content is underpinned by modern science- lending credibility to the discussion. Having outlined the suffering of 'our common home' the Pope encourages us to own up to and take responsibility for our part in causing the suffering. In conclusion the encyclical introduces 'integral ecology' (225) as a way of highlighting the unique place of humans within creation. Being in that unique place Pope Francis challenges us to renew our lifestyles in harmony with God, our fellow humans and nature.

This time of 'social distancing' gives us ample opportunity to celebrate the anniversary of the document and 'to seek a new beginning' by embracing some habits suggested by Pope Francis. These suggestions range from a way of achieving inner peace (227) and to reviving the practice of praying 'the grace before meals' (227) as a way of being more aware of food as a gift from God. We are reminded, in paragraph 206, that 'purchasing is always a moral - and not simply economic -act' and that 'less is more', a value cherished in many religious traditions.(222) Paragraphs 228 and 231 provide an excellent discussion of fraternal and social love. The themes mentioned here are intended merely to whet the appetite and give a flavour of the many aspects explored in *Laudato Si'*. It is, perhaps, one of the most accessible and practical documents to come from the Vatican. The encyclical and study guides, available on the web, support the reading of what is a most encouraging and enlightening read. Enjoy!

Anna Byrne, Daughter of Charity, Chaplain in St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast. Sister Anna sees this time as a valuable opportunity to ensure that Laudato Si' is revisited and actioned.

¹ Sachs, Jeffery D, in America Magazine 06.07.2015

BEFRIEND 'SOCIAL DISTANCING' WITH POPE FRANCIS



On May 24th, five years ago Pope Francis wrote a letter- *Laudato Si'* - encouraging us to take care of our common home– the earth. Today, we in Northern Ireland like many people in the world are coping with the Covid -19 pandemic. We are at home because of the virus and many of our shops and businesses are closed with our families and friends working from home or have no work. The message in the letter, Pope Francis sent us five years ago, was **'to seek a new beginning'** – a good idea surely to help us cope in our present situation!

A 1. Being Happy during Social Distancing- 'less is more'



Rose Wong (in the Atlantic)

1. During 'social distancing' what activities shown in the cartoon are helping you to take care of yourself? List other activities that you are doing to help yourself? List them in order of your preference.
2. In what ways are these activities making you feel happy?

"Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession of consumption it is the conviction that 'less is more'. Laudato Si' Paragraph 222

A 2. Restrictions on social contacts and not going places can help us to develop the habit of being happy with less



During 'Social Distancing' shopping centres not are not open, going to the cinema is not possible, neither is spending time in Cafés with friends or team sports– yet feeling happy and content is possible.

1. What positive things are you doing that help you feel happy and grateful?
2. List these things in order of your preference. Identify one good habit that you will carry with you when 'social distancing' ends?
3. Write a letter to Pope Francis and/or a local newspaper explaining how 'social distancing' has given you an opportunity to put in place a 'new beginning' for yourself.

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'SHOWING CARE FOR OTHERS' WITH POPE FRANCIS



In *Laudato Si'* – the letter that written by Pope Francis – the Pope asks us to show care for others – to recognise that we need one another and that we all need to encourage a 'culture of care'. Pope Francis calls this 'social love'. Even making small gestures to show our thanks to others helps to build a better world. The Covid -19 pandemic is causing us to think of others who are working to keep our hospitals and health services open, to look after and care for those who are ill. Pope Francis invites us **'to seek a new beginning'** – by showing care for others.

B1. During Social Distancing our well – being depends on others.



TEXT JAYNE MANFREDI

CartoonChurch.com

Look at each of the beatitudes above.

Which beatitude best represents you?

- 1 How are your actions during 'social distancing' helping others?
- 2 Who is helping you and how are their actions helping you?
- 3 Draw and label two other 'beatitudes' that you could add to the diagram above.

"We must regain the connection that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for othersand that being good and decent are worth it" paragraph 229
"Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care is also civic and political and makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world" paragraph 231

B2. Being grateful to others can help us to develop 'social love'.



1. Each Thursday during our 'social distancing' at 8pm we share a positive gesture showing thanks to the NHS. What other gestures are communities in Belfast making?
2. What positive gestures can I take to show my gratitude and care to those that I share my home with/live with?
3. What positive gestures can I take to show my gratitude and care to one person outside my family that I depend on – this could be in school/ shops/ or my community.
4. Choose one meal today list others who made your meal possible – start with the growing of the food itself. Take a few minutes to say thank you.
5. Write a 5 - point plan of how you will put in place a habit- a 'new beginning' – to show how you will thank others going forward.

"We must regain the connection that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for othersand that being good and decent are worth it" paragraph 229
"Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care is also civic and political and makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world" paragraph 231

BEFRIENDING PLANET EARTH WITH POPE FRANCIS



May 2020 will be remembered for Covid-19 and its impact on our community. The 'stay at home' rule means that we have time to notice more, to appreciate more and this includes nature and our surroundings. In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis suggests that if we really see the beauty in nature then we will do all in our power to protect it. Both the smallest plant and animal, part of our common home, are a source of 'wonder and awe'. This time of 'social distancing,' difficult as it is for many, allows us some time to reflect and **'to seek a new beginning'**, and take more care of the earth.

C 1. Caring for planet earth while 'Social Distancing'



Lord, purge our eyes to see
within the seed a tree,
within the glowing egg a bird,
Within the shroud a butterfly.
Till taught by such, we see
Beyond all creatures Thee.

Christina Rosetti.

Look and See

This morning, at waterside, a sparrow flew
to a water rock and landed, by error, on the back
of an eider duck; lightly it fluttered off, amused.
The duck, too, was not provoked, but, you might say, was
laughing.

This afternoon a gull sailing over
our house was casually scratching
its stomach of white feathers with
one pink foot as it flew.

Oh Lord, how shining and festive is your gift to us, if we
only look, and see. Mary Oliver

1. Study the picture and the poems. What are they saying to you about our planet?
2. Notice something beautiful locally, e.g. - bird, dog/cat, tree/ flower, butterfly. Take photographs/make a video clip, include some music or birdsong for the background. Describe how this exercise helps you appreciate God's creation.

"Only by cultivating sound virtues(habits) will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment." Paragraph 211, "... these efforts ... benefit society ... and often unbeknown to us ...tend to spread." Paragraph 212

C 2. Social distancing is giving us time to examine our lifestyles.

“The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like and immense pile of filth. ... our once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish.” Paragraph 21



1. What is the 'Normal' suggested in the diagram?
2. Why does it suggest that we should not go back to this 'Normal'?
3. A 'new beginning', a new 'Normal' is needed. Pick one aspect of your lifestyle e.g. use of electricity and mobile phones, clothes and cosmetics shopping. How could you change your usual habit to lessen the burden on the planet and to live a lifestyle more in balance with nature.
4. What we do impacts on the environment and lives of people in other countries. Research one of the following (1) dumping of waste in developing countries, (2) child labour in cheap clothing factories in developing countries. Design a poster/collage to urge your friends to live a life that takes better care of our common home and encourages responsible co-operation.

Now make the Links

Look back on your three Reflections 1. Befriend Social distancing
2. Showing care for others 3. Befriending Planet Earth Write an article for a Magazine/Newspaper on one aspect of Laudato Si' that will stay with you after this experience of 'Social Distancing.' is over.
The Read More section may help you with this.

“Only by cultivating sound virtues(habits) will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment.” Paragraph 211, “... these efforts ... benefit society ... and often unbeknown to us ...tend to spread.” Paragraph 212

Read More – Laudato Si’ Week May 16-24th 2020

‘May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope’ (Paragraph 244)

1. 2020 the year to stop and make us think
<http://youtu.be/Nw5KQMXDiM4>
2. We have unfortunately allowed plastic, in particular, to come into our lives, *‘almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door.’* Laudato Si’ (Paragraph 112)



3. Song : ‘Who’s gonna stand up? (And save the earth)’ Neil Young

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkiRR3T_3NY

4. A Readers Guide to Laudato Si’
<file:///C:/Users/Owner/Desktop/A%20Readers%20Guide%20to%20Laudato%200Si.pdf>

5. Further quotations from Pope Francis in ‘Laudato Si’

Together we can solve the problem

‘Everything in the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.’ (Paragraph 92)



The earth’s resources are for all

Whether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. (Paragraph 93)

We humans and other creatures depend on each other

Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other. (Paragraph 86)

The Church has two duties to care for nature and protect humans from themselves

The work of the Church seeks not only to remind everyone of the duty to care for nature, but at the same time “she must above all protect mankind from self-destruction.” (Paragraph 79)

The well-being of all is dependent on each one of us living a balanced lifestyle

Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good... because it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. (Paragraph 225)

*‘May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away
the joy of our hope.’* (Paragraph 244)