



Where Justice and Truth Meet

September 2016

“Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion” ([Laudato Si'](#), 228)



Season of Creation

The Season of Creation is a month-long prayerful observation of the state of the world, its beauty and the ecological crises that threaten it and all its inhabitants. It runs from September 1, the World Day of Prayer for Creation, through October 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

In his [message for the World Day of Prayer for Creation](#) on September 1, Pope Francis asks Christians to add two new works of mercy related to care for the environment to the traditional [corporal and spiritual works of mercy](#):

Let me propose a complement to the two traditional sets of seven: may the works of mercy also include care for our common home... As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a “grateful contemplation of God’s world” ([Laudato Si'](#), 214) which “allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us” (LS 85). As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” and “makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world” (LS 230-31).

Fr. Frédéric Fornos, international director of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, noted that [prayer is essential to the Season of Creation](#). “Changing our lifestyle is not enough, because change requires a deep conversion. It is the prayer, closeness to Jesus, ... which can transform our hearts and our lives and help us to live everyday” with simplicity and solidarity.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, at a Vatican press conference presenting Francis’ message, said the pontiff is calling people around the world to “take a long and hard look at our lifestyles” and to recognize individual and institutional failings.

This call echoes our Springfield Dominican [2014 General Chapter statement](#) in which we call ourselves “*with profound gratitude and deep interior purpose, [to] choose to live sustainably in order to further the mission and to cultivate right relationship with all God’s creation.*”

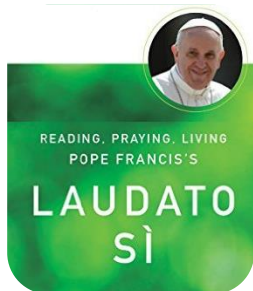
In a concrete step to fulfill that Chapter mandate, at our recent General Assembly in June of 2016, we committed to the [Paris Pledge](#) as a congregation: to reduce our carbon footprint by 50% by 2030 and to set a goal of being carbon neutral by 2050. In the coming year we will be making efforts to calculate our collective carbon footprint as well as continuing efforts to reduce our carbon pollution.



“I urgently appeal... for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.”

#LaudatoSi

Resources for further study and reflection in this Season of Creation



Fr. Jim Hug, SJ offers a beautiful [reflection on the scriptures](#) in light of *Laudato Si* and a reminder of the need to develop liturgical resources that nourish a spirituality of care for creation.



[Sisters of Earth](#), an informal network of women who share a deep concern for the ecological and spiritual crises of our times and who wish to support one another in work toward healing the human spirit and restoring Earth's life support systems, held an [international conference](#) in July 2016. Medical Mission Sr. Birgit Weiler, who teaches at the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University in Lima, Peru, and works with the Awajún and Wampi tribes of the Amazon, spoke about the colonial mindsets still very present today: that individuals can own land and that good use of land is to extract resources from it.



A bill to improve climate change literacy was introduced this summer in the U.S. Senate by Senator Ed Markey (D-MA). The ["Climate Change Education Act"](#) would

educate students and the general public on the causes and consequences of climate change, as well as solutions like clean energy. The Climate Change Education Act was introduced on the first-year anniversary of Pope Francis's historic environmental encyclical. When he introduced the Act, Senator Markey said, "Not only must we act here at home to directly address the carbon pollution causing climate change, but we must encourage a national discussion, especially with our youth, about how we can reduce our carbon footprint and serve as stewards of our environment."

Pulitzer Prize-nominated reporting shows that [Exxon has known](#) that burning oil and gas causes catastrophic climate change as far back as 1977. But by the 1990s, Exxon had started funding climate disinformation at a massive scale—an approach many have likened to the lies spread by the tobacco industry regarding the health risks of smoking. Both industries were conscious that their products wouldn't stay profitable once the world understood the risks.



At Exxon's annual meeting in Dallas in May, [Anna Kalinsky](#), granddaughter of former Exxon scientist James Black, questioned CEO Rex Tillerson about Exxon's history of denial of climate change. Her grandfather warned company executives about the risks of climate change and fossil fuels in 1977.



The Catholic Health Association (CHA) devoted the May-June 2016 issue of its [Health Progress](#) magazine to the issue of climate change as a critical health issue. [A Call to Climate Leadership](#), calls for healthcare leaders to



recognize that the hospital community is uniquely positioned to tackle climate change as the greatest global health threat of our time. Recognizing that climate change has a severe, detrimental impact on human health and the natural world that sustains life, they point out that our understanding of climate change must move away from being a partisan issue to one of health. "The concept of health care needs to go far beyond treating a patient. Patient-centered care is whole person care that necessarily must include care of communities and the environment. It recognizes the exquisite connection between human health and the health of the Earth community."