

1 July 2022

JPIC: LOVE THE LORD, LOVE HIS KINGDOM, LOVE THE EARTH

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Saint Francis and in Christ,

May the Lord Give You Peace. Our Franciscan love includes encouraging and nurturing each other as we live out the beautiful vocation to which we have been called, to the Way of Life that our Beloved Saint gave us, as we follow him to the feet of our Lord. This month, let us join our hearts, thoughts, and hands to Reflect, Act, and Pray on Earth Justice.

Reflect: We are blessed to be Franciscan during this time in our world's history. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, chose to hear God's directive to call himself the name of our own Saint and to fashion his ministry inspired by Saint Francis. And, of course, as we know, Saint Francis is the patron saint of ecology. Therefore, it does not surprise us that one of Pope Francis' key encyclicals over the last years has *been Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. Many in our fraternities have studied this amazing document which calls us to recognize and acknowledge the human origins of the ecological crisis and transform our way of life from one in which we "use" the earth, to one in which we become good stewards of the earth, one in which we exploit the poor, to one in which we hear their cries. In our Franciscan language, we are called to be in universal kinship with all that lives. So, dear sisters and brothers, let us continue to reflect upon the words of the encyclical and act in keeping with its directives, deepening our commitment to our Franciscan life.

Act: It is quite overwhelming to think about how one individual can contribute to the climate crisis. However, we also know that is what we are called to do so we step out in faith, faith in action. There are so many possibilities. I will only mention a few. We know that plastics have served us in growing our modern way of life and we also know that it is time to put them away. They no longer serve the greater good. May all of us join together in giving up our convenient, yet eco-unfriendly water plastic water bottles and carry our own water in non-plastic containers. Although it may not seem like much to do, it is estimated that we in the U.S. throw away sixty million plastic water bottles a day. Many of these go into the landfill. Holding our own water bottles in our hands will serve to remind us to honor the earth.

Many among us have started composting. It is really quite easy to do, and California is making it easier all the time by including compost materials in our waste collection. Let us join together in some simple yet profound statements of our love for the earth. Please see the attached handout, beautifully prepared by Barbara Courtois.

Pray: We are blessed that on October 8 we will gather to pray, reflect, and consider how we can Live and Lead Laudato Si as part of a larger initiative with the OFMs in our region. Brother Keith Warner, a professor, and expert in Laudato Si is convening us at Mission San Luis Rey to reflect as a Franciscan family how we can

advance the directives set forth by the Holy Father, Pope Francis. Mark your calendars and your hearts as we gather to pray, reflect, and plan actions to honor Sister Mother Earth.

I will end with excerpts from “A Prayer for Our Earth” found at the end of Laudato Si.’ So many blessings to all of you.

Peace and All Good,
Patricia Grace, OFS
JPIC Animator St. Francis Region

A Prayer for Our Earth

All powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
And in the smallest of our creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
That we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
As brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
So precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
That we may protect the world and not prey on it,
That we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
At the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
To be filled with awe and contemplation,
To recognize that are profoundly united with every creature
As we journey toward your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love, and peace.

Amen