Reflection on Acting on Laudato Si' – Sr Marie

Opening words: This week, we have a transcript. We have attached some pictures/ resources to help you in your meditation. If you are meditating alone but would like to feel 'with us' we meditate at 7.30pm on Wednesday in our homes during this time of pandemic. The tradition we meditate in is Centring Prayer which is fully inclusive of all traditions of Christian Meditation and welcoming of World Traditions.

Welcome to Christian Meditation in the Centring Prayer Tradition: A very warm welcome from Fiona, Marie, Rob, Hazel and Paul, the leaders of the Christian Meditation group at Wisdom Centre, Romsey. The whole session is about 50 minutes. We meditate beginning with an opening prayer followed by reflections and then 25 minutes of silence. We hope you enjoy your meditation with us.

Opening Prayer: *Eternal God,* through our meditation may the ears of our hearts be attentive to your Word. May we seek and find You. Awakened to Your presence may we be joyful, embodying peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-awareness. May we follow Your teaching, seeking also, the wisdom of the Holy Fathers and Mothers. May we, therefore, commit to community, love of earth, peace and justice making. **Amen**

Introduction:
On 24 May 2015 Pope Francis' document Laudato Si', the watershed encyclical letter that called the world's attention to the increasingly precarious state of our common home, was published. Last year, which was five years on, the encyclical appeared ever more relevant. The multiple "cracks in the planet that we inhabit" (LS, 163), from the melting ice caps in the Arctic to the raging wildfires in the Amazon, from extreme weather patterns around the world to unprecedented levels of loss of biodiversity that sustain the very fabric of life, are too evident and detrimental to be ignored any more. Pope Francis' prophetic words continue to ring in our ears: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (LS, 160) The poor communities around the world are already the early and disproportionate victims of the current ecological degradation and we cannot remain indifferent any longer to the increasingly desperate "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS, 49). The fifth anniversary of the encyclical came in the midst of another watershed moment - a global pandemic - and Laudato Si's message was just as prophetic as it was in 2015. The encyclical can indeed provide the moral and spiritual compass for the journey to create a more caring, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world. We have, in fact, a unique opportunity to transform the present groaning and travail into the birth pangs of a new way of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity, and a more harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home. Truly, COVID-19 has made clear how deeply we are all interconnected and interdependent. As we begin to envision a post-COVID world, we need above all an integral approach as "everything is closely interrelated and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis" (LS, 137).

The Vatican Department for Promoting Integral Human Development announced a Special Laudato Si' Anniversary Year from 24th May 2020 – 24th May 2021, hoping that the anniversary year and the ensuing seven years will indeed be a time of grace, a true Kairos experience and "Jubilee" time for the Earth, and for humanity, and for all God's creatures. The anniversary year opened with Laudato Si' Week 2020, followed by several initiatives, realized in partnership and with a clear emphasis on "ecological conversion" in "action". Everyone was invited to join this initiative. The urgency of the situation called for immediate, holistic and unified responses at all levels - local, regional, national and international. Needed, above all, was

"a peoples' movement" from below, an alliance of all people of good will. As Pope Francis reminds us, "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." (LS, 14)

On 24th May 2021 the Vatican invited the entire Catholic church to embark on a daring faith-filled 7 year – long journey through the Laudato Si' Action Platform. For this, the various Christian communities can express their desire to get involved in this global movement for a transition towards an integral ecology. As Pope Francis said, "Interdependence forces us to think of a single world, a common project". (LS, 164)

The Goals of Laudato Si' are seven fold and can possibly be explained in the following actions:

1. Response to the **Cry of the Earth:** which means a greater use of clean renewable energy and reducing fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality, efforts to protect and promote biodiversity, guaranteeing access to clean water for all, etc.

2. Response to the **Cry of the Poor:** that is defence of human life from conception to death and all forms of life on Earth, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrants, children at risk through slavery, etc.



3. Ecological **Economics:** shown by sustainable production, Fair-trade, ethical consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any economic activity harmful to the planet and the people, investment in renewable energy, etc.

4. Adoption of **Simple Lifestyles** including moderation in the use of resources and energy, avoid single-use plastic, adopt a more plant-based diet and reduce meat consumption, greater use of public transport and avoid polluting modes of transportation, etc.

5. Ecological **Education:** re-think and re-design educational curricula and educational institution reform in the spirit of integral ecology to create ecological awareness and action, promoting the ecological vocation of young people, teachers and leaders of education etc.

6. Ecological **Spirituality:** meaning to recover a holistic vision of God's creation, encourage greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude, promote creation-centred liturgical celebrations, develop ecological catechesis, prayer, retreats, formation, etc.

7. Emphasis on **Community involvement and participatory action** to care for creation at the local, regional, national and international levels which is to promote advocacy and people's campaigns, encourage rootedness in local territory and neighbourhood ecosystems, etc.

On the way to achieving these goals, the UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow 1st – 12th November 2021. The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26. Already there is extensive preparation for this important world event. We can include the success of this important conference in our prayer.

Why is the Vatican so concerned that we all take part in this journey? Pope Francis, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, David Attenborough, to name a few household names as well as countless scientists,

religious leaders and ordinary citizens have all warned us that we need to take urgent action in order to protect our Earth from a sixth mass extinction and dangerous global overheating. Changing weather patterns could spiral out of control, making large parts of the earth uninhabitable and leading to hundreds of millions of climate refugees.



As Christians, we believe that the whole Earth is a miracle of God's creation and that it is held in every moment by God. We are invited to hold it preciously too. This attitude of awe and wonder was evident in the title Pope Francis gave to Laudato Si' and he recalled St Francis who " just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest animals, he burst into song" (LS 11).

The Pope, quoting St Francis, spoke with great tenderness about the Earth; "Our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us "(LS 1). Integral ecology is integral to our faith.

Earlier this year we meditated on the book of Pope Francis *'Let us Dream'*. This Action Platform is a visible form of that dream.

Donal Dorr, theologian and missionary priest, in his book '*A Creed for Today',* lays out the possible elements of a Creed--a statement of Christian belief--that takes into account our contemporary standpoint in relation to ecology and our understanding of an evolving universe.. It consists of a series of statements of our Christian faith, covering the traditional topics: God the Creator, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the community and the future. Here is a little taste of such a creed:

"We believe that the mystery within which all of us and all of creation exists is a God who is incomprehensible but also personal, trustworthy and bountiful. We believe that the Word of God is present in the stars, the trees, the plants, the animals and the people; that every creature is a gift from God that has a distinctive value and its own role in the integral web of the cosmos; that each person is unique and is called to have a loving personal relationship with God; that all humans are equal in dignity and that the fundamental rights of all must be respected and protected. We believe that at God's appointed time, 'the Word of God was made flesh and came to live among us' as the one in whom the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,' sharing the growth, the hope, the joy, the suffering and the death of all people and of all creatures and modelling for us how to come close to this infinitely compassionate God by becoming ever more fully human…. We believe in the creative Spirit of God at work in creating our evolving universe, from the first moment of its existence right up to the present in to the future; that from the very beginning of humanity there have been Spirit-guided prophetic individuals and wisdom teachers who challenged and nurtured their communities by speaking inspired Words of God to them and that the Holy Spirit inspires each one of us to discern what we are called to do in major and minor matters as we respond in love to God's call. We believe that we are called to respect and care for creation, to contribute to its evolution towards its God-ordained destiny and to challenge policies and lifestyles that imperil its future and ours. We believe that God answers our prayers and that our prayers can contribute to the development of human society and to the evolution of creation."

Beginning Meditation:
As I settle down before my Creator, perhaps in the garden or at the window, I notice how I am feeling. I place myself and all my cares in God's loving hands. If it helps, I close my eyes and take some slow deep breaths, releasing any tensions within my body. I try to set aside any busyness of the day and then invite the Holy

Spirit to guide my mind and heart. I become aware of creation around me and that I am a part of it. I am here now, hoping to hear God speak to me through the words I have read.

25-minute meditation begins…

Post meditation:

Loving God,
Creator of Heaven and Earth and all that is in them.
You created us in your own image and made us stewards of all your creation.
You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land so that all might be nourished.
Open our minds and touch our hearts, so we may attend to your gift of creation.
Help us to be conscious that our common home belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures
And to all future generations, and that it is our responsibility to preserve it.
May we help each person secure the food and the resources that they need.
Be present to those in need during these trying times,
Especially the poorest and those most at risk of being left behind.
Transform our fear and feelings of isolation into hope and fraternity so that we may experience
A true conversion of the heart.
Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic.
Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are needed in search for the common good.
Now more than ever may we feel that we ae all connected and interdependent.
Enable us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.
May the present sufferings be the birth pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Closing prayer: Loving and Eternal God, we thank you for the gifts of prayer, meditation and contemplation. We thank you for being with us and for this community. May we, therefore, pray with all others, as one community, one world and one spirit to One God…Take some time for your personal prayer …**Amen**

Thank you for meditating with us, please join us again soon.

Resources: https://columbans.co.uk/publications/vocation-for-justice/

https://www.humandevelopment.va/en/news/2020/laudato-si-special-anniversary-year-plan.html

https://www.veritasbooksonline.com/a-creed-for-today-faith-and-commitment-for-a-new-9781847309389-45152/

image from pixabay



Our peaceful outdoor spaces promote wellbeing and are open to all, free of charge.