



The Northern Voice

Volume 1, Issue 2, May 2022

Welcome to the second edition of *The Northern Voice*, the newsletter of the Fields of Justice collaborative. Fields of Justice includes individuals and representatives of parish families in the northern part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. We hope you'll join us as we explore the justice issues facing our region, our country, and our world, and seek ways to address these issues with prayer, information, and action.

May's Focus: Care for Creation

The Vatican has launched the 7-year Laudato Si' Action Platform (laudatosiactionplatform.org). The initiative's aim is that every Catholic institution—from the family to large institutions—become ecologically sustainable in seven years. Pope Francis' goal is “to help lead the world's Catholics along a journey of intensified action in caring for creation.” Pope Francis states, “We need a new ecological approach that can transform our way of dwelling in the world, our styles of life, our relationship with the resources of the Earth and, in general, our way of looking at humanity and of living life.”

“Our selfishness, our indifference and our irresponsible ways are threatening the future of our children...I therefore renew my appeal: let us overcome the temptation of selfishness that

makes us predators of resources; let us cultivate respect for the gifts of the Earth and creation, let us inaugurate a lifestyle and a society that is finally eco-sustainable,” said the Pope.

In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis identified the ecological crisis as “a summons to profound interior conversion; a reexamining of our relationships with the Creator, with creation, and with our sisters and brothers.” He also noted that “Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue... and calls for a spiritual and cultural revolution to realize integral ecology.”

The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform focuses on seven sectors: families, parishes, schools, hospitals, businesses, organizations, and religious orders, with seven goals: the response to the cry of the earth, the response to the cry of the poor, ecological economics, adoption of simple lifestyles, ecological education, ecological spirituality, and community involvement.

“There is hope,” Pope Francis says. “We can all collaborate, each one with his own culture and experience, each one with her own initiatives and capacities, so that our mother Earth may be restored to her original beauty and creation may once again shine according to God's plan.”



Just two tips to help you in the mission of *Caring for Our Common Home* (catholicclimatecovenant.org/resources)

1. Try to eliminate as much disposable plastic from your life as possible; it breaks down into tiny particles that enter streams, lakes and oceans, harming fish and other wildlife. Instead, keep a reusable water bottle; wash and reuse plastic sandwich and snack bags, or try replacing them with waxed paper or waxed paper bags, which can be composted.
2. Talk with fellow parishioners about the possibility of sharing rides to Mass and other parish events as a way of reducing your carbon footprint. You can take this a step further by organizing occasional walk to church events.

Learn more about *Fields of Justice* and its work by contacting one of our co-chairs, Judy Zimmerman (670 Plum Ridge Trail, Sidney 45365; 937/638-2733) or Bonnie Banks (154 W. Parkwood Street, Sidney 45365; 937/492-7564).

What Can We Do?

1. Pray, as individuals and parish families.

A Prayer for Our Earth by Pope Francis

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your 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 we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

A Universal Prayer (invite your parish family to use this as a petition at liturgies)
Lord, grant us the wisdom to care for the earth and till it. Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, founded on the covenant of your love. We pray to the Lord... (from Xavier University)

2. Learn. Discover these websites for more information!

uscgb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment

catholicclimatecovenant.org

www.preciousbloodsistersdayton.org/our-ministries/ecology

And check out the St. Francis Pledge newsletters: resources.catholiccaoc.org/offices/catholic-social-action/newsletters



Sisters of the Precious Blood

3. Act.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati is an official partner of the Laudato Si' Action Platform, thanks to Archbishop Schnurr. The archdiocese's Care for Creation Task Force is looking for people to join the ad hoc committee we're forming (one for each of the seven constituencies) to promote these concepts. If you're interested in joining this effort, please contact Andrew Musgrave, amusgrave@catholiccaoc.org.

We also invite you to join Fields of Justice as we organize a mailing from individuals and parish families to our elected officials, encouraging their support for Creation. Here's a template; the letter can be sent regular mail or via the elected official's website.

Dear Senators Brown/Portman AND Dear Representative _____

(<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>)

As a Catholic called to uphold the life and dignity of every human person and to care for Earth, our common home, I urge you to support legislation that includes climate and clean energy investments that reduce dependence on fossil fuels, address the climate crisis, and improve prospects for a thriving and peaceful future.

The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change makes clear that ambitious legislation is critical to address the root causes of climate change and create a clean, energy independent future for the good of all people. Russia's war against Ukraine makes our need to depend less on fossil fuels even more tragically apparent, as this aggression is funded significantly by profits from oil and gas exports.

The proposed \$55 billion in investments supporting clean energy technology innovation, resilience investments to protect directly affected communities, and other incentives to decarbonize and strengthen the economy. I urge you to support these provisions.

Sincerely, Name/Address



Catholic disciples in mission are called to put Two Feet of Love in Action! This tool describes two distinct but complementary ways we can put the Gospel in action in response to God's love: social justice and charitable works.

Social Justice: We step with this foot when we work to address the root causes of problems facing our communities by advocating for just public policies and helping change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

Charitable Works are our "response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc." We step with the Charitable Works foot when we assist others locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need. (from the US Bishops)

How do we in the Northern Area put both feet into action for our brothers and sisters?