



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



THE CRIES OF SISTER MOTHER EARTH

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“The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.... I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.” (Laudato Si, 2 and 14)

We hear the Psalmist proclaim, “*The earth is the Lord’s and all it holds; the world and those who dwell in it.*” Our Holy Rule exhorts us to respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which “bear the imprint of the Most High,” and strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship (OFS Rule, Art. 18). I believe that universal kinship has a three-step approach – ourselves, others and God.

It is not difficult to understand the violence we humans do to our earth, because it is very much played out in the violence we do to one another. The senseless killings in a Charleston, S.C., church are indicative of the violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin. How we do one thing is how we do everything. If we cannot honor and respect ourselves, then it follows that we cannot honor and respect the rest of God’s creatures.

The much anticipated papal encyclical, *Laudato Si*, is a call to stop, pause and ask ourselves some difficult questions: How are we *BE*-ing with ourselves? With others? With God’s creation? With all creatures, animate and inanimate? Pope Francis shines light on how we show up in the world as we relate to our Sister Mother Earth. First, we must realize that we are all human

beings, created by God, and not a product of use. This is the first principle of our Catholic Social Teaching – the life and dignity of the human person. Violence done to our brothers and sisters is reflected in the violence done in our earth home. If we do not care about one another, then how can we care about the earth? When we do violence to Sister Mother Earth, the poor and the vulnerable are the first to feel its effects. As the poor cry out for safe drinking water, fertile vegetation, and clean air, we turn a deaf ear. The Psalmist laments “the Lord hears the cry of the poor,” while the author of Proverbs tells us whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, will also cry himself and not be heard.

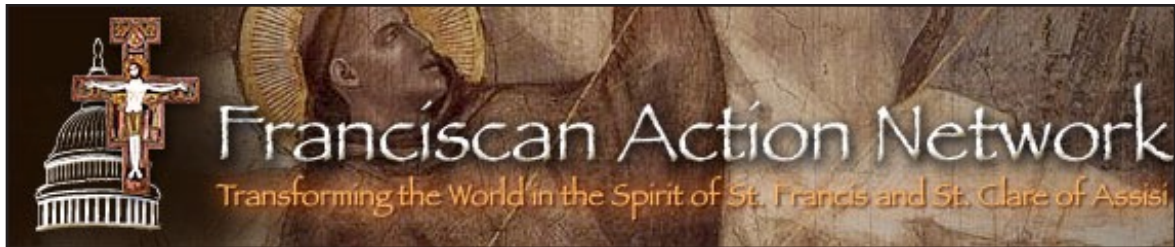
Pope Francis speaks of the Trinitarian relationship with all creatures in that “the world was created by the three Persons acting as a single divine principle, but each one of them performed this common work in accordance with his own personal property. Consequently, ‘when we contemplate with wonder the universe in all its grandeur and beauty, we must praise the whole Trinity.’” This is our Franciscan call to praise and honor all of creation – to contemplate with wonder. It is in the contemplation that we are mindful of God’s grandeur, thus we do not take it for granted. We notice and recognize what we have before us and what we have been so benevolently entrusted to care for; we do not dominate and destroy.

We are called to trust the presence of the divine seed in everyone (OFS Rule, Art 19). Everything created by God is good and has an inherent nature or divine seed. The inherent nature of an oak tree is to grow tall and strong, giving shade and sustenance to creatures, thus giving honor and glory to the Creator. We must be mindful of

the presence of the divine seed in everyone. We must be mindful of the inherent nature of all of God's created.

Pope Francis calls us to recognize our place in the world as stewards of the created world. We cannot hear the cry of the world without hearing the cry of the poor and vulnerable. Stop and

notice the violence we do to ourselves, then to each other, and then to our earth home. Then hear the words of the Psalmist as he laments for the poor who are gravely affected by the violence we have wrought. That must also be our lament; for one day we too will cry out and there will be no one left to hear us.



FAN Urges Signatures to the GCCM Climate Petition

FAN's and the Global Catholic Climate Movement's recent participation in a rally in Rome thanking Pope Francis for the release of his encyclical is a first step toward action called for by His Holiness. As a second step, FAN urges all members to sign the GCCM Climate Petition.

At current levels of deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions, average global temperatures are likely to rise 4 degrees Celsius or more by 2100, unleashing catastrophic climate change. Nations have begun submitting plans to the United Nations for how they intend to cut oil and coal use, increase renewable energy, and conserve forests. But so far it's not clear that their commitments will pull that number down significantly; nor are these targets legally binding. The GCCM believe this petition may help spur political leaders to act more effectively.

In the Philippines, Catholics have mobilized behind their leader, Cardinal Tagle who announced the official launch of the GCCM petition to an audience of over 1,000 priests, religious and lay leaders during a General Assembly of the Manila Archdiocese. He then



encouraged Catholic Filipinos to take action and signed the petition himself. This direct response to the call to action in "Laudato Si'" is a beautiful example of what Catholics all over the world should be doing.

Please take one minute to sign the petition and then share it with your family, friends and community. Together we can create a joyful noise to show world leaders we mean business when it comes to reversing the effects of climate change.

Franciscan Action Network Website:
franciscanaction.org

Global Catholic Climate Movement
<http://catholicclimatemovement.global/>