



JUST Love

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ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH

No surprise: Nuns are taking the lead in putting Laudato Si' into action

So says the headline in a July 6 article in AMERICA magazine (<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2021/07/06/women-religious-laudato-si-school-sisters-notre-dame-240958>). Religious congregations of women have made ecological sustainability a center of their mission for a long time. Women religious are embracing with energy and enthusiasm the Vatican's 7-year *Laudato Si' Action Platform*. Launched in May, this effort aims to have every Catholic institution, from the family to large organizations, ecologically sustainable in seven years. By this initiative Pope Francis hopes "to help lead the world's Catholics along a journey of intensified action in caring for creation." The Leadership Congregation of Women Religious has asked every congregation to appoint a point person for this effort of the Holy See. For close to a year, these representatives have been meeting by ZOOM to share experiences and plans. Each Congregation is preparing to make a public commitment to the Plan, to do a yearly evaluation of its own particular goals, and to be publicly accountable for its progress. Our conversations have been energizing and its impressive the wealth of energy and enthusiasm women religious bring to care of creation. We are clear that our efforts need to be collaborative and intergenerational. We recognize that, as important as they are, our own greening efforts as religious are not enough. As the saying goes – those who are killing the planet have names and addresses. We need to leverage our moral power in pressuring large institutions like the military and multinational corporations to break their addiction to fossil fuel. Sister of Charity of Nazareth Teresa Kotturan, SC Federation NGO representative at the UN, loves to point out how well this ambitious effort of the Holy See dovetails with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). Unfortunately world governments, including the United States, have been sluggish in meeting the goals to which they have committed themselves. Pope Francis is calling the Church to put its global reach and moral and spiritual authority behind the achievement of these



goals, desperately needed for the well-being of Earth and its peoples. In our conversations and planning, religious congregations note the intersectionality of the goals of the *Laudato Si' Action Platform*. For example, climate change and its effects on agriculture and fishing are a push factor for refugees, many of whom are women and children from the global south – climate change, migration, economic injustice, racism, gender inequality – inextricably connected in the lives of millions of people. Unfortunately Catholic diocesan leadership has been equally sluggish in its response to *Laudato Si'*.

Five years after the publication of this landmark encyclical only 23 of the 196 US dioceses have a diocesan *Laudato Si'* implementation plan. Consider writing a letter to your bishop and asking how the diocese is responding to the initiative of Pope Francis. Gather with a few of your fellow parishioners and set up a meeting with your pastor to ask the same. To motivate yourself, print out these words of *Laudato Si'* #217 and post them on your mirror, on your refrigerator, on your computer: "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."

Find out more:

- Official Site of the *Laudato Si' Action Platform* <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>
- Global Catholic Climate Covenant <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/>
- Sowing Seeds of Hope for the Planet <https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org/resources>
- For an excellent example of a diocesan response to *Laudato Si'*, check out the plan of the Archdiocese of Atlanta <https://archatl.com/catholic-life/refreshatl/>
- An easy way to get your friends, co-workers, fellow parishioners to engage with *Laudato Si'* is to share with them our SC "Six Weeks with *Laudato Si'*" calendar https://0e4f0307-8157-4c79-9229-37922dbe65e9.filesusr.com/ugd/a2bb32_6395e038741246f38c6552fb8ab5d634.pdf



Air conditioners, so welcome in the summer heat, are also major contributors to global warming. Take action to mitigate the negative effects of AC:

- Have a professional check your air conditioners for leaks. A well-functioning AC is easier on the environment.
- Use other means of cooling when you can: close curtains and shades, use fans rather than AC when possible, drink water frequently, turn off unnecessary lights.
- Cook as much as you can with toaster ovens and microwaves which are more energy

efficient than stoves. Plan meals around salads that don't require cooking. Do you know you can cook corn on the cob in the microwave for about 4 minutes? It's delicious, easier to shuck, and doesn't require boiling a lot of water.

Doing the Hard Work of Racial Justice

Villanova professor Shannen Dee Williams suggest five ways for Catholics to get started in the hard work of racial justice:

- **Education:** Learn about the long history of anti-Black racism within the Church. While this history is not widely known or taught, it is well documented. The testimonies and life experiences of Black Catholics, religious and lay, are especially powerful sources.
- **Action:** Challenge racism in Catholic spaces and call for a change. Make Black and Brown history mandatory in Catholic school curricula, religious formation and seminary training. Hire Black and Brown Catholics in leadership positions in Catholic institutions. Adopt an anti-racist praxis in your Catholic organization.
- **Support:** Donate to organizations fighting for racial justice, especially those working to end mass incarceration, cash bail, racial disparities in health care, the school-to-prison pipeline, and police violence.
- **Reconciliation:** Call upon the Catholic Church to formally acknowledge and apologize for its histories of slavery and segregation. Reconciliation is not possible without justice, and justice does not come without acknowledging the truth.
- **Pray:** Pray for all victims of racism and state violence. Pray also for those in positions of power. Pray that they hear the cries of those calling for an end to white supremacy in every institution where it exists.



Days to Commemorate in August

1 Feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori who said, "Those who preach law before love do the devil's work."

6-9 US Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

A blasphemy against hope is named deterrence, or Trident submarines, or star wars, or preemptive strike, or simply, any nuclear weapon. These are in direct violation of the commandment of Jesus: Your ancestors said, "An eye for an eye," but I say to you, offer no violent resistance to evil. Love your enemies." - Daniel Berrigan, SJ

8 Feast of St. Dominic One priest who had heard Dominic preaching asked where he had learned all his wisdom. Dominic said that he had learned more from the book of charity than in any other, because it is an "all-instructive book."

15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary "On this feast day, we call on Mary to protect the young mothers, the children, and all vulnerable people struggling with the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that has indiscriminately brought communities to a precipice.

We ask Mary to be with the millions of low-wage workers, disproportionately in Black and Brown communities, as they struggle to put food on their tables and keep a roof over their heads." - Laura Peralta-Schulte

28 (1963) Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech delivered at the Lincoln Memorial

"We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

30 Birthday (1963) of Rev. William Barber, co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival. "Not long ago I was a guest on *Real Time* with Bill Maher, with one of America's most prominent atheists. Wearing my clerical collar, I realized that I stood out among his guests. So I decided to announce to Bill that I, too, am an atheist. He seemed taken aback, so I explained that if we were talking about the God who hates poor people, immigrants, and gay folks, I don't believe in that God either. Sometimes it helps to clarify our language."