



## Contemplative Reflection for the Month of February

### Fifth Goal on the Action Platform: Ecological Education

**Ecological Education** is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. Actions could include ensuring equitable access to education for all and promoting human rights, fostering Laudato Sí themes within the community, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities.

**Matthew 6:24-34: You cannot serve both God and money ... Look at the birds of the air ... Consider the lilies of the field ... You are much more valuable ... Seek first the kingdom.**

#### Call to Contemplation

**Leader:** Father, who created the world and all it contains with love beyond measure,  
Jesus, who gave Your life because you knew and cherished the Father's creation,  
Spirit, who infuses all creation with sparks of the Divine love,

**Response:** Grace us with a student's heart - eager to learn how to appreciate the beauty of all creation and willing to learn and adopt new ways to care for it.

**Music video:** "The Colors of the Wind," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXYqXoG-4L8>

**Reflection:** Excerpt from *Laudato Sí*

- The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. (204)
- In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say "thank you" as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressiveness and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. (213)
- It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment. But we need the personal qualities of self-control and willingness to learn from one another. (214)
- By learning to see and appreciate beauty, we learn to reject self-interested pragmatism. If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple.... Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationships with nature. (215)

**Considerations:**

- As students of ecological education, Pope Francis says that we need to learn from one another (214) and learn to appreciate beauty. (215) When have you learned the lessons of *Laudato Si* from another? What aspect of beauty is most appreciated in your life and how does a moment of deep appreciation affect/change you?
- How can you/we help promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and relationship with nature? As Pope Francis refers to the process, how can we bring about conversion of hearts?
- Which of this month's LS Sharings piqued your interest or challenged you? In what ways?

## FEBRUARY'S LAUDATO SÍ SHARING



### **Small actions can lead to a huge impact**

Could a few children change the world? We know, as educators, that this is true. As we acknowledge the need to raise awareness of ecological concerns and promote care for the earth, three young schoolgirls in Spain show us the way. Creating an organization within their own school to educate and encourage care for the environment, they show us how even the smallest actions can make a HUGE impact!

At their school, they:

- create and display posters to educate and raise awareness of the need to care for our common home
- focus on encouraging three small actions that everyone can do:
  - 1) keeping clean communal spaces
  - 2) avoiding unnecessary consumption and waste of food
  - 3) sharing information on the disposal of batteries and toxic products

**Imagine if every one of our schools and places of ministry encouraged small actions to care for the environment. What an impact that would make!**

To learn more, click on this link:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-12/children-take-the-lead-caring-for-the-planet.html>



### **What is a "Carbon Footprint Calculator?"**

Our carbon footprint is the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) or methane released into the atmosphere through our daily activities. It centers around our use of energy in our homes (heating and electricity use), our food consumption (which includes the production of these foods) and transportation or how we get from here to there. Our choices can make a difference. A carbon footprint calculator is a way of tracing the amount of carbon dioxide that each of us individually emits into the air. The link below, which is an activity for children, can also help us be more aware of how our actions contribute to our carbon footprint. Using the activity with students can help us all make better ecological choices.

<https://kids.lovetoknow.com/kids-activities/carbon-footprint-calculator-kids>

### **A *Laudato Sí* Book Club**



Have you ever had the experience of trying to put something together and then, only after being frustrated in the attempt, did you think about reading the manual?

Well, I think many of us are trying to understand the goals of the *Laudato Sí* Action Platform without ever having read and reflected on Pope Francis' words and inspirations found in his encyclical.

Perhaps, now is the time to commit to reading and studying *Laudato Sí*.

This encyclical was published over six years ago and so there are some excellent resources to help us understand it. Here are two:

[NCR Readers Guide to \*Laudato Sí\*](#)  
[Trocaire Book Club for \*Laudato Sí\*](#)

You could use these for self-study or, even better yet, form a book club with your local community or parish group.

