



Window on Social Justice

Article 47, February 2021.

Window on *Laudato Si'*

“When we speak of the “environment”, what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. This will prevent us from regarding nature as something separate from ourselves... We are part of nature, included in it.” (*Laudato Si'* no. 139) Therefore, loving planet earth and making efforts to protect it also means loving and protecting all living creatures who occupy it.

The *Laudato Si'* Encyclical looks at the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet. It eloquently reminds us that “everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by **the love God has for each of his creatures** and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.” (92) In the beginnings of the Congregation, didn't Mother St. Joseph already say the same thing in her own way? **“God is everywhere and in all things”**.

The Bible has always been aware of the story of love between God and the whole of creation. In the Old Testament God speaks to us about the Covenant that he has made with all the living creatures of the earth: “Behold I establish my covenant **with you...** and **every living creature that is with you**” (Gen 9:9-10). “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and **every living creature that is with you**, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a **sign of the covenant between me and the earth**” (Gen 9:12-13). During the pandemic, children remind us that “everything will be OK” with their drawings of rainbows. Isn't that a great way to spread a bit of hope around them?

Everything is connected in the world and this earth belongs to everyone, so how come inequality and poverty still exist? According to Pope Francis, “a true ecological approach

always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*" (49) The actions I take to protect our common home have repercussions on the people who live in it, especially the poorest of the planet. The earth gives us what we need to live but as long as we only see her as having resources that can be exploited to no end, the earth cannot be a mother for ***all living creatures*** who also have the right to exist. "Everything is interconnected, and (...) genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others. "(70)

What acts of kindness can I carry out in my surroundings to make our common home more habitable for everyone? These acts are done in solidarity with the most disadvantaged.

"All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures...
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." (246)

Did you know:

The poorest countries are responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions while the middle class of developed countries produce, on average, 175 times more.

References:

- *Laudato Si' Encyclical*
- Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice

SSCJ Social Justice Committee (Canada)