



Laudato Si'

**Promoting an integral ecology
in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet**

DIOCESE OF JOLIET

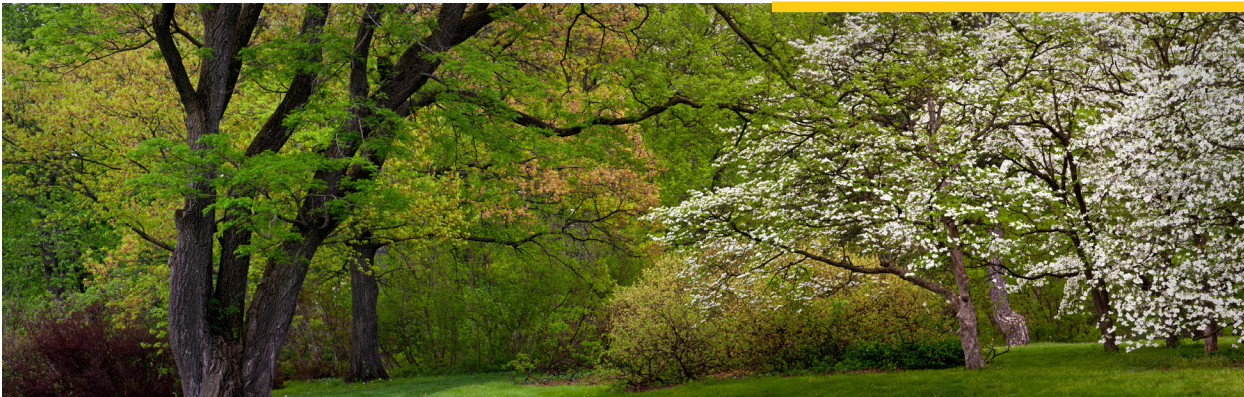


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The Diocese of Joliet would like to express gratitude to the Archdiocese of Washington for the use of many elements of its *Laudato Si'* Action Plan. By sharing resources to promote sustainability, the Archdiocese of Washington is exercising stewardship over God's creation.

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Opening Letter from

MOST REVEREND RONALD A. HICKS

BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET



IN HIS ENCYCLICAL, *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis calls us to 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” (14).

We are each called to protect our common home according to our ability and means. This plan contains small and big ways for us to steward and show respect for God’s creation. I pray that every member of our diocese will discern how they can best participate.

I would like to thank the members of the Diocesan *Laudato Si'* Committee for their diligent work in preparing this Action Plan. With its publishing, the Diocese of Joliet joins the Archdioceses of Chicago and Atlanta, along with the Dioceses of San Diego and Davenport, Iowa, and others who have paved the way with action plans of their own.

Join Pope Francis and I in a new dialogue on Care for Creation for future generations in our diocese, so that they too can enjoy the natural beauty and splendor of our local prairies, wetlands, and woodlands; our great Lake Michigan and mighty Mississippi River; and our cities, suburbs, and farming communities. May this document help us put our faith into action.



St. Francis of Assisi, pray for us!

+ *Ronald A. Hicks*

MOST REVEREND RONALD A. HICKS, BISHOP

Introduction

IN 2015, POPE FRANCIS RELEASED HIS SEMINAL ENCYCLICAL, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*, which is an open invitation to all people everywhere to care for Earth as our common home, created by God. The Holy Father writes about our dependency on each other and on Earth, which sustains us. He teaches that because we are all God's creation, we are connected locally, nationally, and internationally with each other and with our environment. A better understanding of the encyclical comes from looking at some of the Church's social teaching leading up to it.

Pope John Paul II was a true advocate for environmental stewardship and care of Earth. He not only declared St. Francis the patron saint of ecology, but in 1990 wrote about environmental changes in his World Day of Peace message. He also introduced the term ecological conversion during a general audience on January 17, 2001, stating "...humanity has disappointed God's expectations. Man, especially in our time, has without hesitation devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted waters, disfigured the earth's habitat, made the air unbreathable, disturbed the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, turned luxuriant areas into deserts and undertaken forms of unrestrained industrialization. . . We must therefore encourage and support 'ecological conversion.'"¹

Pope John Paul II introduced the link between Catholic social teaching and ecological conversion using the concept of solidarity. Traditionally, solidarity meant shared interests and sympathies that encourage people to live in unity with each other or with the poor; however, he defined it as "the virtue that allows all of us to serve all of God's human creation," expanding our call to solidarity to include creation.

Pope Benedict further elaborated on the links between solidarity, Catholic social teaching, and environmental conversion when he stated that "every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment just as environmental deterioration in turn upsets relations in society." Both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict share the idea that caring for Earth is caring for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pope Francis expanded the work of previous popes when he included the concept of ecological solidarity in *Laudato Si'*, proclaiming that every creature, human and nonhuman alike, has inherent dignity because of its Creator. Humans continue to have their uniqueness; however, the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor are actually one cry for justice and mercy. As the Pope writes, "We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature" (139). In short, we need to change the ways we engage each other and our environment.

As the Church's first encyclical on care for creation and the environment, *Laudato Si'* examines several themes. One of these, "integral ecology," means that in combating poverty we are also

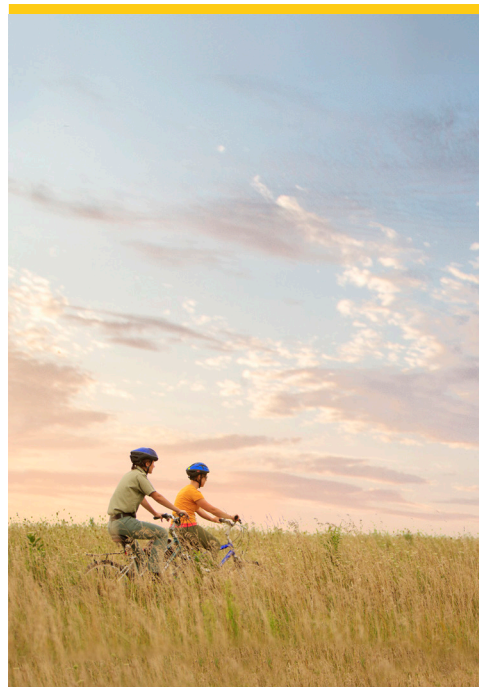
3 [17 January 2001 | John Paul II \(vatican.va\)](#)

protecting the environment and vice versa. A local example of integral ecology is the restoration of Illinois habitats by removing invasive species and planting native ones; thus, providing not only improved habitat for Illinois flora and fauna, but also beautiful places for residents to learn about their environment and enjoy it with their families. Another demonstrates the effect of reduced water levels on the Mississippi River caused by drought conditions which, in turn, affect grain transport and the resulting increased cost to farmers and families. Related to drought, Illinois has also experienced environmental disasters. On May 1, 2023, dust-filled air made it impossible to see the road, leading to dozens of highway accidents resulting in the deaths of eight people. Factors contributing to this catastrophe included strong winds and the recent tilling of farm fields where soil was extremely dry due to lack of rain. In addition to these examples which emphasize the effects of climate change, human activities also impact those living in the Diocese of Joliet. Six out of the seven counties in the diocese rank in the top nine percent of all U.S. counties for health, societal, and economic impacts caused by diesel fine particle air pollution.²

Another major theme of *Laudato Si'* is Pope Francis' call to protect the environment for future generations. He asks, "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (160). Catholic youth are not only leading the way toward sustainability, but they are at the forefront of leadership, conversations, and civic actions aimed at creating a society more attuned to environmental and racial justice. Pope Francis sums up their passion across the full range of social and environmental issues: "Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded" (13). Young people today are calling on adults to act and advocate on behalf of the environment, and to help them protect Earth for future generations.

Additionally, *Laudato Si'* is a call for conversion; to turn away from sin and towards Jesus. The Holy Father calls us to an ecological conversion, to realize the profound impact of global environmental degradation, and to transform our lifestyles and choices so that in our daily choices we place the poor and suffering first, while protecting the environment.

In 2020, The Holy See's Dicastery (Office) for Promoting Integral Human Development introduced a worldwide initiative called The *Laudato Si'* Action Plan, or LSAP. Since then, many dioceses, parishes, schools, religious communities, and families have embraced the call to protect Earth for future generations; however, much work is still needed! Following in the footsteps of the Archdioceses of Atlanta, Chicago, Washington, San Diego, and Davenport, Iowa, the Roman



4 [The Dirty Dozen: The Impacts of Diesel Engine Pollution in Illinois, May 2022](#)

Catholic Diocese of Joliet is releasing this *Laudato Si'* Action Plan embracing the call of Pope Francis to work toward an integral ecology that is reflected in our personal lives and in the life of our parishes and Catholic schools.

***Laudato Si'*: A Call to Embrace Faith and Science**

FAITH AND SCIENCE ARE COMPLEMENTARY, not in opposition to one another. We know from our Catholic faith that God created the world, and that creation is beautiful and something we are called to protect. We also know that science tells us that Earth is facing ecological challenges never seen before now.

Earth's climate is changing faster than at any point in the history of civilization. Since the late 19th century, humans have released increasing amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels—coal, oil, and natural gas, and through habitat loss caused by deforestation and changes in land-use such as continued urban sprawl and farming practices. These activities have increased the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide by about 40 percent since the 19th century.³ Carbon dioxide, and other greenhouse gases such as methane (caused by food production, decomposition, and industrial production), absorb and reflect the sun's heat back to Earth rather than allowing it to be reflected back to outer space. As a result, the last decade (2010 to 2019) was the hottest decade globally since reliable temperature records began being recorded 140 years ago.⁴ The last seven years (2014 to 2020) are the seven hottest years on record,⁵ with June 2023 the hottest on record, according to NASA⁶.

As a result of this increased accumulation of heat reflecting gases, Illinoisans can expect to experience increased risks from precipitation, heat, and drought due to climate change over the next 30 years. According to [Climate Central](#), winter is the fastest-warming season in the majority of the U.S., including Illinois. Since 1970, winters have warmed an average of 3.2 degrees Fahrenheit. While there may be upsides to this, such as a more bearable commute, a reduction in energy costs for heating, and a longer growing season, the adverse effects outweigh the good. Winters (and springs) are going to get wetter, which can lead to decreased water quality, fertilizer runoff contributing to algal blooms and bacteria, and a delayed planting season. A reduction in ice coverage and increase in the frequency of severe storms exacerbate flooding, harm fish habitats, damage property, and make Lake Michigan more vulnerable to erosion.

3 Jay, Alexa, et al. "Overview." Impacts, Risks, and Adaptation in the United States: Fourth National Climate Assessment, II, U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2018, p.19.

4 Cole, Steve and Peter Jacobs, "NASA, NOAA Analyses Reveal 2019 Second Warmest Year on Record," National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2020, Accessible [here](#).

5 Greene, Tylar and Peter Jacobs, "2020 Tied for Warmest Year on Record, NASA Analysis Shows," National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 2021, Accessible [here](#).

6 "NASA Finds June 2023 Hottest on Record," Accessible [here](#).

Overall, Illinois' climate has gotten warmer and wetter since the start of the 20th century.

- Average daily temperatures in Illinois have already increased by 1 to 2 degrees Fahrenheit. By the end of the 21st century, temperatures are projected to increase between 4 and 9 degrees at the lower end of the scenario and between 8 and 14 degrees at the higher end.
- Precipitation has increased across Illinois. Total annual precipitation has increased by five inches over the past 120 years. This is equivalent to a 12- to 15-percent increase in total annual precipitation.
- Projections show a change in the distribution and seasonality of precipitation with increases in both heavy rain and length of dry spells.
- Precipitation has gotten more intense, as the number of two-inch rain days in Illinois has increased by 40 percent since the beginning of the 20th century.

Rising temperatures, especially in urban heat zones, are recognized as being the number-one weather-related cause of deaths among the elderly poor. The unborn are also vulnerable to climate-induced excessive temperatures. Recent research studies are showing that excessive temperatures increase the incidence of birth defects and stillbirths.⁷

Increases in high-temperature extremes are directly threatening human health in the summer. Earlier spring arrival, warmer temperatures, and other climate changes increase health risks such as exposure to airborne pollen allergens. The frequency and severity of allergic illnesses—including asthma and hay fever—are expected to increase.

Climate change is damaging our communities—locally, nationally, and globally. As Pope Francis states, “Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day” (25).

Laudato Si' calls us as people of faith to embrace environmental science and the science of climate change to protect and preserve the environment for future generations because Earth is God's wondrous creation and gift to humanity.

⁷ Caitlin Hartwyk, "Climate Change Could Cause Increased Birth Defects by 2025," Passport Health, 2019, Accessible [here](#).

Laudato Si' Action Platform

ON NOVEMBER 4, 2021, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development launched the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform to help individuals and communities better understand the teachings of *Laudato Si'*, inviting all to embark on a seven-year journey of implementation. The Dicastery named seven goals to help measure that implementation. These will be used in this Action Plan as a way to promote integral ecology throughout the Diocese of Joliet. Here is how the Dicastery describes them:

1. **Response to the Cry of Earth.** This is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.
2. **Response to the Cry of the Poor.** This is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend all forms of life on Earth.
3. **Ecological Economics.** This is an acknowledgement that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which is embedded within our common home.
4. **Adoption of Simple Lifestyle.** This goal promotes the idea of sufficiency and moderation in the use of resources and energy.
5. **Ecological Education.** This is a call to re-think and re-design curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.
6. **Ecological Spirituality.** This goal recovers a religious vision of God's creation and encourages greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy, and gratitude.
7. **Emphasis on Community Involvement and Participatory Action.** This encourages the development of cultures and policies that protect our common home and all who share it.

The Diocese of Joliet Responds to *Laudato Si'*

An Action Plan for Embracing the Vision of an Integral Ecology

THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET IS PROUD to join the Dicastery in using an integrated approach in its journey toward sustainability and integral ecology. *Laudato Si'*'s vision of integral ecology calls for environmental efforts to be rooted in the teachings of our Church seeking to not only preserve and protect our Earth but also to eliminate poverty and lift up individuals and communities who are on the peripheries of our society. Integral ecology calls for individuals to do their part in environmental efforts, and for communities to work together to protect the environment.

The Diocese of Joliet is blessed with a rich diversity of parishes and schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The diocese was established by Pope Pius XII in December 1948, created from seven counties in Illinois: DuPage, Kendall, Will, Grundy, Kankakee, Iroquois, and Ford; with a geographic area of 4,218 miles. The Diocese is divided into eight deaneries and serves 520,000 Catholics in 117 parishes and seven missions under the leadership of Bishop Ronald A. Hicks. Given this wonderful diversity, this action plan lists options so that according to a parish, school or family's financial and human resources, anyone can find ways to implement *Laudato Si'*. The remainder of this Action Plan will focus on how the Dicastery's seven goals can be implemented in our Diocesan offices, parishes and schools, and by communities, individuals and families.



GOAL 1

Response to the Cry of Earth



THIS GOAL CALLS EACH OF US to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. There are numerous ways this can be done, as seen in the list below; and one of these, which has already been implemented in Illinois, involves the increased use of clean renewable energy and the reduction of fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality while protecting biodiversity. Currently, 37 percent of the electricity in Illinois is produced from fossil fuels; seven percent from natural gas, and 30 percent from coal. The Catholic Conference of Illinois Bishops has urged the Illinois General Assembly to continue to increase funding for the Illinois Solar for All program, which offers incentives to poor communities and nonprofit organizations to install solar panels on their buildings, or take part in Community Solar, which does not require installation of solar panels on one's property. Doing this would decrease the burning of fossil fuels to produce electricity.



GOAL 1

Possible Actions

Develop or revise your facilities plan through the lens of *Laudato Si'*

Seal or caulk around windows and door frames

Turn off light sources when not needed

Adjust temperatures to 70° or lower in winter and 80° or higher in summer

Open windows and use box fans for cooling

Utilize heat pumps

Reduce both indoor and outdoor water consumption

Look to EPA's [WaterSense](#) program for help

Repair leaks quickly

Retrofit kitchens and bathrooms by installing low flow sinks and toilets

Connect to free resources and expertise like the EPA's [ENERGY STAR](#) program, using their ratings when purchasing appliances

Establish energy baselines

Replace all lightbulbs with LED bulbs

Purchase power strips to turn off electronics when not in use

Purchase a programmable thermostat to reduce heat or cooling when not in use

Protect watersheds and wildlife

Increase tree canopy

Eliminate/reduce chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and deicers

Create, build, or expand gardens

Introduce storm water pollution reduction methods

Replace turf grass by planting native plants

Plant pollinator plants and use conservation landscaping

Begin a parish, school or home composting program

Install shades on windows directly exposed to sun and pull drapes at night to keep in the heat

Install solar panels on property or participate in a Community Solar program

Install timers or motion sensors on outdoor lighting

GOAL 2

Response to the Cry of Those Who Are Poor/Vulnerable



THIS GOAL IS A DEFENSE OF HUMAN LIFE FROM CONCEPTION TO DEATH, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrant families, and their children, forced to relocate by climate, war, or economics, and those living in underdeveloped countries. There are people in the Diocese of Joliet who are suffering from the effects of structural racism and from political, social, and economic negligence, and who are disproportionately affected by climate change. Listening to ‘the cry of those who are poor or vulnerable’ means actively engaging all members of the diocese in implementing *Laudato Si’*.

We need to take deliberate steps to ensure that all communities are consulted, listened to, and empowered to make decisions on environmental issues that affect them. Persons of all income levels, the elderly, children, immigrants, people with disabilities, those experiencing homelessness, racial and ethnic minorities and indigenous people must be included in discussions and decisions related to their communities. As we work towards environmental justice, we must also work towards ensuring racial justice. We must be mindful that God created Earth and that all people are made in God’s image and likeness and, therefore, deserve to be treated with dignity.

The lack of environmental and racial justice is of great concern to our Church. Pope Francis points to the global dimensions of these issues and how they are interconnected. Excessive consumption, extraction of Earth’s natural resources, and the culture of waste in affluent countries have had dire consequences for the most vulnerable countries and has had a negative impact upon the health of people living in them. Climate refugees from Central America and Africa—fleeing from raging fires, severe droughts, and devastating floods to find a safer life—can be found in our Illinois communities. Some in our diocese, unfortunately, encounter discrimination.⁸

⁸ Integral ecology makes clear that one action can apply to multiple goals as the following Illinois example shows. On September 15, 2021, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) was signed into law with provisions to phase out carbon emissions from the energy and transportation sectors and expanding its low-income solar program, Illinois Solar for All (**Goal 1**). At least 25 percent of the funding will be utilized in environmental justice communities and be available in various forms for low-income customers and nonprofit customers through Community Solar and Illinois Shines programs. CEJA is aligned with the teachings of *Laudato Si’* by caring for the planet and the poor, by reducing emissions and targeting areas impacting the poor and addressing the economy. Since it was passed, several low-income families, churches, and nonprofits across northern Illinois have taken advantage of both programs; thus, reducing emissions and saving lives.

GOAL 2

Possible Actions

Create or expand parish and school libraries to feature a variety of voices and experiences on the impact of water pollution on low-income communities

Volunteer to do a parish clean-up

Assist vulnerable persons

Know your neighbors; develop relationships with one another

Run errands for those who need assistance in your neighborhood

Develop awareness of programs that can assist vulnerable persons

Support local charity programs to help and assist vulnerable persons (Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Campaign for Human Development)

Contribute food or financial donations to your parish or community food pantry

Provide heating/cooling stations during extreme weather events

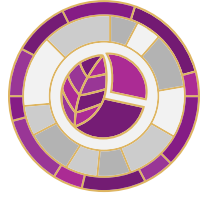
Educate about box fans and/or heat pumps

Donate a box fan to Catholic Charities for assistance to those unable to purchase one



GOAL 3

Ecological Economics



THIS GOAL REMINDS US THAT THE ECONOMY SHOULD EXIST for the benefit of all people, and not the other way around. It should not be the case that some persons are harmed to benefit others.

Some concepts to be considered are sustainable production, fair trade, and ethical consumption of resources, as well as ethical investments and the divestment from fossil fuels. Any economic activity harmful to the planet and its people should be avoided and investment in renewable energy should be encouraged.



GOAL 3

Possible Actions

Reduce food waste

Purchase food from ranchers and farmers who use sustainable agriculture practices

Consider alternative uses for your parish property

Plant a garden

Use the parking lot for a local CSA (community-sustained agriculture) drop off or a farmers market

Buy locally produced and prepared food

Buy fair trade and sustainably produced food

Participate in a CSA program or local farmers market

Model healthy and just purchasing practices in all activities for parishes and parish schools

Improve access to nutritious foods

Build and eat from home gardens

Lobby to utilize public land to build community gardens

Compost food scraps

Repair broken items, rather than purchasing new ones

Reduce, reuse, and repurpose, even before recycling

Consider divesting from fossil fuels

When resurfacing a parking lot, consider safe sealants

Carpool when possible

Replace gas stoves and other gas appliances with electric

Replace electric stoves with induction stoves or stovetops

Insulate homes

Install low-flow plumbing fixtures

GOAL 4

Adoption of a Simple Lifestyle



THIS GOAL FOCUSES ON the best use of resources and energy and the avoidance of choices that, though they may be convenient, are harmful to Earth. Through it, we are called to adopt a prayerful and intentional approach to our purchases, and to be mindful of the toll our choices have on God's creation and the world in which we live.



GOAL 4

Possible Actions

Cut down or eliminate single-use plastic (such as water bottles)

Buy fewer non-essentials

Use non-toxic home cleaners

Purchase organically grown food and sustainably raised seafood

Purchase re-usable products

Cut down or eliminate foam-based food containers

Encourage recycling

Visit the [Laudato Si' Movement](#) website to find excellent resources

Buy consciously: Look for goods with less packaging; support businesses that pay fair wages

Eat intentionally: Buy local and in-season fruits and vegetables, or grow your own

Waste less: Avoid throwing away food whenever possible, bring your own bags, purchase only what is necessary

Participate in a circular economy by sharing yard or house equipment, donating and trading materials or finding other ways to reduce your consumption

Volunteer or find other ways to support your local community

Drive less: Share a vehicle for grocery trips. Bike, walk, or use public transportation when possible

Examine your lifestyle for waste

Take time to pray and give thanks

Implement an ecological purchasing system

Try to purchase products that are fair trade, sustainably produced, or organically grown.

Purchase office supplies made from natural, recycled, or recyclable materials

Purchase a hybrid or electric vehicle when possible

Read labels carefully to make the best purchases

Read about sustainability in order to practice it

GOAL 5

Ecological Education



THIS GOAL CALLS US to re-think and re-design educational curricula and institutions in the spirit of integral ecology in order to create ecological awareness and action, promoting the ecological vocation of young people, teachers, and leaders of education. Ecological education should be integrated into all of our religious education programs and liturgical celebrations because our faith offers a rich array of teachings on the theology of creation, life, human dignity, and our role in fostering the common good. We are called to care for creation in loving and sustainable ways. Earth is our shared home, and its goods are for all.



GOAL 5

Possible Actions

Find recycling, energy production and water-treatment facilities—many offer and encourage tours and other programs for groups

Create or expand parish and school libraries to feature a variety of books that provide guidance and resources for this work and embrace the vision of *Laudato Si'*

Challenge children and youth to come up with local solutions to social and environmental problems and affirm the ideas they put forward

Explore the connection between the environment and personal and communal health

Develop *Laudato Si'* inspired activities and theme days with practical follow-up actions

Examine how to support efforts toward systemic justice for those who are marginalized and offer practical steps toward living a lifestyle modified to care for creation

Incorporate justice and care for our common home into faith formation programs at all levels

Involve parish religious education, youth ministry and parish schools in living out *Laudato Si'*

Encourage children to play outside; provide opportunities for them to explore and enjoy nature

Provide educational opportunities for teachers to learn about *Laudato Si'*

Encourage book club and discussion groups to read about *Laudato Si'*

Start a video club. Watch a film together and discuss the importance of environmental and social action, e.g., show *The Letter*

Offer professional training to teachers on issues related to climate change, biodiversity, and sustainability

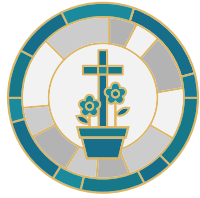
Integrate care for creation and concern for our marginalized communities into October Respect Life month

Teach about Season of Creation, *Laudato Si'*, and Earth Day

Work to install safe green spaces and parks in urban areas

GOAL 6

Ecological Spirituality



THIS GOAL CALLS US to recover a religious vision of God's creation, to encourage greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy, and gratitude, to promote creation-centered liturgical celebrations, and to develop catechesis, prayer, retreats and formation. Pope Francis reminds us that spirituality rooted in creation is Christ centered, and this Christological approach compels us to be in relationship with others and challenges us to change our personal behaviors and to seek to change society for the better. Pope Francis has joined with other Christian leaders in designating September 1 to October 4 as the [Season of Creation](#). Parishes can celebrate through preaching, offering prayer services, and other activities that focus on Catholic teaching on care for our common home. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' guide [Caring for God's Creation \(usccb.org\)](#) has ideas for making connections between the liturgy and care for creation throughout the liturgical year.



GOAL 6

Possible Actions

Offer homilies on pro-life values and integration of Catholic social and moral teaching regarding care for creation

Highlight Catholic teaching through bulletin announcements, parish social media, youth ministry, RE classes, RCIA preparation, adult formation opportunities, and coffee and donuts after Mass, etc.

Plan, celebrate, and mark the Season of Creation held each September 1 to October 4 and *Laudato Si'* month, May

Participate in a Diocesan Green Mass

Utilize materials from USCCB on Caring for Creation

Integrate *Laudato Si'* into all facets of promoting an integral ecology at celebrations of Respect Life Month and World Mission Month in October

Bring in expert speakers to lead/guide conversations at parish or parish school sponsored events

Listen to a variety of voices including/especially from those in marginalized communities

Utilize parishioners, members of Catholic organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who feature Catholic values, to speak on ecological issues

Ensure parish, school events, and formation opportunities promote the Church's teaching on climate change, social, racial, environmental, and immigrant justice

Empower parishioners to be active and engaged in the work of *Laudato Si'*

GOAL 7

Emphasis on Community Involvement and Participatory Action



GUIDED BY CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING, Catholics have historically engaged in collective and individual advocacy across a range of issues for the common good. *Laudato Si'* has been “added to the body of the Church’s social teaching” (#15). We are called to be advocates for our common home, Earth, and for the people who are most directly affected by climate issues, namely the poor. This goal encourages the development of policies that protect our common home and all who share it. This can be done by engaging in public advocacy work for decisive political action for the common good. As Catholics, we have models for dialogue and civil engagement in our political processes. In our public policy engagement, we must continue to be effective advocates and heed the “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (#49).



GOAL 7

Possible Actions

Use parish and parish school communication channels to spread the message of *Laudato Si'*

Distribute liturgical calendars with suggestions for environmentally beneficial practices and other ways to promote justice

Utilize parish Facebook pages, and other social media to put *Laudato Si'* teaching/learning into action

Form parish social concerns teams that focus on integral ecology

Engage ministries and groups in collaborative efforts on integral ecology

Connect with other parishes through the Diocesan *Laudato Si'* Committee

Start a parish Care of Creation Committee

Connect to interfaith groups such as [Interfaith Power and Light](#), [Green Faith](#), [Faith in Action](#), and [Faith in Place](#)

Learn more about *Laudato Si'* and how you can take action according to its principles at this important and relevant resource [Catholic Climate Covenant](#)

We are all part of [God's Planet](#)! Visit this website to find out how U.S. Catholics care for creation. Learn what the Church is doing and how you can be a part of God's plan!

Conclusion

THE DIOCESE OF JOLIET is proud to embark on this journey towards the full implementation of *Laudato Si'*! As a people of faith, the diocese is ready to continue efforts in preserving and protecting our common home in our local communities and throughout the world. We are ready to heed the call of our faith to work together with science to implement *Laudato Si'* in our families, parishes, schools, and communities. We are ready to proclaim the Gospel message of hope, to create a more sustainable society, and to preserve Earth for future generations.

“Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork,” Pope Francis states in *Laudato Si'*, “is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an option or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”



A Prayer for Our Earth from *Laudato Si'*

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.

