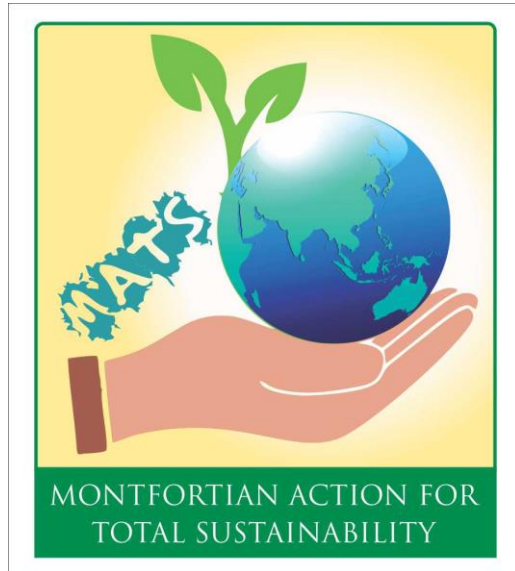


**MONTFORTIAN ACTION
FOR TOTAL SUSTAINABILITY
(MATS)**



BROTHERS OF ST. GABRIEL

Fratelli di San Gabriele

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**MONTFORTIAN ACTION
FOR TOTAL SUSTAINABILITY (MATS)**

Inspired by



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FOREWORD

If Pope Francis' Encyclical ***Laudato Si' – Care for Our Common Home***, dated 24th May 2015, has been a subject of discussions and deliberations not only at the level of Church leaders and Church institutions, but also by the World Leaders and the Scientific Community, it is because of its impact on the whole humankind. In this Encyclical the Pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take swift and unified global action.

During the *Laudato Si'* Special Anniversary Year (2020-2021), Vatican's Dicastery for Promotion of Integral Human Development launched a new program and public commitment for various institutions to begin a seven-year journey to total sustainability, ***Laudato Si' Action Platform***, in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*, with seven specific goals to achieve.

Religious Congregations, under the leadership of the Unions of Superiors General, was one of the bodies that came forward enthusiastically to implement the ambitious plan of the successful implementation of the *Laudato Si'* Goals. Bro. T. K. James, Assistant General in-charge of JPIC dossier in our Congregation, was actively involved in the reflections that were carried out by the Religious Congregations. As communicated by him on 23rd March 2021, one of the decisions taken by the Superior General and Council was to constitute an International Committee to propose, process and promote

actions for “Total Sustainability”, inspired by the concepts of Integral Ecology and Ecological Conversion enshrined in the Encyclical *Laudato Si’*.

The document you have in hand “**Montfortian Action for Total Sustainability**” is a proof of the Congregation’s commitment to become a *Laudato Si’* Congregation, inviting each one of us individually, institutionally and collectively to embark on a seven-year journey toward Integral Ecology, a holistic perspective and strategy to promote both a flourishing earth and a flourishing human community. As Cardinal Peter K. A. Turkson stated on 25.05.2021 during the conclusion of the Special Year of the Fifth Anniversary of *Laudato Si’* and the launching of the *Laudato Si’* Action Platform, “*The special year of Laudato Si’ ends today, however, it also signals the beginning of seven-year action plans as local Churches, communities, businesses, healthcare centres and education facilities continue to bring the message of the encyclical to life through concrete actions.*”

As I invite each one of our Brothers, our Associates, Collaborators and Students to give thoughtful consideration to your commitment to implement the *Laudato Si’* Goals at the level of the Provinces and the varied ministries of our Congregation. I wish to place on record my sincere appreciation to Bros. Mani Mekunnel and Maurice Birane Diouf, the Convenors of the International Committees, all the Members of the Committees, Bros. T. K. James and Jean-Paul Mbengue, who coordinated the Congregational Commitment, Prayer and Action Plan, and Bro. Georges Le Vern, who did most

of the translations from one language to another. I also acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of Bro. Michael Mathew, the General Bursar, and Bro. Louis Anthony Samy, the Communication in-charge, towards the designing and formatting of this booklet. Let us all together renew our commitment made during the 32nd General Chapter, *“Together with the whole Church and other stakeholders in our education mission, we will engage with the global goals of Sustainable Development. We will draw inspiration from the life and example of St. Francis of Assisi and from the Social Teachings of the Church, particularly from the Encyclical Laudato Si”*. As Pope Francis beautifully puts it, *“All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvement and talents”* (LS. 14).

21 June 2021

Bro. John Kallarackal, SG

Superior General

1. INTRODUCTION:

In our education mission over the years, we have been inculcating in students respect and care for the community of life through various activities and programmes. The following extracts from the Congregational documents establishes this fact:

- *“...the Brother teaches the young to use created things in the light of the Gospel and according to the teachings of the Church”¹.*
- *“Montfortian Education recognizes that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value...hence all of creation has to be treated with respect and care... Towards this end, Montfortian education will:*
 - *Inculcate in students respect and care for the community of life through various curricular and co-curricular activities;*
 - *Reduce, reuse and recycle materials used in consumption systems;*
 - *Make careful and efficient use of energy;*
 - *Adopt lifestyles that enhance quality of life and limit material needs;*
 - *Develop an institutional culture that embodies respect and care for community of life;*

¹ Cf. Constitutions No. 67

- *Adopt the values and principles embedded in the Earth Charter as a guide in our commitment to respectful and sustainable use of resources of the world.*²
- *“Together with the whole Church and other stakeholders in our education mission, we will engage with the global goals of Sustainable Development. We will draw inspiration from the life example of St. Francis of Assisi and from the Social Teachings of the Church, particularly from the Encyclical Laudato Si’* ³
- *“We will study and engage with Laudato Si’ in our education mission”*⁴.

Inspired by our Rule of Life & Constitutions, Montfortian Education Charter and the General Chapter exhortations, some of our institutions are doing commendable works in the areas of renewable energy, cultivation of medicinal plants, biodiversity & afforestation, water management, waste management, relief to vulnerable groups, simple lifestyle, ecological spirituality, ecological education, etc.

The publication of the encyclical, *Laudato Si’* (2015), the release of *Laudato Si’ Goals* (2020) and launch of *Laudato Si’ Action Platform* (2021) have given us an opportunity to align our existing initiatives with the massive global movement of the Catholic Church. It is an opportunity for us to strengthen our initiatives and invent new, concrete, visible, long-term projects being caught up with “*the*

² Cf. The Montfortian Education Charter, 2010

³ Cf. 32nd General Chapter, 5.5.1 Action 5

⁴ Cf. 32nd General Chapter, 5.5.1.2 Strategy 5b

urgent need for us to move forward in a bold cultural revolution”⁵.

Pope Francis reminds us, *“The future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize.”⁶* The need of the hour is to engage every Brother, Teacher, Student and anyone associated with our mission, in promoting total sustainability, considering the global climate emergency that threatens the balance of our eco system.

2. POPE FRANCIS’ CALL FOR URGENT ACTION:

In the words of Pope Francis, *“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral*



development, for we know that things can change...”⁷ He envisions a state of harmonic coexistence wherein the needs of the present are met without compromising the needs of the future.

Making Peace with Nature is the defining task of the 21st century. The new Report (2021) of the United Nations

⁵ Cf. Laudato Si’, 114

⁶ Cf. Second World Meeting of POPULAR MOVEMENTS, Santa Cruz la Sierra, Bolivia, 9 July 2015

⁷ Laudato Si’, 13

Environment Programme offers a blueprint for the sustainable world we need, with practical recommendations on how to tackle the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The well-being of today's youth and future generations depends on an urgent and clear break with current trends of environmental decline. The coming decade is crucial. Society needs to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 compared to 2010 levels, and reach net-zero emissions by 2050 to limit warming to 1.5 °C as aspired to in the Paris Agreement, while at the same time conserving and restoring biodiversity and minimizing pollution and waste.

(<https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>)

Echoing the urgency of tackling the environmental crises, Pope Francis said: *“As the term ‘countdown’ suggests, we must act urgently... Each one of us can play a valuable role if we all set out today — not tomorrow, today... Science tells us, every day more precisely, that we need to act urgently — I am not exaggerating — this is what science tells us, if we are to have any hope of avoiding radical and catastrophic climate change...This is a scientific fact.”*⁸.

⁸ Cf. Pope Francis, TED Talk, Oct 11, 2020

3. LAUDATO SI' GOALS:

The *Laudato Si'* Special Anniversary Year was observed from 24 May 2020 to 24 May 2021. It was opened with *Laudato Si'* Week 2020, and released seven goals grounded in the *Laudato Si'* concept of integral ecology with a clear emphasis on “ecological conversion”⁹ in action. Within these goals are roughly two dozen indicators, indicative of caring for the Earth and total sustainability. Benchmarks include carbon neutrality, biodiversity protection, upholding climate and social justice for the marginalized sectors.



- I. **Responding to the Cry of the Earth:** The Response to the Cry of the Earth 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. Actions could include the adoption of renewable energies and energy sufficiency measures, achieving carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture, and guaranteeing access to clean water for all.

- II. **Responding to the Cry of the Poor:** The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human

⁹ Laudato Si', 217

life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. Actions could include projects to promote solidarity, with special attention given to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, and children at risk, analysis and improvement of social systems, and social service programmes.

- III. **Ecological Economics:** Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere – our common home. Actions could include sustainable production and consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any activity harmful to the planet and the people, supporting circular economies, and prioritizing care labour and protecting the dignity of workers.
- IV. **Adoption of Simple Lifestyles:** The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. Actions could include reducing waste and recycling, adopting sustainable dietary habits (opting for a more plant-based diet and reducing meat consumption), greater use of public transport, active mobility (walking, cycling), and avoiding single use items (e.g., plastic, etc.).
- V. **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 Si'* themes within the community, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities.

VI. **Ecological Spirituality:** Ecological Spirituality 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. Actions could include promoting creation-centred liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats and formation programmes, and praying in nature.

VII. **Community Engagement and Participatory Action:** Community Engagement and Participatory Action encourage the development of cultures and policies that protect our common home and all who share it. Actions could include promoting advocacy and developing people's campaigns, engagement with decision-makers, and encouraging rootedness and a sense of belonging in local communities and neighbourhood ecosystems.

[\(https://laudatosi-actionplatform.org/laudatosi-goals/\)](https://laudatosi-actionplatform.org/laudatosi-goals/)

4. LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM (LSAP):

Pope Francis says, "*Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan*"¹⁰. Responding to this call, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human

¹⁰ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 164

Development (DPIHD), in collaboration with Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), has launched *Laudato Si'* Action Platform on 24 May 2021. It is a seven-year action plan at local, regional, national and international levels towards addressing *Laudato Si'* Goals.

It seeks to involve families, dioceses, schools, universities, hospitals, business establishments and religious orders. The

participating entities are required to commit themselves to a 7-year journey towards transition to Integral Ecology through a common process. The suggested process has three components, namely, Public Commitment, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) Action Plan and Partnership. Each entity is expected to define its own plan in detail, according to its charism, situation and context, but it should be realistic, simple, gradual, inspiring and flexible. In order to provide tools for sharing and collaboration, the DPIHD, has launched a new website.



The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform plans to involve the entire Catholic world in this noble venture. It is hoped that this initiative will help 21-25 % of the global population to embrace systemic change, thereby reaching the critical mass needed for radical transformation. This will be the contribution of Catholic Church towards the realization of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5. CONGREGATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN LSAP:

The Superior General in Council in Session No. 183 & 192, held on 05 March 2021 & 18 March 2021 respectively, constituted two International Core Committees to facilitate the Congregational participation in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform with the following members:

ANGLOPHONE CORE COMMITTEE

- a) Bro Mani Mekkunnel - Convener (Secretary, Education Secretariat)
- b) Bro. Varghese Theckanath (Secretary, GSJP Sub-Secretariat)
- c) Bro. Irudhayam M. (Convener, JPIC Commission, India)
- d) Bro. P. J. George (Convener, Education Commission, India)
- e) Bro. Varghese Mandapathil (Convener, Formation Commission, India)
- f) Bro. Anurak Nidhibhadrabhorn (THA)
- g) Bro. James N. A. (PEA)

E-mail: proactive2019@gmail.com (Bro. Mani Mekkunnel)

FRANCOPHONE CORE COMMITTEE

- a) Bro. Maurice Birane Diouf - Convener (Secretary, JPIC Secretariat)
- b) Bro. Ambroise Désiré Ndougou (Provincial Superior, Brazzaville)
- c) Bro. Arsène Bwayomo (KIN)
- d) Bro. José Luis Rodriguez Bayòn (ESP)
- e) Bro. Henri Péroys (FRA)
- f) Mr. Dominique Lecorps (FRA)

E-mail: birmau@hotmail.fr (Bro. Maurice Birane Diouf)

The Superior General in his Letter No. 14 dated 20-04-2021 exhorted, “*May I request all the Brothers of the different entities to collaborate with the International Francophone and Anglophone Committees, in promoting Integral Ecology in our environment and in realizing Laudato Si’ Goals?*”

6. COMMITMENT, ACTION PLAN & PRAYER:

Responding to the impassionate appeal of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, by answering “*both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*”¹¹ through concrete actions and passionate commitment, the Superior General in Council in Session No. 209 held on 16-06-2021 has approved the Congregational Commitment, the Action Plan and the Prayer proposed by the Core Committees.

¹¹ Cf. Laudato Si’, 49

7. CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT TO LAUDATO SI' GOALS:

In the context of global environmental crisis marked by powerful opposition to concrete solutions, general lack of interest, the denial of the problem, the indifference, nonchalant resignation or the blind confidence in technical solutions¹²,

WITH

- Pope Francis,
- The international community in its concern for the degradation of the environment,
- In communion with all men and women of good will, in the footsteps of Saint Louis-Marie de Montfort, and in the spirit of the *Montfortian Education Charter* of the Institute¹³

WE,

Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel,

- With our collaborators, our associates, our students, those involved in varied ministries and their families,

Aware

- of the "urgent challenge to protect our common home"¹⁴;

¹² Cf. Laudato Si' 14

¹³ Montfortian Education Charter (2010), 5 vii (Respect for Community of Life)

¹⁴ Cf. Laudato Si', 13

Welcoming

- with love, humility and trust "the urgent appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of the planet"¹⁵;

Sharing the conviction

- that "humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home"¹⁶;
- that "we require a new and universal solidarity"¹⁷;
- that "humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption..."¹⁸;

THUS,

- listening to the cry of the earth, our mother, and the cry of the poor, our sisters and brothers in humanity who are the faces of Jesus Christ¹⁹;
- "We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference."²⁰

¹⁵ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 14

¹⁶ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 13

¹⁷ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 14

¹⁸ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 23

¹⁹ Cf. Montfort carrying a poor man to the Mission House in Dinan in 1706: "Open to Jesus Christ"

²⁰ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 52

WE,

Montfort Brothers of St. Gabriel,

Faced with the painful observation

- that “our common home is falling into serious disrepair”²¹,

Becoming aware

- that “hope would have us recognize that that there is always a way out”²²,
- that “faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters”²³;
- that “everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society”²⁴;

WE COMMIT OURSELVES IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. LOUIS-MARIE DE MONTFORT, "FATHER OF THE POOR"

- **to live "an integral ecology**, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions”²⁵;

²¹ Cf. Laudato Si', 61

²² Cf. Laudato Si', 61

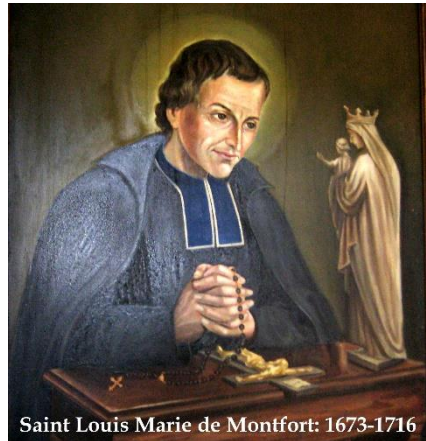
²³ Cf. Laudato Si', 64

²⁴ Cf. Laudato Si', 91

²⁵ Cf. Laudato Si', 137

– **to choose the Montfortian " GOD ALONE"**

- the only Saviour of the universe, as the end of the choices and decisions to be made;
- to root our reflections, research and initiatives in fidelity to His creative and redemptive work;
- as the source of our motivations, commitments and actions;
- by cultivating, in our lives, interiority for ourselves²⁶ and by giving interiority a real place in the education and teaching of our pupils²⁷; giving space to silence, to the heart and to the body, and stopping to observe and educate "*in grateful contemplation of God's world*"²⁸ in order to see it with the eyes of God²⁹.



Saint Louis Marie de Montfort: 1673-1716

– **To act for the Montfortian "GOD ALONE":**

- as collaborators in the work of restoring the relationships of our common home by creating a climate of family spirit, made up of trust,

²⁶ Cf. The importance of prayer in the life of Montfort

²⁷ Cf. The primordial role of silence in structuring the children in Montfort's charitable schools in La Rochelle

²⁸ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 214

²⁹ Cf. Gift of Wisdom

benevolence and closeness to the human beings who live with us

- as stewards of God's gifts;
 - bringing to life the principles of green institutions in the spirit of the Earth Charter;
 - by educating the beauty of Creation³⁰ to sow in the hearts of the children, young people and adults (staff and families) of our ministries the desire to take care of our planet and of human beings
- in a dialogue of love, "*summon to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest*"³¹. We commit ourselves so that our ministries may be more and more, in the spirit of Father de Montfort, "levers of social dignity"³², places of "restoration of the dignity of the body"³³, of "reawakening self-esteem"³⁴, of "works of mercy"³⁵, and of social commitment³⁶.
 - **To follow more closely Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Wisdom through a "profound interior conversion"³⁷ to adopt a prophetic lifestyle:**

³⁰ Cf. The books of Wisdom, Psalms and Proverbs on which Montfort based his concern for the beauty of churches, processions...

³¹ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 158

³² Cf. Montfort's charitable schools

³³ Cf. Montfort's action at the general hospital in Poitiers

³⁴ Cf. Montfort's letter to the inhabitants of Montbernage in Poitiers

³⁵ Cf. the hospice for the incurable in Nantes created with the Dauvaise sisters

³⁶ Cf. Montfort's "House of Providence" to welcome the distressed and to help the abandoned

³⁷ Cf. *Laudato Si'*, 217

- by incarnating Jesus Christ Wisdom in our lives, to discern, teach and live the true wisdoms in the service of men, especially the poorest, and in the service of the preservation of our planet, to discern and denounce the false wisdoms of our increasingly consumerist world.
- by relying on Mary, our Mother, through whose hands Montfort invites us to consecrate ourselves to Jesus Christ³⁸, to help us and to help young people and adults to divest themselves of their excessive desire for possession, of the desire to subject nature to the unbridled satisfaction of all their needs in order to live a happy and contented life.

8. CONGREGATIONAL ACTION PLAN:

- 8.1 Existing and new initiatives of every entity of the Congregation towards the Integral Ecology shall be termed as MONTFORTIAN ACTION FOR TOTAL SUSTAINABILITY (MATS).
- 8.2 All the institutions under the control of the Institute are invited to align their existing and new initiatives towards Integral Ecology to the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform by adhering to the proposed **common process** having three components, namely,
 - a) Public Commitment
 - b) SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) Action Plan

³⁸ Cf. The text of the consecration

c) Partnership

For more clarity on *Laudato Si'* Goals and Action, please visit:

<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/resources/>

- 8.3 All the institutions under the control of the Institute are invited to finalize the above process and register in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform website **before 01 October 2021**.

[\(<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/pledge-your-commitment>\)](https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/pledge-your-commitment)

- 8.4 All the Communities of the Institute are invited to incorporate their Commitment to *Laudato Si'* Goals in the Community Project.
- 8.5 All the Provincial Superiors are invited to prepare a concrete, visible, long-term project towards the realization of *Laudato Si'* Goals.
- 8.6 A Fund at the Generalate level shall be created to support the projects of the needy Provinces, by pooling the resources from the self-reliant Provinces.
- 8.7 All the Provincial Superiors are invited to organize Retreats, Reflections, Workshops, Seminars, Webinars, Projects for the Brothers, teachers and students to disseminate the message of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the United Nations 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

- 8.8 All the Provincial Superiors are invited to organize a half-yearly meeting / webinar in August and February to assess and to sustain the MATS actions and send half yearly report to the Core Committee marking a copy to the Assistant General In-charge of JPIC.
- 8.9 The respective Core Committees shall take appropriate steps to promote MATS initiatives and shall organize an annual meeting / webinar in September and shall publish an Annual Report in October.
- 8.10 Periodic assessment of MATS initiatives will be conducted by the Central Administration with the assistance of Core Committees, using Google Forms Survey and other suitable methods.
- 8.11 The Provincial Superiors are invited to encourage Brothers, Teachers and Associates to do the Certificate Courses on *Laudato Si'* wherever feasible.
- 8.12 The Province and Congregational News Bulletins and Websites shall highlight MATS.
- 8.13 Efforts shall be made at every level to collaborate with the environmental initiatives of Parishes, Dioceses, Congregations, Government agencies, etc.
- 8.14 All the Provinces are invited to prepare an *Interactive Dialogue Guide for Institutions*, to engage the stakeholders in effectively implementing Laudato Si' goals.

9. ONLINE RESOURCES:

- a) JPIC Roma: <https://www.jpicroma.org/laudato-si>
- b) Sowing Hope for the Planet: <https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org>
- c) Season of Creation: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>
- d) [Laudato Si' Schools | Living Laudato Si' Philippines](#)
- e) <https://catholicearthcare.org.au/laudato-si-schools>
- f) [Ecumenical and Interreligious Guidebook: CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME | Catholic Climate Covenant](#)
- g) <https://jesuitforum.ca/resources/dialogue-guides>
- h) <https://www.devp.org/fr/laudatosi>

PRAYER

Lord you created the earth as our Home to nurture and sustain our life. Your Son walked on it and died to consecrate it as the kingdom of God. Make us instruments of preserving this integrity of creation. Send your Spirit to help us on this journey towards an Integral Ecology under the leadership of Pope Francis, whom you have chosen for our times. Lead us to work with the world leaders who have committed themselves to transform the world with the Sustainable Development Goals. May all the people engaged in various ministries be guided by your Spirit, and experience the loving care of Mother Mary. Amen.