

# Ecological Education

Ecological Education is about helping children, young people, and adults learn the Christian values and habits to be co-creators and good stewards in caring for our own bodies, defending human life, and living in harmony with creation.



## STATEMENT FROM POPE FRANCIS

An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits. Many people know that our current progress and the mere amassing of things and pleasures are not enough to give meaning and joy to the human heart, yet they feel unable to give up what the market sets before them. In those countries which should be making the greatest changes in consumer habits, young people have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment. At the same time, they have grown up in a milieu of extreme consumerism and affluence which makes it difficult to develop other habits. We are faced with an educational challenge. (*Laudato Si'* #209)

## SCRIPTURE QUOTES

- “Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold.” *Proverbs 3:13*
- “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” *James 2:17*

## REFLECTION

We must challenge our ordinary range of perception through Faith and an open heart. Compassion, patience and solidarity will be the prerequisite to engage in a meaningful conversation with our neighbors about how to better care for creation. As Pope Francis affirms in *Laudato Si'*: “It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.” We will grow together from the tensions between what we come to learn and what we must unlearn. For over a century, society understood its responsibility to improve markets and quality of life, but we now face an existential threat in a finite physical world. A renewed sense of stewardship asks us to live more simply so that others may simply live. We must also be mindful of the earth as the common home for future generations. New habits of conserving our natural resources and using sustainable resources can help us develop a sense of contributing to a more integral human ecology that fosters stronger bonds of communion with one another and harmony with God's creation. In this way we more fully unite ourselves in the saving work of the Lord Jesus. In union with Christ, we “hope that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (*Romans 8.20-21*)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the family the first place where environmental concerns must be taught and lived?
2. What small steps can your family take to learn the ABC's of caring for our common home?
3. What steps must our communities of faith take to integrate the language of protecting our common home in its ministries, eucharistic celebrations, and daily interactions?

## TAKE ACTION

- What is your parish community interested in doing to begin to reconnect with God, our neighbor and with the earth itself? List your action steps for your community in teaching and living the message of *Laudato Si'*.
- Take the St. Francis Pledge: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/pledge>
- Form a Parish Creation Care Team: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.worldsecuringsystems.com/creation-care-resource-library>
- Catholic Covenant Energies: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/cce>
- Legislative Advocacy Resources: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/advocacy>