

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



International Mother Earth Day Restore Our Earth

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"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."

Pope Francis, Laudato Si' (LS #217)

The global theme for Earth Day 2021 — Restore Our Earth — brings hope that all people can come together to heal the planet. The crises our planet faces require urgent action by all - governments, international and civil society organizations, the private sector and individuals. From the United Nations that has launched a decade on ecosystem restoration to every living person on the planet, each of us can play a part to bring healing to our common home.

For us, as people of faith and members of the Bon Secours Family, we have taken to heart Pope Francis' invitation to embrace an "ecological conversion" on behalf of the healing of Mother Earth. This conversion begins with an awareness of and deep connection with the natural world that, as Pope Francis reminds us, "speaks of God's love and affection for us". This deep appreciation for the gift of the natural world moves us to cultivate "ecological virtues" that motivate us to live in more mutually enhancing ways on our beautiful planet.

We celebrate Earth Day 2021 knowing we are lavishly blessed by the diversity, beauty and abundance of creation and we look to the future with audacious hope that through our efforts Earth's health will be restored.

United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity.

There has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, half and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part.

The UN Decade runs from 2021 through 2030, which is also the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals and the timeline scientists have identified as the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change. Find out more about ecosystems and the UN Decade, and join the global movement to restore our world.

Learn more: <https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/>



*All of us can cooperate as
instruments of God
for the care of creation,
each according to his or her own
culture, experience,
involvements and talents.*

Laudato Si', #14

April
JPIC Days of Remembrance

April 7
World Health Day

April 22
International Mother Earth Day



*"Our common home
is like a sister
with whom we share our life
and a beautiful mother
who opens her arms
to embrace us."*

Laudato Si'

April 24 – 30
World Immunization Week

April 25
World Malaria Day

If we approach nature and the environment with openness to awe and wonder ...
we feel intimately united with all that exists and sobriety and care for creation wells up spontaneously. LS #11



The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on intensely personal meaning.

Laudato Si' #84

Reflection

What places are part of the history of your friendship with God?

Take time to revisit one those places this month. If you can't physically go there, revisit that place in your mind...often.



The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us.

Laudato Si' #84

The starting point for healing and restoring Earth begins with a deep appreciation for the beauty, diversity and magnificence of God's creation. Spend time every day this month in nature and allow yourself to feel God's love reflected there. Then, consider one practice you can adopt to heal Earth.

Cultivating Ecological Virtues: As Catholics we are all familiar with the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Love. In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis suggests that we cultivate "ecological virtues", virtues that will enable us to deepen our relationship with the natural world, live more simply in our use of Earth's resources and pass on to future generations an Earth restored to health.



Gratitude: "When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them." LS #87 Notice how often gratitude wells up in you through all your encounters with the natural world.

Reverence: "Every creature is thus the object of God's tenderness... Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of God's love and...God enfolds it with affection." LS #77 And "Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life." LS #207 Inscribe this quote on your heart and call it to mind as you encounter other species in the days ahead.

Humility: It is said that Earth is a tiny speck of dust in the vast cosmic universe. It is also said that if time were condensed to a twelve-month calendar, humans only appear at a few seconds before midnight on December 31. Allow these two perspectives to evoke humility in you.

Simplicity: Pay attention to your purchasing habits. Are you an impulsive buyer? When do you feel the need to shop? If you buy in bulk, try getting only stuff for the week. Through trial and error, see how much you really need in a given week. If you're an impulsive buyer, stay away from the things that ignite that impulse. If you know what makes you feel the need to shop, try to resist it in a constructive and healthy way. Go for a run or call a friend who can keep you accountable for your purchasing habits.

Sobriety: What is enough? Sometimes we deceive ourselves and tell ourselves that we need more than we do. Family and friends can help us discern our needs. If you're serious about it, muster up the courage and ask them: "Is there anything in my life that you think I don't need?" "Is there anything that I have that you might need?"

Care: Finally, what is yours and what is ours to do? What does God desire to do through you and for you so that our greatgrandchildren, great nieces and great nephews can enjoy the beauty and health of this magnificent planet we call our common home?



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