

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours

Laudato Si' Week



Hope for Earth + Hope for Humanity

"Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems."

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

Hope for Earth – Hope for Humanity is the theme of Laudato Si' Week 2023. While Pope Francis' encyclical on the care for our common home presents the painful realities of the suffering of Earth and all her beings, it also offers so much hope. This hope comes in the form of people of good will who have taken to heart the message of Pope Francis' encyclical and have committed themselves to participate in a journey of "ecological conversion". This interior journey is one of developing a transformed relationship with Earth based on reciprocity and gratitude.

I recently viewed the film, "The Letter", featuring Pope Francis and five frontline ecological leaders that he invited to the Vatican to discuss his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. What is so powerful about this film is that it expertly weaves spirituality, scientific facts and first-hand encounters with people who are experiencing the effects of climate change. If you have not yet seen this film, available on YouTube with subtitles in English, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, it is a must see! To commemorate Laudato Si' Week this issue of the JPIC Newsletter introduces you to the remarkable people in this film and challenges all of us to listen to their voices that truly bring hope for Earth and hope for humanity.

"The great treasure of *Laudato Si'*'s wisdom needs to become far more deeply known and effectively put into practice."

Cardinal Micha.el Czerny



Celebrate Laudato Si' Week

Plan time to view "The Letter". Everything you need to host a showing of this film is available here and it's FREE:

<https://www.theletterfilm.org/>

Watch here:

<https://www.theletterfilm.org/watch/>



Be the Change You Want to See in our World

Since its promulgation eight years ago, *Laudato Si'* and its message are still not widely known, even among Catholics, while the environmental crisis of our planet has worsened drastically. What can you do on behalf of Earth and all her beings to spread the good news of *Laudato Si'*?

Consider who you can invite to view and discuss "The Letter".

Try to arrange a family, colleague or friends' movie matinee or movie night to spread the word in your area of influence.

May, 2023
Vol. 8, Number 9



May
JPIC Days of Remembrance

May 1
Feast of St. Joseph the Worker
International Workers' Day

May 15
Anniversary of Papal Encyclicals
Rerum Novarum (1891)
Quadragesimo Anno (1931)
Mater et Magistra (1961)

May 16
International Day of
Living Together in Peace

May 21 - 28
Laudato Si' Week

May 22
International Day for Biological
Diversity

May 29
International Day of
United Nations Peacekeepers

Voices that Challenge

The voices that are present in the dialogue documented in *The Letter* come from communities of the Indigenous, people experiencing poverty, youth and nature herself.

Cacique Odair “Dadá” Borari comes from the Borari people in Brazil’s Amazon region, where he has led groundbreaking work on environmental defense in a very dangerous place.

Arouna Kandé lives in Saint Louis in Senegal, a city he was forced to move to as a climate refugee. He now studies sustainability in order to bring new solutions to his village.

Ridhima Pandey comes from Haridwar in India, where she has led youth movements for the climate since the age of nine. Now 14 years old, she continues her leadership to address the climate crisis.

Greg Asner and Robin Martin are scientists from Hawaii where they have developed an innovative technique to map underwater heat waves that kill coral reefs. They speak for nature.



Cacique Odair Borari, Arouna Kandé, Robin Martin, Greg Asner, Ridhima Pandey



The Voice of Poverty: Arouna Kandé

“I am a climate refugee from Senegal. I was working on the farm. The fields dried up. All the farmers suffered. The destruction of nature forced us to leave our homes. The people had nowhere else to live after their houses were destroyed. The sea, too, has invaded all the houses in the area. Now some almost live in the sea.”

What would you say to Arouna?

The Voice of Indigenous People: Cacique Odair “Dadá” Borari:

“I am here to speak on behalf of the forest and the Indigenous population. We do not want to see the Amazon forest finished, because life is in it. The forest is asking for help, and to keep it alive, it does not depend only on the Indigenous people, but on everyone, especially the government. Let’s unite to protect it.”

What would you say to Cacique?

International Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS

Sr. Rosa Elena Lozada Escobar, CBS

Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ - Chair

Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS

Rachel Moccia

Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS - Co-chair

Nicholas Stein

Sr. Chris Webb, CBS

Observers for 2023:

Sr. Marianne Falanka, DRC

Beatrice Lesourd, France

Sr. Nathalie Lundolo, CBS, France



“May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’*

The Voice of Youth: Ridhima Pandey

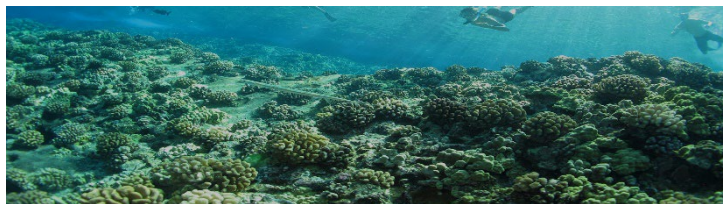
“I do not want my generation to suffer. What has my generation done wrong to live in such conditions when the older generations had a healthier childhood and life? Why is it important for us to be on the streets fighting for our rights? I believe it is because the older generation who was supposed to take the lead did not do their jobs properly. I was forced to be an activist as the older generations forgot to respect the planet. I was supposed to be in school. I missed out on my childhood because I was afraid that if I did not take action, I would die and my future would be destroyed.”

What would you say to Ridhima?

The Voice of Nature: Greg Asner and Robin Martin

“Our role was to represent the unseen wildlife. The film focused on our research with coral reefs, but it’s symbolic of all wildlife. As scientists, we measure, provide a compass and provide tools and tool kits, but all people at all levels are needed to tackle this. Scientists know this already, including the most experienced veteran researchers. People cannot just sit back and hope that science will solve the climate crisis or hope that some technological solution will solve it. We need to act and work together.”

What would you say to Greg and Robin?



Epilogue: One of the biggest learnings these participants took away from their dialogue with Pope Francis was that they have more power than they knew. All of these leaders developed incredible initiatives in their home regions long before traveling to the Vatican. But they left that meeting with Pope Francis with an even greater sense of how much they matter. They are people who are protecting this planet on behalf of all humanity. Pope Francis spent more time with them than he usually spends with heads of state and visiting dignitaries. After the meeting, which was reported by the media in his region, Cacique “Dadá”, the Borari leader who has been a powerfully effective land defender in a very dangerous place, said: “They will think twice before trying to kill me now.”

Source: TED Blog