

Our Common Home

SESSION 1: Praise and Lament

Spiritual Reflection

The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (84)... 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. (87)... This sister [the Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. (2)... Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal. (202)

Ethical Reflection

Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things. (43)

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*. (49)

Call to Action

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. (13)

A Prayer for Our Earth

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. ~ POPE FRANCIS



Franciscan Action Network
Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare



ACTIONS

Reflections and Reading Materials

- **Nature as Spiritual Practice** by Steven Chase (Eerdsman Publishing 2011)
- **The Way of Hope** by Jim Wallis (*Sojourners Magazine*, <http://sojo.net/articles/way-hope>)
- **Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake: Online resources** – Additional reading materials, Bible studies, statements from many religious denominations
- **Center for Spirituality in Nature** – Online resources

Living Witness

Positive changes in your daily living that will serve as a living witness to those around you

- Check out online resource **“Water Use It Wisely – 100+ Ways to Conserve”**
- **Carry utensils and reusable napkins** at all times to avoid waste
- **Be willing to forego coffee or water** when there’s no way of avoiding a disposable container. Make your sacrifice an act of prayer and solidarity.
- **Challenge yourself to divest from fossil fuels** as a personal commitment to reverse climate change. Check out Divest Invest.
- **Vote: make creation care a top priority in every election** – Check out the League of Conservation Voters’ Scorecard.
- **Sign the Catholic Climate Covenant global petition** to increase the pressure on governments to make substantive advancement at the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris in November 2015.

Community Engagement

Working together will speed up positive change

- **Tree plantings** – IPC’s Trees for Sacred Spaces Program hosts tree plantings throughout Maryland. Convince YOUR faith community to host its own tree planting. For details about this program and upcoming plantings, contact bonnie@interfaithchesapeake.org.
- **IPC Stewardship Service Day in 2016** – Join 200 other volunteers in an interfaith planting effort in Anne Arundel County
- **River Cleanups** – 28th Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup (April 16, 2016); Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay Project Clean Stream (year-round)
- **Help track river health** with the Audubon Naturalist Society “Creek Critters” phone app. The app teaches you what indicators to look for, and you’ll enter your findings into the app to help scientists tell the story of that river’s health.
- **Become a trained Master Watershed Steward** – This multi-week course teaches you beyond the basics and trains you to be a community leader. Classes are available in many counties.
- **Volunteer with IPC** and help lead future kayaking trips, outreach to your faith community, or engage in our work. Contact Jodi Rose to get involved! jodi@interfaithchesapeake.org
- **Looking for more ideas?** Check out IPC’s Menu for Action for hundreds of ways to help heal the Earth!

