

Our Common Home

SESSION 2: Environmental Justice

Prompts for Paddling Discussions and Personal Reflections

- What are your reactions to the story of Eagle Harbor?
- Pope Francis encourages us to listen both to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (49). What happens when we are attuned to only one or the other?¹
- How do you define “economy”? What purpose does “the economy” serve?

Suggested Discussion Questions for Eagle Harbor Residents

- What do you love best about Eagle Harbor?
- What challenges do you face (environmental, economic, political, cultural, etc.)
- How can young people be advocates for your community?
- How should young adults strive to be more aware of similar challenges in other communities?
- Q&A with participants

Closing Ceremony

Leader: We were brought here together today to explore the depths of God’s love for all of his creation, including you and me. We are called by name to play an integral role in the healing of the earth in a way that only will be revealed to us through prayer and reflection. Holy One, guide us in our ongoing discernment of how we can contribute to the healing of the earth and the healing of those excluded, the poor, and the ones who bear the brunt of our environmental trappings.

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.

Open group prayers/intercessions

Stand in a circle, turning to the person on the right and saying:

“[Name], you are talented, you are capable, you are essential to the Creator’s plan for healing our broken world.”

¹ Adapted from the US Council of Catholic Bishops Laudato Si’ Study Guide

Personal Reflection Guide

Quotations from *Laudato Si'*

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (92)

...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)

...economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account, let alone the effects on human dignity and the natural environment. (56)

Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. (205)

Yet we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral. (112)

Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded. (13)

Prompts

How does your faith tradition connect environmental, social, and economic concerns? Compare and contrast your tradition and personal beliefs to what Pope Francis writes about.

What constitutes “good” technology or technology that should be limited in Pope Francis’ view? What are the criteria to differentiate them?²

How do we as individuals and in our families, workplaces, and communities contribute to environmental damage by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.? How are we part of the solution?³

What is the role of people of faith in addressing the challenges exemplified in Eagle Harbor?

² Adapted from Archdiocese of Washington *Laudato Si'* Study Guide

³ Adapted from Archdiocese of Washington *Laudato Si'* Study Guide