

Our Common Home: A Guide for Caring for Our Living Planet

Connecting Science, Faith and Action

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Class of 1968

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Presentation

Good afternoon, everyone! I am very happy to be here with you at this amazing event to witness the launch of the publication of “Our Common Home: A Guide for Caring for Our Living Planet.”

As a Catholic earth scientist and environmental engineer who is now the Director of the Laudato Si' Action Platform (or LSAP), I especially welcome this *Guide*, knowing that it represents a rather unique collaboration and a welcome addition to the resources to combat climate change and planetary degradation. It is rare that a publication can offer such a clear and concise treatment of the global climate crisis viewed through the lens of both faith and science, while highlighting the things that are most in need of changing, and calling us all to specific actions that can have the greatest impact. A special thanks goes to the Stockholm Environmental Institute and the Vatican's Dicastery for working together to bring us this exceptional and useful document.

While I may appear by myself here today in support of the work that is being highlighted, I also represent the Laudato Si' Action Platform's nearly 7,000 participants, including over 3,000 families and individuals, 150 dioceses and 385 parishes, 540 religious congregations and 700 religious communities, 1050 educational institutions, and 800 hospitals, healthcare agencies, businesses and organizations around the world who have signed up to this ground-breaking, Vatican-led initiative. Launched a little more than one year ago, the groups that have enrolled in this ecological journey towards sustainability now represent more than 4 million people spread across the planet. And our numbers continue to grow monthly. Taking a truly ground-up approach inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, the LSAP has one clear goal: to inspire

and empower everyone to take practical and concrete “decisive action, here and now” (LS 161) as we journey towards a better future together.

With today’s publication, all participants of the LSAP will be extremely happy to have such a needed resource as the ‘Our Common Home Guide’ that provides clear explanations and languages that most people can easily understand.

As on online, digital space and growing community (www.LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org), the LSAP will be able to provide ‘the Guide’ as a resource document to support the reflection and yearly planning process it encourages everyone to map their goals and actions. The LSAP is not only open to all Catholics, their institutions and communities, but also to every person of goodwill - to join our community to embark on a journey toward healing in our relationships with God, our neighbors and the Earth itself.

Last weekend, as my wife Julie and I spent time with our family cleaning up trash and other debris along the banks of the White River in our City of Indianapolis, I was blessed to part of a game that my two grandsons, River and Rocket, had made up. You see, each time they saw a piece of trash along the River’s edge, they bent down and picked up ‘the treasure’ they had encountered, and took it back to the nearby ‘treasure store’ (*i.e.*, the trash can). What a collection they had at the end of our game! I was overwhelmed at their enthusiasm, and recognized in these simple actions, the root of the ecological conversion we all need to undergo to make a difference - a difference that responds not only to ‘*the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*’ (LS 49), but also to the cry of our children, our grandchildren and all the future generations that follow. This time to respond is not tomorrow, it is today. The time for polite conversations and speeches is past. Only dramatic changes beginning today - right now - in both our personal lifestyles and choices as well as our communal policies and governance will head off the rising temperatures and their devastating consequences.

Thanks again to the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Dicastery for helping us all move in the direction of this concrete action that is so desperately needed. Thank you!