

Laudato Si'

EARTH BEATS

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Justice and Environment Mission Group Newsletter
US Region



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In Chapter 6 of *Laudato Si'*, *Ecological Education and Spirituality*, Pope Francis directs people towards a New Lifestyle, a Transformation for the sake of Humanity. All of God's creation is interconnected with a deep sense of **Love** for everything that exists. Yet many people today "lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone." (202) The Encyclical asks that we try to change this.

TOWARD A NEW LIFESTYLE

"Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. Compulsive consumerism is one example of how a market-centered economic paradigm affects individuals, i.e., it "leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume." (203)

"When people become self-centered, (fearful), and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. As these attitudes become more widespread, social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs." (204)

**Am I a participant in a compulsive consumerist society?
How can I as an individual and we as communities
move beyond this?**



EDUCATING FOR THE COVENANT BETWEEN HUMANITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

"Environmental education has broadened its goals. [Not only does it provide] scientific information, consciousness raising, and a call for the prevention of environmental risks, [but also] tends now to include a critique of the "myths" of modernity ... individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market. It seeks to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature



and other living creatures and with God." (210) Pope Francis clearly states that it "should facilitate making the leap toward the transcendent, which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care." (210) Ecological Education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media in catechesis and elsewhere. Good education plants seed when we are young, and continues to bear fruit throughout life." (213)

**We are all invited to be educators
as described in the paragraph above.
How do we respond?**

ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION



Do we have a **passionate interest** in protecting Earth? Most certainly! "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." (218) Pope Francis reminds us that true "Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep

enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. Christian spirituality proposes a growth by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack." (222)

Do we recognize this in our lives?
Does **having more stuff bring us peace and joy**,
or does it make us weary because we never have enough?

CIVIC AND POLITICAL LOVE

As mentioned earlier in paragraph 206, there is a "great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers" (206), hence we should examine the human (and wider environmental) repercussions of our purchases and way of life as we endeavor to build the new "culture of care."

Are we actively supporting initiatives and institutions that help promote an economy in harmony with Earth and the common good – organizations such as:



Credit Unions,
Farmers' Markets,
Cooperatives (for food buyers, artists, fishermen, electricity purchasers, etc.),



Community Gardens, CSA's, Fair Trade Initiatives,
Buy Local Campaigns,
Organic Food Producers, Local Food Purchasing Hubs,



Crafter's Leagues such as League of NH Crafters,
Transition Towns,
Environmental Organizations,
Socially-Responsible Small Businesses.

**Are we actively sharing
the knowledge, vision, and inspiration
that might assist people
to develop more ecologically sound and compassionate ways of living?**

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