

Recognizing that life as we know it has changed significantly in the last months, we still join the world in commemorating the **5th Anniversary of Pope Francis' first encyclical, *Laudato Si'***, with a special week, May 16-24. The encyclical, on ecology and climate change, is an open appeal for dialogue and conversation about the future of our common home—a home we all share, regardless of faith or ideology. This reflection is an invitation for you to see and experience God in new ways while being attentive to your own context and lived experiences. Indeed, in giving Francis' letter a few minutes of our attention during this global pandemic, we gain new perspective to how our work and lifestyles fit within a much larger ecology.

THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* asks that we orient ourselves to hear the cry of the earth, which is inseparable from the cry of the poor. He writes, “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*” (para. 49).

I invite you to consider this for a moment. *A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach.* What parallels do you see between the neglect and exploitation of the earth and the neglect and exploitation of the poor? How are the poor part of your understanding of the way we are to heal the world around us? Has the pandemic changed your understanding of poverty?

If you're comfortable, share with your neighbor some of the ways you personally hear and respond to those brothers and sisters among us who are less fortunate.

[Allow for dialogue]

Our approach to “ecology” must include the poor and vulnerable just as much as the natural world we all share. And so, let us pray:

**Creator, you give us life.
Help us to honor you
as we care for your precious creation.
Redeemer, you give us hope.
Help us see new ways of living
as we turn from the path of destruction.
Holy Spirit, you give us unity.
Help us find strength in the love between us
as we seek healing for the Earth.
Amen.**