

During [Laudato Si' Week](#) all are invited to commemorate the Anniversary of Pope Francis' first encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. 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. These *Laudato Si'* reflection sessions are an invitation for you to see and experience God in new ways while being attentive to your own context and lived experiences. As we gain new perspective to how our work and lifestyles fit within a much larger ecology, let us then consider what actions we can take to care for our common home.

## A WORLD BEFITTING HUMAN DIGNITY

**Leader note:** If possible, have a small potted plant or an image of one available.

How many of you take care of plants or flowers or gardens?? Why do you do it? What does it do for you?

There is something healing in the tending of the earth. Whether you have developed a green thumb or not, we are all called to help cultivate, nurture and tend to a world befitting human dignity.

Dignity is one of those words we use a lot, especially in Catholic health care, but its meaning is hard to define. For Francis, human dignity is derived from our being made by God and called to God's purposes. In this light, our calling to take care of the earth is an invitation to bestow dignity on the rest of the created world. We have not always done a very good job, and sadly, our failure reciprocally affects *us* in surprising ways. Consider this passage: "We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature" (para. 44).

Think quietly to yourself. Do you agree? Does something deep within us respond to natural environments in a way that doesn't happen when we're inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal? It can be difficult to integrate nature into our workday environments – but it can be done.

First, take a moment today to leave the building for a breath of fresh air. Secondly, as you are working today, consider how you might be able to bring nature closer to your daily experience and the experience of others. There's far more at stake than simply decorating the place you're in; you're helping to cultivate a space more befitting of human dignity. 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.**