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.

**BOTH JOYFUL AND TROUBLING**

As he ends his letter on our common home, Pope Francis characterizes the whole document as “both joyful and troubling.”

Let’s take “troubling” first. Pope Francis mentions many issues that are troubling without sugarcoating anything because we don’t have time to sugarcoat the troubling challenges we face, nor should we want to. Other truth is, most of us barely have time to step back from our problems long enough to get any perspective. Yet that’s what this letter has asked us to do: take a step back and reckon with the world we inhabit. Having done so, what do you feel?

Now let’s look at joyful. Francis hopes his letter will help you feel joyful in response to this calling – the calling to make the world a more hospitable place. Perhaps you haven’t felt joy. Perhaps you’ve felt guilt, paralysis, anxiety, etc. It’s okay to feel this way, but it’s not okay to stay in that space. Yes, the news is troubling, but let not your heart be troubled. Instead, allow yourself to stop and remember the joy of the calling you’ve been given. We don’t need help feeling anxious or guilty or paralyzed. We need help holding fast to joy.

In the midst of all that is troubling about the global pandemic, there are glimmers of joy and the earth’s renewal. Skies are blue above major cities across the globe, the water of Venice is clear enough to see fish swimming, sea turtles lay eggs without interference on coastlines.

Take a moment to consider where joy comes from for you and ask yourself how you will tap into that resource. Allow the insights you’ve gained to continue to shape the way you care for our common home. Let us pray:

Creator, Redeemer, Holy Spirit,
Thank you for the gift of Laudato Si’, which teaches us that
“The Creator does not abandon us;
he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us.
Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.”
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.