

12 Invitations from Laudato Si for CLC

Explanation (to be read prior to the meeting):

In his Encyclical, Laudato Si, Pope Francis calls us to “a new and universal solidarity.” (LS #14)

As a world community, we better understand how human actions have caused environmental degradation and contributed to climate change. There are many instances where the detrimental environmental impacts have threatened human life and indeed all of God’s creation. Around the world, we see rising sea levels, more dramatic and damaging weather conditions, hurricanes, droughts, water shortages, massive deforestation, destruction of coral reefs, plant and animal extinctions, and more. Millions of our brothers and sisters worldwide experience hunger, unemployment, homelessness, violence, war, forced migration and more—due to these climate change impacts. As a world community, we are called to come together in solidarity to address these ecological problems. ‘As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation”. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.’ (LS #14) We look within our spheres of influence to make positive impacts in our cultures and environment.

Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Daily Lives. Personally, we can make lifestyle changes such as reducing, reusing, recycling! Pope Francis states, “Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.” (LS #23) In GP#4, “we aim to become committed Christians in bearing witness to those human and Gospel values within the Church and society, which affect the dignity of the person, the welfare of the family and the integrity of creation. We are particularly aware of the pressing need to work for justice through a preferential option for the poor and a simple life style, which expresses our freedom and solidarity with them.”

Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Communities. In the communities where we are involved, we can advocate for and support environmentally sustainable practices in our families, schools, workplaces, companies, institutions, parishes, etc. Pope Francis emphasizes the need for us to “find ways that help people to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.” (LS# 210)

Living Out Our Interconnectedness and Solidarity in our Politics. The Pope also calls us to act at the political level. “A healthy politics is sorely needed, capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia.” (LS# 181) “Society, through non-governmental organizations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment.” (LS #179) Internationally, “a more responsible overall approach is needed to deal with... both the reduction of pollution and the development of poorer countries and regions... it is essential to devise stronger and more efficiently organized international institutions, with functionaries who are appointed fairly by agreement among national governments, and empowered to impose sanctions.” (LS #175)

In GP #12b Since the Christian Life Community aims to work with Christ for the advancement of God’s reign, all individual members are called to an active participation in the vast field of apostolic service. Apostolic discernment, both individual and communal, is the ordinary way of discovering how best to bring Christ’s presence, concretely, to our world. Our broad and demanding mission requires of each member a willingness to participate in social and political life and to develop human qualities and professional skills in order to become more competent workers and convincing witnesses.

Check in

Grace: I ask for the grace of openness to see the needs of the Earth and of the poor and the wisdom and courage to respond to these needs with care and compassion.

Hymn: Today We Are Called to Be Disciples. Tune: “Kingsfold” by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906. Lyrics: H. Kenn Carmichael, 1985 or any other hymn of your choice.

Scripture Acts 2:42-47

The disciples spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers. ⁴³ Many miracles and wonders were being done through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. ⁴⁴ All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. ⁴⁵ They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. ⁴⁶ Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God, and enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

Prayer exercise: I place myself in the home of one of the disciples where together they are reading scripture, breaking bread, sharing a meal, and caring for one another. Observe what happens there. Who are the characters I see? What are their thoughts and attitudes? What inspires them? How do they care for one another? Where am I in this scene?

As I consider the call to care for all of creation, I allow myself to feel my place in the community of nature. Imagining myself in a park garden or in the bush, I take careful note of any movements in my heart, in my thoughts, and in my body.

How I am a good steward in caring for others and for creation?

In My Daily Life: I consider those steps I have taken in my everyday life experience to be a good steward of the earth. What changes can I make in my lifestyle and in my consumption of energy and other resources to better care for others? How can I contribute to a more sustainable and just world, even if it entails personal sacrifice?

In My Communities: I consider the communities with whom I am involved— family, CLC, parish, school, work, etc. What are some of the creative initiatives that are being taken in these communities on behalf of creation and/or the most vulnerable? What concrete efforts need to be taken in our families and communities in order to respond to the environmental crises?

In My Local, Regional, National, and even International Politics: as members of Christian Life Community, with our rich understanding of our role as stewards of creation, how are we responsible to engage in the global debate to ensure that policies on a local, national, or global level help care for creation rather than lead to environmental degradation impinging on the poor, and advancing cultures of consumerism and waste? What do I see are the most urgent ecological needs that require our involvement in political action at the Local level? State level? National? Global? How do I feel called to engage in the political dialogue and process? You can share or write a little about the thoughts that you generated.

What invitation might the Lord be asking of me personally? Of our community?

Sharing

Ongoing Practice: In my daily awareness examen, ask: Where did I hear the cries of the poor today? Where did I hear the cries of the Earth? Next ask the Lord, “How are you inviting me to respond to these cries?”.

Check out