We approach the Lenten season as a time to come closer to God through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As people of faith, we invite others in our parish, our schools and our community to join us in opening our hearts in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Global South and to take action together to build a better world.

For almost 50 years, Canadian Catholics have faithfully responded to the cry of the poor by giving generously to Development and Peace. We have walked side by side with the women, men and children who experience the injustice of poverty, no matter where they may be.

This Lent we are being asked to look into the eyes of our sisters and brothers from the Global South as we continue to lead the “Create a Climate of Change” campaign across Canada, inspired by the Jubilee Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis and his Holy Father’s encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si’. Both are spiritual calls for greater compassion in our world – compassion for our neighbours, those in the Global South living on the margins through our own actions, and our living Earth which so generously provides us with what we need for life.

These prayers, symbols, announcements, talk and reflection are suggestions to help you bring this message of faith and love to your parish and/or your school. For parish celebrations, it will be important to work closely with the pastor and the liturgical team to determine which suggestions will be possible to use at Mass. For school celebrations, consult the worship coordinator and the chaplain or pastoral worker to see which suggestions would work best.

We hope that these resources will inspire you, and that you will share the joy of the Gospel and the message of this important campaign with those around you.
GET ORGANIZED!

A conversation on running a Share Lent Campaign in your Parish

Members often say they learn best by talking to other members about their experiences. To learn more about how to run a Share Lent campaign, our animator Luke Stocking sat down recently with a member who has a lot of experience when it comes to Share Lent.

Luke: I am with Karen Staunton, a long-time Development and Peace member, to talk about carrying out a Share Lent campaign in a parish. Can you begin by telling us where your parish is and how long you have been doing the Share Lent campaign?

Karen: My parish is St. Anne’s in the city of Peterborough, Ontario, and I have been doing this for about 33 years now.

Luke: Share Lent really begins when Development and Peace sends out its organizer’s kit to members and parishes. What is the first thing you do when you get the kit in the mail?

Karen: Before I even get the organizer’s kit, I look at the Development and Peace website (devp.org) to see if there is anything about the campaign so I can start to get focused. When the kit arrives, I look through all the materials so that I can become familiar with them. Then I get in touch with members of my Share Lent committee. I advise them that I have received the kit and I also let them know about the Share Lent workshop for our diocese, encouraging them to attend. People nowadays are so busy, but if they can come out for one day, I want it to be for the workshop. That way, we all hear the same thing and receive effective training, and all our questions get answered by our local animator. (Note: Contact your local animator for the date of your workshop.) We not only hear from the animator, but we have time to sit down and organize, and ask ourselves ‘what can we do in our parish?’

Once I know the theme of the campaign and see the materials from the kit, I start to prepare a display table for the parish. It is also important to get something in the parish bulletin each week of the campaign, starting with the week before Ash Wednesday. On the Sunday before Lent, we also place the Solidarity Calendar in the bulletins. Everybody likes the calendar because each day you have something to focus on.

Luke: What if you are someone in a parish that doesn’t have a committee? What has been your secret for finding people to help out with Share Lent in your parish?

Karen: Figure out who are the parish groups that are active and who you can invite to get involved, like the CWL or the Knights of Columbus. I have also asked our parish priest if he could name a few people who might be interested in helping out. It also helps to make it known as much as possible in your parish that you are the Development and Peace person. People talk to you and you get a sense of who you can call on for help. The Symbols of Solidarity offer a good opportunity to reach out to people and give them a small, simple role to play. Sometimes you get rejected (chuckle) and other times you don’t! You just have to keep a positive attitude and keep working!

Luke: You mentioned that the support of the parish priest is important for a successful campaign. How do you work with your own parish priest to carry out Share Lent?

Karen: The important thing is to make up a schedule for each week of the campaign. I make an appointment with the parish priest to go over our proposal, showing him the materials we will use. I also ask if he would be willing to say a few words in support of the campaign the week before the collection, or if he is unable to speak, if he can allow us a few minutes to speak. The short talk that is provided by Development and Peace in the materials is very useful. When you speak, it helps to have one of the envelopes with you to show parishioners and tell them that it will be in the pews the following week (Solidarity Sunday), and can be used to make a donation. Have your helpers make sure that there are enough envelopes available for people at each Mass.

Luke: If I was a parishioner at St. Anne’s, and I walked into your church on Solidarity Sunday, the Fifth Sunday of Lent, what would I experience?

Karen: If you walked through the front door, first of all you would see our Development and Peace display table. Always make sure your display has pictures. That way, as soon as parishioners walk in they are thinking of Development and Peace. Then you would see the Symbols of Solidarity being explained and placed at the altar or on a table ahead of the start of the Mass. Also, if you can meet with your choir and arrange for the music to reflect the Share Lent theme, then the people are also hearing the message in the music. And then the collection is taken up. Sometimes after Mass we offer coffee in the parish hall and play Share Lent videos and chat with people informally about why giving to the campaign is so important. You can also do this the week before. If you have a Development and Peace solidarity visitor or someone in your community who has been on a Development and Peace solidarity trip, you can arrange for people to learn firsthand about what their donations are supporting.

Luke: When doing any kind of campaign, saying thank you is important. How do you make sure people are thanked for their generosity at St. Anne’s?

Karen: Once we know how much has been collected, we put a thank-you message along with the amount we raised in the parish bulletin. People who are Share Year-Round supporters are also very important and they should have a specific thank-you. We put Share Year-Round flyers out during the campaign on the display table. The more you can put information about monthly giving in front of people the better, because often they do not know about that program.

Luke: Throughout our interview you have made several references to the free materials that can be ordered. If I were a new Share Lent campaign organizer, how would I know how much to order?

Karen: Ask your parish secretary how many bulletins get printed and that is a good number to use. People don’t always pick up the bulletin, however, so it is good to order a few additional copies of the Mini-magazine so you can put them out on the display table. The display table is handy so that people have access to the materials all through Lent, and can pick them up at their convenience.
**Luke:** How long is the display table up for?

**Karen:** I put it up the Sunday before Ash Wednesday and then it is there all through Lent. I always put up the poster that Development and Peace makes for the campaign right in the middle! If the poster goes up on the bulletin board it gets lost, because there is so much on the bulletin board.

**Luke:** You’ve been doing these campaigns for 33 years. What would be your advice to someone who was doing the campaign for the first time?

**Karen:** I think it’s important for the person to go to the workshop. There will be people at the workshop who have been at this as long as myself, or at least for a number of years. They can ask them for advice and get support. It’s very important that if there is a workshop in the diocese that a new person attends.

**Luke:** And if they come to the workshop in Peterborough, they will have the added benefit of getting to taste one of your incredible Share Lent-themed cakes that you make every year!

**Karen:** (laughs) Yes, they are known around Peterborough! And I know our animator really loves them! He’s got a great appetite!

**Luke:** To be as dedicated to Development and Peace as you have been for the last 33 years and to run a great Share Lent campaign every year in your parish takes incredible commitment. What motivates you to carry out this work?

**Karen:** Development and Peace is not just an organization. To me Development and Peace is my faith. It is the arm through which I can reach out to the world. We have our social teachings, but how do we get them out to people in the Church? Development and Peace helps us to do that. It helps us put those teachings into action. I was fortunate enough that I travelled and saw poverty firsthand. I learned about how our social teachings call us to respond and how the whole community gets involved in working to overcome the struggles that people face. And the way that Development and Peace is helping is an inspiration.

**Luke:** You are certainly an inspiration yourself in all the work you do to promote our mission, and the advice you’ve shared here will also help others in their own efforts with the Share Lent campaign! Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me.

**Karen:** Oh, you’re quite welcome!

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**Share Lent 2016 Key Moments**

- **Order your materials by January 20th,** to ensure that you receive them in time for Ash Wednesday (February 10).

- **During the first four weeks of Lent:**
  - Insert the campaign materials in your parish bulletin (Mini-magazine, Solidarity Calendar).
  - Publish weekly announcements in your parish bulletin, or announce them as part of daily school announcements.
  - Create a special display of Development and Peace materials.
  - Promote Share Year-Round at every possible opportunity.

- **Fourth Sunday of Lent**
  - Prepare parishioners or students for next week’s collection by making the campaign visible.
  - Say a prayer or lead the Symbols of Solidarity.
  - Hold a special event during the week (solidarity visitor, Development and Peace video).

- **Fifth Sunday of Lent: Solidarity Sunday**
  - A great day for the homily or short announcement to remind parishioners and motivate them to give to the Share Lent collection. Be sure to thank them for their generosity!
  - Invite people to become Share Year-Round monthly donors, so that they can show their solidarity throughout the year.

- **Good Friday**
  - Organize a Way of the Cross for your parish community and invite the school communities to attend.

- **A week after Solidarity Sunday**
  - Consider distributing the Prayer Card as a way of thanking the community for supporting the campaign.

- **Thank-you announcement**
  - Publish a thank-you note in your parish bulletin and announce the amount raised for the campaign.
Symbols of Solidarity

The Symbols of Solidarity are designed to be used in a procession before or during Mass or at other gatherings. If you would like to propose that the symbols be part of the procession of the offerings at Mass, it will be important to first consult with the pastor or liturgy planning committee to see if it is possible. Schools can consider keeping these symbols present throughout Lent in the chapel or other appropriate visible place.

The procession of each symbol starts as a narrator begins to read each section, and it ends at the front of the church or room. You may wish to have just one narrator, or different voices for each. Allow brief pauses between symbols to create a dramatic effect. The entire procession takes between 10 and 15 minutes. The presenters of the symbols should remain at the front of the church or room where they will join hands after the presentation of the last symbol.

You will need:

- A place to put the symbols after they are carried in – perhaps close to the sanctuary, on a table decorated for this purpose, or a special area in the room where the procession will take place.
- A potted plant, as a symbol of land.
- A house built out of cardboard or other items from the recycling bin, as a symbol of lodging.
- Work gloves, as a symbol of labour.
- A picture of a dove with an olive branch, as a symbol of peace.

1st symbol – A plant

I am 13-year-old Liz Benítez from Paraguay. This plant represents “TIERRA” (tee - era), the land; the land my community needs to live. Care of the land is vital to the health of Mother Earth, but the family farmers in my country who care for the land are victims of huge inequalities and are losing access to their land. Sometimes, they are even violently threatened. In Paraguay, with your help, Development and Peace is supporting peasant farmers, like my father, in defending their land rights.

2nd symbol – A house

I am Try Mopurto from Indonesia. This house represents “TECHO” (tay – cho), lodging, the homes that protect and shelter us from the outdoor elements. Having a peaceful and solid house is vital for stability in one’s life. I lived in a house that had thin walls and a weak roof, and because it is in a slum, the government ignored us. Through Development and Peace, you are supporting its partner Arkomjogja, an association of community architects, that is working in some of the poorest slums in Indonesia. They are helping people have decent housing that addresses the real needs of the community. Today, I have a house that is safe and warm for my family.

3rd symbol – Work gloves

I am Adonis Mejine from Haiti. These work gloves represent “TRABAJO” (trah- bah- ho), the hard labour of all of us who simply want to provide for our families, despite our humble circumstances. With weathered hands, we work long hours so we can feed our families and send our children to school. Today, I have a steady job at BON POUL, a social enterprise that specializes in raising and marketing chickens. This local business was started by Famn Deside, whose mission is to improve the status of women in Haitian society, and who saw the need for women to have access to employment.

Your solidarity through Development and Peace helps to give labour to many.

4th Symbol – A dove with an olive branch

I am a Sister of the Salesians of Don Bosco community in the Cremisan Valley in Bethlehem. This symbol of peace, which originated with early Christians, is ever so needed today in the Holy Land. Our community has been present in the Cremisan Valley since the 19th century, but we are at risk of being separated from the community that we so diligently serve, including 450 children for whom we provide educational services, due to the construction of an annexation wall. Development and Peace’s partner, the Society of St. Yves, is a Catholic human rights centre that takes on the cases of the most disenfranchised to help them access justice in the midst of daily human rights abuses. They accompany us in defending our rights so that we can continue to live our calling amongst our community and in peace.
CONCLUDING PRAYER

(The celebrant can be asked to pray these words.)

Let us pray:
Loving Creator,
We place these Symbols of Solidarity before you.
We offer them knowing that we must convert our hearts and our ways so everyone may have dignity in life.
We pray for those who seek land, lodging and labour.
We pray for those who seek justice and peace.
Help us Create a Climate of Change within our hearts and homes, and around the world.
May we become more compassionate and merciful to all our sisters and brothers.
In Jesus’ name we pray.
Amen.
One or two of these prayers could be used each week with the Prayers of the Faithful.

For the Church in the world
Let us pray for the Church. That her work may not only remind everyone of the duty to care for nature, but above all to protect humankind from self-destruction. (LS 79)

We Pray to the Lord.

For our world leaders
Let us pray for all leaders and public authorities whose decisions touch the life of our planet. May they overcome the mindset of short-term results and have the courage to attest to their God-given dignity and leave behind a testimony of selfless responsibility. (LS 181)

We Pray to the Lord.

For the suffering of our Common Home
Let us pray for the suffering of our Common Home who cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. May we heed her cries and remember that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; our very bodies made up of her elements and that we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. (LS 2)

We Pray to the Lord.

For those affected by climate change
Let us pray for the poor who have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and whose access to social services and protection is very limited. May we recognize that the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one and respond to their needs with loving care. (LS 25)

We Pray to the Lord.

For those without access to water
Let us pray for the poor without access to clean water. Unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases, including those caused by microorganisms and chemical substances. May we work tirelessly for a world where no one is denied this basic and universal human right. (LS 29)

We Pray to the Lord.

For all partners of Development and Peace
Let us pray for all the women and men of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East who work courageously to overcome those forces which create poverty in their communities and their countries. May our support of their efforts through Development and Peace invite us to develop a spirituality of the global solidarity that flows from the mystery of the Trinity. (LS 240)

We Pray to the Lord.

For our local community
Let us pray for all members of our community. May we respond to the invitation of our Holy Father to Care for our Common Home. May we learn to ask without demanding, to say “thank you” as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressiveness and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. By these simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy may we help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings. (LS 213)

We Pray to the Lord.
2016 SHARE LENT BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

You are invited to ask your parish to publish these announcements in your parish bulletin, or read them during school announcements, to promote this year’s Share Lent campaign for Development and Peace. There is one announcement for each Sunday of Lent and one for the preceding week. You can also download these announcements in Word format from the Resources page at devp.org/sharelent. The bulletin announcements contain references to the free materials you can order and distribute during the appropriate week to promote the campaign.

Pre-Lenten announcement - February 7th

Get your 2016 Share Lent calendar!

On Ash Wednesday Development and Peace will launch its annual Share Lent campaign with its theme for the year, Create a Climate of Change. Money raised through Share Lent provides vital support to the poor in more than 30 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. You can make Share Lent a part of your own Lenten journey by putting up a Solidarity Calendar in your home (available in the parish today). Or you can download our Lenten Calendar app for free from the App store or Google Play! Learn more about the campaign at devp.org/sharelent. The Share Lent collection will take place on March 13th, Solidarity Sunday. If you wish to help out with the campaign please contact: (local D&P rep’s name) at (phone number – email).

Week 1 – February 14th

Share Lent - A Climate of Change pilgrimage starts in Haiti

This year for Share Lent, Development and Peace invites you to join a Climate of Change pilgrimage. Together we will journey through Haiti with people whose lives are being changed with your support. Please take a copy of the Mini-magazine from church today. This is your pilgrimage guide. In Week 1 we meet Adonis Medjine from Haiti. A survivor of the 2010 earthquake, she is benefitting from a social enterprise project to raise chickens. “I have a husband and two children. Thanks to this job and the wages I receive, I can take care of my family, send my children to school and complete a few projects.”

Week 2 – February 21st

Share Lent Pilgrimage - Working to end inequality in Paraguay

This week our pilgrimage travels to Paraguay where we meet Liz Benitez. Her country is one where 1% of the landowners hold 77% of arable land. Liz’s family are part of a peasant movement supported by Development and Peace who work to gain access to land for the poorest farmers in the country, the campesinos. They have been threatened by the state and police because of their work. “I just want to live peacefully with my family,” she says. This year consider stretching your Share Lent donation across the whole year with our Share Year-Round monthly giving program. Brochures are available at the back of the church.

Week 3 – February 28th

Share Lent Pilgrimage – Building community in Indonesia

The 3rd week of our pilgrimage finds us in Indonesia. The word kampung has come to mean ‘slum’ in the local language, but its original definition is ‘community.’ Your support for Share Lent means that Try Mopurto, who lives in a kampung, has been able to renovate his home for his family, despite suffering from mental illness. The community is coming together to support him and his family. “My home is my heaven,” he says, “because here we feel the meaning of brotherhood in the social life of the kampung.”

Week 4 – March 6th

Share Lent Pilgrimage – Helping nuns serve their people in Bethlehem

Now our pilgrimage takes us to the Holy Land. Development and Peace is supporting Salesian nuns in the Cremisan Valley in Bethlehem in their struggle to remain close to their people. Their ability to provide schooling to over 450 children has been threatened by the construction of a separation wall which will cut them off from the people they serve. Your support helps to provide them with crucial legal support to fight the construction in the courts. Next Sunday is Solidarity Sunday and the Share Lent collection. Please be generous!

Week 5 – March 13th

Share Lent Pilgrimage – Solidarity Sunday!

Today is Solidarity Sunday. Thank you for your generosity. Every gift goes far to help our sisters and brothers around the world – from Haiti to Paraguay to Bethlehem and beyond! We end our Share Lent pilgrimage with the words of our Holy Father Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year of Mercy: “Mercy is the force that reawakens us to new life and instills in us the courage to look to the future with hope.”

Thank you for helping to create a hopeful future!

Post-campaign announcement - March 20th (or when the final results of the collection are available)

Thank you for supporting Share Lent 2016!

Development and Peace wishes to thank all those who made a gift to the Share Lent campaign! Through your generosity (insert $ amount) was collected in our parish. This will serve the needs of our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. If you did not have a chance to make your donation, you can still place your Share Lent envelopes in the offertory or donate directly at devp.org/give.
Hello, my name is _____________. I’m grateful for this opportunity to talk to you about Development and Peace’s Share Lent campaign Create a Climate of Change.

For almost 50 years, Development and Peace has been inviting the country’s Catholics to celebrate Lent by acting in concrete ways that show compassion towards their sisters and brothers around the world suffering poverty and injustice. It asks us to take this time to show our love, solidarity and generosity.

This year’s campaign theme is inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’* (Praise be to you), and by the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Development and Peace, the official international development organization of the Church in Canada, offers us a way to respond to the Pope’s invitation. It shows us the path to working together to Create a Climate of Change so we can build a just world.

The Holy Father’s encyclical calls us to hope. He invites us to consider a courageous question: “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?”

This in turn leads us to other pointed questions found in *Laudato Si’*: “What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the Earth have of us?” (LS 160)

Our own dignity is interconnected with that of every human being. Leaving a healthy planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. By working together, we can preserve our common home.

The Jubilee Year of Mercy invites us to be merciful and forgiving and to join our efforts with our sisters and brothers in the Global South. Hearing the cries of the poor, feeling their pain, understanding the challenges they face — that is compassion. Let us open our eyes and hearts to the suffering of others.

The stories Development and Peace shares this year take us to Indonesia, Paraguay, Haiti, and to the Holy Land to meet our fellow sisters and brothers.

In these countries, as in many others, Development and Peace offers a unique opportunity to reach out to those who are working to improve their living conditions so they can live in peace and dignity.

I want to thank you on behalf of Development and Peace, its partners and the thousands of women and men to whom your love, prayers and solidarity give hope.

For close to 50 years, your trust and generosity have allowed us to create change together and will continue to do so.

I wish you all a good Sunday.
Much has been written about *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ encyclical. But how many of us have truly responded to his invitation to dialogue? Do we reflect on and discuss the Pope’s message with others? Have we allowed that dialogue to move us towards the ecological conversion he is calling us to? (217)

Development and Peace believes that if we truly open ourselves to Pope Francis’ invitation, we can begin the journey towards an **integral ecology**, which “calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human.” (11)

This reflection offers questions that can be used for personal contemplation or group discussions in the service of this dialogue. We must not forget that despite the challenges we face, “humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home.” (13)

Reflection questions: How did you feel when the encyclical was released? Have you read it in full, in part or not at all? Have you responded to the Pope’s call to enter into dialogue? If yes, how?

**An encyclical for the world**

The Pope, as Bishop of Rome, is the visible source of the unity of the Church. *Laudato Si’* is a beautiful representation of this unity, as Pope Francis draws from the wisdom of the whole Church in its presentation. There are no fewer than twenty quotations taken from bishops’ conferences around the world: from South Africa to Paraguay, Bolivia to the Philippines, and even from Canada.

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1 Catechism of the Catholic Church, 882

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SEE: The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (21)

Pollution, climate change, quality of and access to water, loss of biodiversity, the breakdown of society, and global inequality: these are all challenges touched upon in the SEE section. The last two issues are especially striking. Often we set ourselves apart from creation and look at issues of poverty and injustice as being separate from environmental concerns. Pope Francis reminds us that “human beings too are creatures of this world.” (43) Therefore, “the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation.” (48) In other words, we must attune ourselves, “so as to hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.” (49) In this sense, the focus of the encyclical on “our common home” is especially significant— in particular the word ‘home.’ A home is not only a physical reality but also a social and spiritual one. Our own homes consist not only of bricks and mortar, but also of the social relationships that exist between us and the people with whom we share that space.

Reflection questions: In your own life, where do you find that you hear both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor in the world? When Pope Francis speaks about our common home, did you ever think of that home as being more than just the natural environment, but one that includes human relationships?

JUDGE: It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions. (64)

In seeking to understand the ecological crisis, Pope Francis paints a vision of reality that neither makes nature (90) or the human person (117) divine. He wants humanity to understand that, “We are not God.” (67) Instead, the Pope argues that the human reality, “is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the Earth itself.” (66) The ecological crisis is best understood as a rupture of these three vital relationships. That rupture is sin. And yet, there is hope of healing. The story of Noah and the great flood is evidence that, “All it takes is one good person to restore hope!” (71) This hope is embodied in what we may call an ‘authentic humanity.’

“An authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door. Will the promise last, in spite of everything, with all that is authentic rising up in stubborn resistance?” (112)

Pope Francis proposes a new synthesis in response to this call, which he names ‘integral ecology.’ Integral ecology begins with the recognition that everything is interconnected. This reality is something which “cannot be emphasized enough.” (138) Integral ecology therefore draws together relationships that exist between the ecologies of the environment, the economy, society, and culture. The Pope even draws in the “ecology of daily life,” which is a profoundly human ecology. (147-158) An integral ecology also stretches across time through generations of people, requiring an “intergenerational solidarity.” (159)

Integral ecology is above all an invitation to go to the heart of what it is to be human. “When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values. Unless we struggle with these deeper issues, I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results. But if these issues are courageously faced, we are led inexorably to ask other pointed questions: What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the Earth have of us? It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity.” (160)

Reflection questions: Where in our world do you see the authentic humanity, which dwells almost unnoticed, “like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door”? If an integral ecology leads us to life’s deepest questions, do we have the courage not to dismiss them as cliché or irrelevant and to ask them of ourselves?

ACT: A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal. (202)

How are we to live out this integral ecology? Saint Francis of Assisi is put forward by the Pope as “the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically” (10), because of his love of creation, the poor and God.

While we can look to Saint Francis for inspiration and motivation, Pope Francis offers humanity concrete orientations for action. In the fifth chapter, he outlines five dialogues to move us forward out of the ecological crisis2. It is important to note that the concept of dialogue here is inherently a path of action and not just a meaningless exchange of words or ideas. For example, in the section “Dialogue on the environment in the international community,” it is stated that “the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay.” (165)
Other paths of action put forward include: devising stronger and more efficient international institutions, continuing the development of economic co-operatives, citizen control over all levels of political power, strengthening the use of the precautionary principle in environmental assessments, removing the principle of maximization of profits from economic thinking, and the inclusion of religious perspectives in public ethical debates.

The last chapter on ecological education and spirituality also provides an important path of action because, “many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change.” (202)

For Pope Francis, this education is needed in order to develop a new awareness that will allow us to overcome a destructive consumerism and “truly be able to develop a different lifestyle.” (208) This education aims to “restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God.” (210)

An ecological education to address the crisis faced by the world is rooted in a call to conversion – specifically an ecological conversion. This conversion will not happen through an education that simply “provides information,” but rather through one is focused on “cultivating virtues” (211). It is less concerned with passing on concepts and more focused on developing a spirituality that can “motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world.” (216)

The signs of an ecological spirituality are the joy and peace found in the liberation from obsessive consumption. It is a spirituality which is captured in the moment of grace before meals, which Pope Francis urges us to return to: “That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; itstrengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those

who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need.” (227) When we do grace, it calls to mind our relationship with God, the Earth, and others, and transforms the act of literal consumption into awareness that everything in everyday life is sacred.

It is extremely important to note that an ecological spirituality is one that neither embraces heaven at the expense of the Earth nor embraces Earth at the expense of heaven. As Pope Francis says, “encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature.” (235) An ecological spirituality instead celebrates these two distinct realities and the relationship between them – the relationship between Creator and Creation.

For Catholics, the Eucharist is the greatest expression of this relationship. It “joins heaven and Earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation.” (236) We may also refer to our experience of this relationship as Grace: “Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter.” (236)

Reflection questions: Of all the paths of action outlined by Pope Francis, which ones do you feel most strongly called to participate in? Would you describe your own spirituality as one that “joins heaven and Earth”? How can we cultivate this ecological education and spirituality in our own communities?

Continuing the dialogue

This reflection is a simple tool to begin the dialogue that Pope Francis invites us to enter into on our Care for our Common Home. It is hoped that it will encourage you to take the time to go deeper. Find a local study group on the encyclical to join or even start one of your own!

Finally, why not dialogue directly with Pope Francis himself? You can write to the Pope and tell him how his message is impacting you, your family, your community and even your country.
Psalm of Humanity for Creation

O Divine Love, O Infinite Beauty, Creator God,
how breathtaking is Your creation.

From the grains of sand beneath our feet to the vast starry night sky,
as we contemplate Your infinite revelation,
how can our hearts not be transformed?

Humanity’s pillage and over-consumption is hurting Your exquisite creation.
Hasten our steps along the journey to healing;
“take us to the heart of what it is to be human.”

Turn our eyes to those already open to Your voice,
already inspired by Your Gracious Spirit to
walk with the poor and live more simply.

We praise You and thank You for Your forgiving Mercy;
for strengthening our spirits to do Your Will.

May the love for our common home grow so that Your creation will flourish,
so that as one human family,
we have renewed hope with the dawn of each new day.

Praise to You, O Divine Love, O Infinite Beauty, Creator God.

Amen.

On our way to 50 years of solidarity!

In October 2017, Development and Peace will celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is
for us an important moment in our history, both to contemplate the work of the
past 50 years, but also to plan for the future and consider the next 50.

We are already starting to put in place initiatives that will help us to journey
towards our jubilee. We take this opportunity to unveil our new logo!

In addition, a special initiative starting this Lent will last until the end of Lent 2017. It is a national and international pilgrimage where
our members, through the Diocesan Councils, and our partners in the Global South are invited to collaborate in the making of a giant
Patchwork Quilt of Solidarity. The quilt will travel across the country during the year, from West to East (British Columbia to Ontario)
and East to West (Newfoundland to Quebec), to be assembled in central Canada.

For more details on the pilgrimage of the Patchwork Quilt of Solidarity, please ask your Diocesan Council, or refer to our website
starting from Ash Wednesday (February 10, 2016).

You can also consult the coordinators of the 50th:
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• Danny Gillis dgillis@devp.org