

Guiding Principles for Kinship-Oriented Citizenship Education arising out of *Laudato Si'*

“Change is impossible without motivation and a process of education.”

Laudato Si', 15.

Pope Francis addresses *Laudato Si'* to every human being on Earth: “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” (*Laudato Si'* (LS), 13) Throughout *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis stresses the complementarity of scientific knowledge and Christian faith.

Convinced “humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home,” Pope Francis issues an “urgent appeal...for a new dialogue about how we are shaping our planet.” (LS,13)

I want to listen deeply enough that I hear everything and nothing at the same time and am made more by the enduring quality of my silence.

I want to question deeply enough that I am made more not by the answers so much as my desire to continue asking questions.

I want to speak deeply enough that I am made more by the articulation of my truth shifting into the day's shape.

In this way, listening, pondering and sharing become my connection to the oneness of life, and there is no longer any part of me in exile.

(Richard Wagamese, *Embers*, 23)

Laudato Si' provides a set of principles for dialogue across differing positions. The educational process for citizenship education will adopt these principles:

1

The educational process must include and value the diverse identities, knowledges, and paradigms of participants.

“Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality.” (LS, 63)

“A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.” (LS, 91)

2

The educational process must support participants to engage in a critical examination of their own and others' habits of thought, feeling, and action.

“True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue, and generous encounters between persons, [occurs in the contexts of] real relationships with others, with all the challenges they entail.” (LS, 47)

3

The educational process must authentically connect the world to the learner and the learner to the world.

“(Education) needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.” (LS, 210)

“Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.” (LS, 19)

4

The educational process must be grounded in scientific research and intent upon integral ecology.

“I will [briefly review] several aspects of the present ecological crisis, with the aim of drawing on the best scientific research available today, letting them touch us deeply and provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary that follows.” (LS, 15)

5

The educational process must provide and honor the quiet spaces of reflection and give conscious attention to nurturing spirit and virtue.

“A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an “interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity.” (LS, 217)

“Any technical solution which science claims to offer will be powerless to solve the serious problems of our world if humanity loses its compass, if we lost sight of the great motivations which make it possible for us to live in harmony, to make sacrifices and to treat others well.” (202)

In the Modules offered here to support Kinship-Oriented Citizenship Inquiry, the suggested [instructional strategies](#) are designed to meet these guidelines. You will notice how each one provides opportunities for students to develop the Essential Citizenship Competencies (central to the [Concentus Citizenship Foundation](#) resources).

ENLIGHTENED

→ Others' knowledge develops one's own

EMPOWERED

→ Power and voice are shared equitably among group members

EMPATHETIC

→ Students listen and respond to diverse thinkers & assumptions

ETHICAL

→ Learners' rights are respected and responsibilities are met

ENGAGED

→ Students are citizens of the classroom, engaged in authentic, democratic forms of discourse and problem-solving

“As the kneading bowl is to the leaven, the classroom is to citizenship.”

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Laudato Si': A Call for Transformative Education to Care for Our Common Home

"In the encyclical (*Laudato Si'*) Pope Francis calls for ecological education capable of establishing a new covenant between humanity and the natural world. According to the pope, we need a holistic education that can reestablish harmony with nature, our fellow human beings and the Transcendent."

(The 10 Green Commandments of *Laudato Si'*, p. 108)



EDUCATING FOR INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: RATIONALE

Urgency

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis issues a call of paramount importance in Catholic education:

"I urgently appeal, then, for a *new dialogue* about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a *conversation which includes everyone*, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (*Laudato Si'*, 14)

Pathway

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis gives humanity a theologically and scientifically rooted pathway towards what he refers to as an essential, global "ecological conversion".

Integral Ecology

Development and Peace-Caritas Canada, in its mandate to *educate and mobilize Canadian Catholics*, is offering to assist Catholic schools across the country in the important education of integral ecology through its current two-year campaign, "*For our Common Home*". The learning and actions of the campaign are intended to explicitly develop and help internalize the principles and practices of integral ecology as expressed in Catholic Social Teaching and in *Laudato Si'*. The first year's focus is on the *Amazon region*.

Call to Engaged Citizenship

Children and youth are *citizens now*, in their families, classrooms, teams, churches, communities, and beyond. As such, intentional education for citizenship through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching supports their *engagement in the world of now* infused with the indigenous perspective of looking Seven Generations ahead.

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATOR RESOURCES:

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis describes the work ahead for all of us as a "*journey*." As educators, we accompany students on a journey. The resources that follow are designed to invite students on a journey of engaged citizenship through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching.

Timing

The focus on the Amazon region is aligned with

- the Synod on the Amazon (“*Amazonia: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*”) that took place in Rome October 6-27, 2019
- Pope Francis encyclical *Laudato Si’* released May 2015
- growing international awareness of the need to honor and respect the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Sept 2007)

Educational Purpose and Cross-Curricular Outcomes

a) *Laudato Si’* calls us to develop the capacity for *kinship* with all peoples and all the created world. The two learning modules framed within *Laudato Si’* will invite teachers and students to place kinship at the center of *classroom culture*. The modules use a scaffolding pedagogy with each lesson building upon previous learning. There is unity and coherence in using all lessons as designed.

b) The two learning modules herein (adaptable Grades 8-12) are designed to move students into *deeper analysis and understanding* of the ecological crisis in the Amazon biome (linking the cry of the earth with the cry of the poor), and to equip them with the *critical and creative thinking process needed* for engaging confidently and courageously as responsible citizens with a Catholic lens.

c) The lessons can be connected easily to *outcomes* in ELA, Indigenous Studies, Science, Religious Studies, Political Studies, Social Studies, Multimedia Studies, Citizenship Education, broad areas of learning and cross curricular competencies. Pope Francis names the separation of peoples and disciplines as part of the problem; the pedagogy herein is thus intentionally cross-curricular.

In *Laudato Si’*, “Pope Francis opts for a dialogical and inclusive approach, integrating insights from various traditions, schools of thought, and individual thinkers.”

(The 10 Green Commandments of *Laudato Si’*, p. 116)