

Statement on *Laudato si'*

We, the major superiors of the Jesuit Conference Asia Pacific, sincerely and enthusiastically welcome Pope Francis' new encyclical *Laudato si'* (*On the Care of Our Common Home*). He draws attention to the urgent need for reconciliation with creation, already one of our apostolic priorities in Asia Pacific. We urge all the members of our Conference, our colleagues, and all those we seek to serve to make a thoughtful and generous response to the Holy Father's plea.

Our many Jesuit works have the potential for far-reaching impact. Yet we know, too, that the first step necessary will be a personal conversion for each of us. It is crucial that we address ecological issues more explicitly in Jesuit formation and also make these a matter for our ongoing formation. For both our personal prayer and our public preaching, we suggest three specific themes raised by the Holy Father: deepening our gratitude to God for the many gifts of creation (praise); appreciating the interconnectedness of all things (integral ecology); and becoming healers of a wounded world (practical steps).

Pope Francis reminds us that "little daily actions" can transform the world. We ask each of our Jesuit communities to embark soon on a process of discernment toward making concrete changes in our lifestyle. As we do this, we might keep in mind three particular priorities: a secure water supply for all; planting in order to cool down the earth's atmosphere; and the recycling of resources and rubbish to counter the effects of a "throwaway culture".

Ecology is a field in which we can easily partner with all people of good will. The Church will look to us for both deep study and meaningful action. We can assist local bishops by contributing to a deeper theology and spirituality of ecology. With our many schools and our social communications centres we are well positioned to promote education towards the "ecological citizenship" Pope Francis envisions. Our intellectual apostolates can engage both government policy makers and critics. In addition, concern for creation should become a vital element of our interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

Pope Francis describes the family home as a privileged space for learning to appreciate the beauty of creation and to practice good stewardship of “our common home”. In our pastoral ministries, we can encourage families to live a life of greater simplicity, a virtue which we as religious need to renew as well.

The Holy Father also urges people everywhere to embrace a new paradigm, a new vision for our relationships with others and with the created world. He calls us to increase our awareness of the needs of our neighbours today and our responsibility for future generations. In so doing, Pope Francis points to a number of issues that concern our provinces and regions and that we ought to continue to examine: migration; pollution; nuclear power; sustainable energy; stewardship of resources; and the dignity of every human person.

Finally, as we seek a genuine change of heart, let us focus on the needs of the poor, who suffer the effects of climate change and economic injustice most starkly. In holding them close, we will only draw closer to the poor and humble Christ.

Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific
Siem Reap, Cambodia, July 17, 2015

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