



PURSUING  
THE COMMON GOOD  
FOR OUR COMMON HOME

## Module 2

### Care of our Common Home and *Laudato Si'*

– by Lisa Mitchell, Dominican Associate

***Laudato Si'*** – the Pope’s encyclical letter written in 2015 - is **On Care for our Common Home**. Many have asked me, “What does *Laudato Si'* mean?” The words mean, *Praise be to you* (my Lord).

So begins the [encyclical letter](#) by Pope Francis!

It is a reference to the writings of St. Francis of Assisi who reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

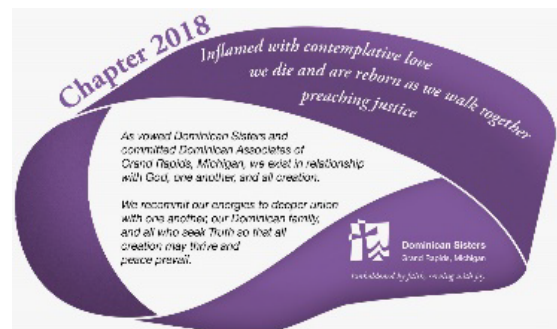
*“Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.” ~  
Cantic of the Creatures in Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, vol. 1*

Pope Francis has invited us to join with many institutions and individuals of the Church to journey toward integral ecology [Laudato Si' Action Platform](#). He asked us to put an action plan together to address the [seven global goals](#). The Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids (DSGR) made a [pledge](#) to pursue the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform for the next 7 years. This pledge is in keeping with their common life endeavors during the past thirty years. The DSGR commit themselves to their Direction Statements that compel them

- To be in relationship with God’s mission
- To be in relationship with One Another as Sisters and Associates
- To be in relationship with Others
- To be in relationship with Earth

As I began to study *Laudato Si'* over the past two years, I realized that my individual actions

are important, but they won’t solve the critical issue of global heating (upgraded from global warming), fresh drinking water for all, extinction of plant and animal species, and quality of life for the poor. Dominicans never change systems by working alone. As Dominicans, we are called to preach justice and be what we preach. The justice we



preach calls us to be in right relationship with God and with one another. *Laudato Si'* speaks to the common good for all and encourages us to dialogue with one another and shape the future for our planet. How can we make choices for the common good and respect the whole of creation? We need the synergy of each other to affect systemic change and reach a critical mass of people.

**The following questions/thoughts/actions give me pause for reflection:**

1. What kind of world do I want to leave for future generations?
2. The Covid pandemic taught me how we are all connected across the planet. How can I journey with my brothers and Sisters in a global campaign with [Catholic Climate Covenant](#)?
3. Learn about local campaign [Grand Rapids Climate Coalition](#) and Sign on.
4. Join or begin a study group on *Laudato Si'*.
5. Plant native plants. Use less fossil fuels. Eat local foods. Don't use pesticides.
6. We have become a plastic planet. We are ingesting 2,000 pieces of plastic each week (the weight of a credit card) usually through water or food. By 2050, plastic will outweigh life in the oceans. What are ways I can stop using/purchasing plastic?
7. The word human comes from the Latin word "*humus*" meaning earth or ground. We (humans) are the same as the earth. Which life might God prioritize?
8. Awareness is the first step. How can I learn from places that live responsibly?
9. Joan Chittister states, "We need a revolution, join it!" What can I join?
10. I know I can't do this alone. Who can I collaborate with? As an Associate, how can I work with the Sisters on their *Laudato Si'* Action Plan?

The Associates and Sunday Assembly met on Saturday, April 23, 2022, to pray, learn and discuss the *Laudato Si'* encyclical. They prepared a list of resources for all of us to start on our journey of awareness. [Read them here](#)  
<https://www.grdominicans.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Laudato-Si-Resources.pdf>

We encourage you to share information and your voice with your family, parish, school, etc. so we feel the synergy of collaboration and hope for the future of our planet!