



PURSuing  
THE COMMON GOOD  
FOR OUR COMMON HOME

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**Dominican Sisters**  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*Emboldened by faith, serving with joy*

## Module 1: Project Overview

Dear Sisters, Associates, and Friends,

*Laudato Si'* Week, May 22-29 will mark the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical on creation care. This global celebration will unite Catholics to rejoice in the efforts we have put forth for the Care of Creation over many years and decades. In this moment in time, we are called to become conscious of those efforts and to RECOMMIT ourselves to continue forward. What might seem different in this moment of *LAUDATO SI'* is that we will publicly proclaim our ministry so that it is shared in communion with others who are also embracing this journey.

Beginning on Earth Day April 22 and through the end of *Laudato Si'* Week, we welcome you to join our Care of Creation Committee for a seven-week reflective study. Each week you will receive a study module like this one. You can also find some helpful introductory content in two posts on our blog. This content also appeared in the March 20 *Community Ways Newsletter*.

[Read "\*Sisters Pledge to Pursue Laudato Si' Action Platform\*"](#)

[Read "\*Laudato Si' Initiatives 2022\*"](#)

We have, for many years, used the **DOMINICAN CALL TO JUSTICE** as the foundation of our justice responses: *Climate Justice, Economic Justice, Human Trafficking, Migration/Immigration and Peace and Security of All Life*. A key concept that has arisen from our justice responses and study of *Laudato Si'* is that of **INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: an integrated and holistic approach to political, social, economic, and environmental problems**.

Integral ecology demands that we pay attention to how any and all justice issues are connected to one another. An Integral Ecology mindset will move us to concern about how all justice issues interconnect with one another. This mindset will allow us to view the *Laudato Si'* Action Plan not simply as an environmental project.



As an example, before the last election, our Congregation studied a 2020 Voter Guide and the idea of [Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration & Climate Crisis](#). This document from the Promoters of Justice of Michigan and Indiana exemplifies this process of systemic analysis.

Another resource for understanding Integral Ecology is an article by Jessica Ludescher Imanaka, "[Integral Ecology Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor,](#)" writing for The Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center in Seattle. She stated:

*Integral has multiple meanings: **essential, intrinsic, entire, complete, whole, constituent of and/or necessary to the whole.** As such, integral carries several connotations when applied to ecology. Integral ecology seems to denote a comprehensive, holistic picture of reality. Such a picture would incorporate the whole of ecology: everything that ecology includes. To say that ecology is integral, is also to suggest that ecology itself is essential to our understanding of and relationship to reality.*

*Ecology, in present day usage, refers to the complex relationships between organisms and their environments and ecosystems. Interestingly, the word ecology comes from the Greek **oikos**, meaning home, house, dwelling place.*

- **Economy** -- management of the household
- **Ecology** -- understanding the household
- **Equity** -- balancing the household



*Caring for our Common Home thus requires an integral ecology: a multidisciplinary study of the elements needed to “keep” and “till” (LS 124) our natural, material, social, cultural, and human environments.*

### **An Example Integral Ecology Can Be Found in Our Pursuit of Chocolate**

Responding to the cry of Earth  
Responding to the cry of the poor  
Building ecological economies  
Adopting simple lifestyles  
Creating ecological education  
Recovering ecological spirituality  
Promoting community action and advocacy

We can opt for adopting a simple lifestyle and search out for what we need/want

#### **CHOCOLATE!**

But the cheapest and closest chocolate is harvested by children. The cheapest producers pay the lowest wages to the harvesters. The land on which the cocoa is grown is acquired by deforestation. It can take an entire year for a cocoa tree to produce the cocoa in just half a pound of chocolate.

A series of responses: identify fair trade and ecologically sound products – pay more/eat less! - engage in advocacy actions – boycotts, socially responsible investing - preach the Good News for the poor. [Read "Bittersweet: chocolate's impact on the environment"](#)

This is a process of INTEGRAL ECOLOGY – we and our actions are never independent - we are constantly responsible for the consequences of what we do.