

Missionary Oblates Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office

2016 Lenten Reflection on the Climate Change



"Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. Se we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture." **Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*—On Care For Our Common Home, May 2015**

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."
(Psalm 24:1-2)

Reflection

The environment appeared on the world stage in a big way in 2015. Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment *Laudato Si* was released in May 2015; Pope Francis spoke on climate change to the U.S. Congress in an historic address in September 2015 saying, the U.S. has a role to play in implementing "a culture of care" and "an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature;" and a major UN climate change conference (COP21) took place in Paris in November 2015, where 195 countries committed to standards for things like the use of solar power and cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Closely listening to the Pope's message was Fr. Daniel LeBlanc, OMI, NGO representative to the UN for the Missionary Oblates and VIVAT International.

"Pope Francis is talking about a long-term relationship of human beings with their environment," said Fr. LeBlanc. "We cannot separate the human person from the environment."

Fr. LeBlanc said since Pope Francis released *Laudato Si*, there appears to be more openness at the U.N. to seeking solutions for climate change. Fr. LeBlanc is excited that Pope Francis' attention to climate issues is making people re-evaluate their own position on the environment. He notes that the Catholic Church, and especially religious congregations like the Missionary Oblates, have been promoting better stewardship of the earth for more than 40 years. But now, thanks to Pope Francis, many more people are listening.

(Adapted from OblateWorld Magazine, February 2016)

Excerpt from *A Prayer for our Earth*

By Pope Francis, Laudato Si

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. **AMEN.**

Action: Support Pope Francis' call to care for our common home!

Pope Francis has called us to protect creation and to care for our common home. During his visit to the United States, he echoed this call saying: "Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a 'culture of care' and 'an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.'"

One important way you can care for creation is to contact your Senators and urge them, as they consider the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 (S. 2012) to:

- Stand with nonprofits by supporting the creation of a nonprofit energy-efficiency program (Section 1004 of S. 2012)
- Oppose amendments that seek to undermine or reverse efforts to implement a national carbon standard. Your voice is needed today as the Senate is expected to vote on this important energy legislation.

Visit the US Bishops website to send a message to your US Senator:

<https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/Campaigns>