



Catholic Social Teaching *for Everyone*

SESSION EIGHT:
Care for Creation

Opening Prayer:

A Prayer for Our Earth

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.

continued

Opening Prayer *cont'd*:

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the
earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each
thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly
united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite
light.

We thank you for being
with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray,
in our struggle
for justice, love and
peace.

Amen.

Laudato Si' 246

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Care for Creation



Art by Bro. Mickey McGrath, OSFS

“We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan; it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.”

USCCB

CST

101

Care for Creation



Essential Part of Our Faith



“There is an order in the universe which must be respected. . . . The human person, endowed with the capability of choosing freely, has a grave responsibility to preserve this order for the well-being of future generations. . . . The ecological crisis is a moral issue. . . . Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith.”

Shared Responsibility Toward All

“The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.”



Caritas in Veritate 48

Shared Responsibility Toward All *cont'd*

“We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment. . . . Concern for the environment calls for a broad global vision of the world;

a responsible common effort to move beyond approaches based on selfish nationalistic interests towards a vision constantly open to the needs of all peoples.”

Responsibility to Future Generations



“A greater sense of intergenerational solidarity is urgently needed. Future generations cannot be saddled with the cost of our use of common environmental resources.”

2010 World Day of Peace Message 8

Responsibility to Future Generations *cont'd*

“Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.”



Laudato Si' 159

Responsibility to the Poor

“The environmental crisis and poverty are connected by a complex and dramatic set of causes that can be resolved by the principle of the universal destination of goods, which offers a fundamental moral and cultural orientation. The present environmental crisis affects those who are poorest in a particular way, whether they live in those lands subject to erosion and desertification, are involved in armed conflicts or subject to forced immigration, or because they do not have the economic and technological means to protect themselves from other calamities.”

Responsibility to the Poor *cont'd*

“The principle of the universal destination of goods also applies naturally to water Satisfying the needs of all, especially of those who live in poverty, must guide the use of water and the services connected with it. Inadequate access to safe drinking water affects the well-being of a huge number of people and is often the cause of disease, suffering, conflicts, poverty and even death. Without water, life is threatened. Therefore, the right to safe drinking water is a universal and inalienable right.”

Integral Ecology

“We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

Laudato Si' 139



Ecological Debt

“A true ‘ecological debt’ exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.”

Ecological Debt *cont'd*

“The developed countries ought to help pay this debt by significantly limiting their consumption of non-renewable energy and by assisting poorer countries to support policies and programs of sustainable development. . . . We must continue to be aware that, regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities.”

Climate Change

“Our present situation . . .
is in many ways
unprecedented
in the history of
humanity.”

Laudato Si' 17

Climate Change *cont'd*

“If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world’s population lives on the coast or nearby, and that the majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas.”

2050

2006

1920

Climate Change *cont'd*



“Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades.”

Laudato Si' 25

Climate Change *cont'd*

“There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy.”



Ecological Conversion Needed

“Humanity needs a profound cultural renewal; it needs to rediscover those values which can serve as the solid basis for building a brighter future for all. Our present crises — be they economic, food-related, environmental or social — are ultimately also moral crises, and all of them are interrelated. They require us to rethink the path which we are travelling together.”

2010 World Day of Peace Message 5

Ecological Conversion Needed *cont'd*

“What [Christians] need is an ‘ecological conversion,’ whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”

Ecological Conversion Needed *cont'd*



“Nevertheless, self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today. . . . Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds. . . . The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.”

Laudato Si' , 219

AI and the Environment

“Let us establish standards for discernment — the dignity of the human person, the universal destination of goods, the preferential option for the poor, care for our common home and peace — and let us translate these standards into practices”

AI and the Environment *cont'd*

“Current AI systems require enormous amounts of energy and water, significantly influencing carbon dioxide emissions, and place heavy demands on natural resources. . . . For this reason, it is essential to develop more sustainable technological solutions that reduce environmental impact and help protect our common home.”

AI and the Environment *cont'd*



Photo credit: PACT, pactworld.org

“In some regions of the world, children and adolescents work in dangerous conditions, crushing the materials from which rare earth elements are extracted. The bodies of these people are scarred, injured and worn down so that computational flow may continue uninterrupted.”

Care for Animals

“God entrusted animals to the stewardship of those whom he created in his own image.

Hence it is legitimate to use animals for food and clothing.

They may be domesticated to help [people in their] work and leisure. Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is a morally acceptable practice, if it remains within reasonable limits and contributes to caring for or saving human lives.”

CCC 2417



Care for Animals *cont'd*

“It is contrary to human dignity to cause animals to suffer or die needlessly. It is likewise unworthy to spend money on them that should as a priority go to the relief of human misery. One can love animals; one should not direct to them the affection due only to persons.”

CCC 2418



Q&A

Questions for Reflection *and Discussion*

Integral Ecology

“Nature itself is reduced at times to a bargaining chip, a commodity to be bartered for economic or political gain. As a result, God’s creation turns into a battleground for the control of vital resources.

We see this in agricultural areas and forests peppered with landmines, ‘scorched earth’ policies, conflicts over water sources, and the unequal distribution of raw materials, which penalizes the poorer nations and undermines social stability itself.”

(Pope Leo XIV, Message for the Tenth World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, September 2025)

What can the international community do to address conflicts over natural resources and other environmental issues?

What role can religious institutions play?

Ecological Conversion

“Environmental justice . . . is also a duty born of faith, since the universe reflects the face of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created and redeemed. In a world where the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters are the first to suffer the devastating effects of climate change, deforestation and pollution, care for creation becomes an expression of our faith and humanity.” “

(Pope Leo XIV, Message for the Tenth World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, September 2025)

What can you do in terms of lifestyle changes and/or advocacy to better care for God's creation?



Take Action

Examination of Conscience

(USCCB)

- Do I live out my responsibility to care for God's creation?
- Do I see my care for creation as connected to my concern for poor persons, who are most at risk from environmental problems?
- Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely? Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life?
- Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth's resources for future generations?



Taking Action

Care for Our Common Home



- CCH works to bring to life the Church's rich social teaching on the environment in all relevant aspects of parish life, including worship, faith formation, social ministry, and facilities management.

- We seek to better understand the interconnectedness of all of God's creation and act in solidarity with vulnerable populations around the world and for the benefit of future generations.



- We share Church teaching on care for creation, strive to reduce our environmental impact as a parish, and provide resources and encouragement to parishioners to live more sustainably as faithful stewards of creation.

Taking Action — CRS Virginia Chapter

- A community of volunteers throughout the state taking meaningful action to help eradicate global poverty and injustice.
- Focuses on:
 - Telling the story of CRS's work
 - Advocacy in support of CRS and those it serves
 - Fundraising for CRS



- Current advocacy issue: Support for the highest possible funding for international development and humanitarian assistance programs in the FY 2027 appropriations bill.
- Meets virtually every fourth Monday of the month, 7-8 p.m.

Evaluation Form

Closing Prayer:

Prayer to Care for Our Common Home

FATHER OF ALL,
Creator and Ruler of the Universe,
You entrusted your world to us as a gift.
Help us to care for it and all people,
that we may live in right relationship —
with You,
with ourselves,
with one another,
and with creation.

CHRIST OUR LORD,
both divine and human,
You lived among us and died
for our sins.
Help us to imitate your love for
the human family
by recognizing that we are all
connected—
to our brothers and sisters
around the world,
to those in poverty impacted
by environmental
devastation,
and to future generations.

Closing Prayer *cont'd*:

HOLY SPIRIT,
giver of wisdom and love,
You breathe life in us and guide us.
Help us to live according to your
vision,
stirring to action the hearts of all—
individuals and families,
communities of faith,
and civil and political leaders.

TRIUNE GOD, help us to hear
the cry of those in poverty, and
the cry of the earth, so that we
may together care for our
common home.

Amen.

USCCB



*Thank you for your
participation in
Catholic Social Teaching
for Everyone!*

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