

OUR CHANGING CHURCH # 8 - 2015

“To every person”

The recent Encyclical from Pope Francis “On Care for our Common Home” (*Laudato Si'*) is addressed to all people. In the Introduction, Pope Francis writes:

“More than fifty years ago, with the world teetering on the brink of nuclear crisis, Pope Saint John Paul XXIII wrote an Encyclical which not only rejected war but offered a proposal for peace. He addressed his message *Pacem in Terris* (*Peace on Earth*) to the entire “Catholic world” and indeed “to all men and women of good will”. Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (*The Joy of the Gospel*) I wrote to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal. In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.” *

The message the Pope presents is clear, comprehensive and rich in meaning.

“The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system.” **

He calls to us:

“We require a new and universal solidarity. ... All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.” ***

The encyclical covers wide ground. There are chapters on “The Ecology of Daily Life”, “Civic and Political Love”, “The Celebration of Rest”, “Joy and Peace.” The Pope’s analysis of the challenges of our contemporary life is deeply insightful. As we face our changing church, our changing world, the Pope offers guidance: “convinced as I am that change is impossible without motivation and a process of education, I will offer some inspired guidelines for human development to be found in the treasure of Christian spiritual experience.”

“Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that “less is more”. ... No one can cultivate a sober and satisfying life without being at peace with him or herself. An adequate understanding of spirituality consists in filling out what we mean by peace, which is much more than the absence of war. Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life.” ****

Amanda Smith – Pastoral Services Consultant

* Pope Francis: *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*. #3

** *Laudato Si'* #23 ** *Laudato Si'* #14

*** Pope Francis: *Laudato Si'* #222 & 225

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html