

- + End hunger...promote sustainable agriculture
- + Ensure healthy lives and well-being
- + Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education
- + Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- + Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation
- + Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy
- + Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all
- + Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization
- + Reduce inequality within and among countries
- + Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- + Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- + Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- + Conserve and sustainably use the oceans and marine resources
- + Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems
- + Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development
- + Strengthen the means of implementation for sustainable development

The Paris Climate Change Agreement, also from 2015, commits nearly all the nations of the world to take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By reducing emissions to levels that will limit future changes to global climate, it is hoped that we can stave off the potentially catastrophic damage to global ecology and human society that is likely to be in our futures if we fail to act.

So, imagine a world without poverty or hunger, where basic health needs are met and basic education is a reality for children everywhere. Imagine a world with an economy that functions in a manner that provides safe and decent work for all and an income that allows all people to live in dignity. Imagine a world where girls and boys, women and men are equal. Imagine a world powered by clean energy and with clean water and air. Imagine a world that has beaten back the worst effects of climate change and is healing. Can you imagine such a world? That is what the global community—as imperfect as it surely is—is working toward.

As a faith-based organization, the Carmelites, led by our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is wholeheartedly committed to that world imagined anew. Indeed, as an organization and as individuals committed to the Gospel message of hope, justice and peace we have no choice. We are called upon to do whatever is necessary to serve our sisters and brothers and care for our common home.

How do we do this work? How do we go forth in these challenging times serving humanity and caring for creation? How do we fulfill the promise and hope of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement?

First, we listen and learn. Of course, we listen to development experts and climate scientists. We listen, too, to the likes of theologian Leonardo Boff and certainly to Pope Francis. And in so doing, we listen to and hear “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

Pope Francis in his writings and speeches has already taught us much about our social and moral obligations to our sisters and brothers and to God’s creation.

In his remarkable Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis explains our responsibility to care for creation, which includes addressing pollution and climate change, as well as tackling poverty and inequality. “Everything is connected,” Francis writes. “Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.”

The Pope’s support for urgent action on climate change and for the Paris Agreement, in particular, is very clear. It is the type of global action he had in mind when he wrote *Laudato Si’*. And his support for the SDGs is also clear. Here is Pope Francis, speaking at the United Nations in September of 2015: “The dramatic reality this whole situation of exclusion and inequality,

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Resources for this Issue:

The Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si’: On Care for our Common Home* can be found in bookstores or free online. Simply search “Laudato Si”)

Vatican archive of Pope Francis’ writings, speeches, and homilies (in several languages): w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches.index.html.

Resource of the important documents that make up the Church’s social teachings: <http://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/principles/documents/>

The Sustainable Development Goals: sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs. On this site you can find many details regarding the goals, the targets, progress being made and more.

The Paris Climate Change Agreement, go to this website: unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

The Carmelite NGO website: carmelitengo.org.

The announcement of our new *Laudato Si’* Curriculum: <http://www.carmelitengo.org/pdf/onepage/2-13-17-OPX2.pdf> (and on that page you can find a link that will take you to the curriculum itself)

The Carmelite NGO Facebook page. Please check it out and “like” us: www.facebook.org/TheCarmeliteNGO.



Laudato Si': A Paradigm Shift for Today

Webster defines paradigm as – a worldview underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject i.e. the discovery of universal gravitation became the paradigm of successful science.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII wrote his Encyclical on *Capital and Labor (Rerum Novarum)*. This was a paradigm shift that challenged the way profit and labor was managed at that time. Workers had little or no rights while increases in profits soared for the few. Inhumane working conditions were the norm worldwide. There was a new revolution happening, an industrial revolution, and workers were not the beneficiaries of this revolution. Untold numbers of workers lived in poverty although they worked long hours each day in unhealthy working conditions. Child labor was an acceptable practice. It was during this period that Pope Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum*. Not unexpectedly many in the corporate community, as well as workers who were fearful of losing their jobs, challenged it. However,

“The time is ripe for a new paradigm shift in our worldview.”

“A paradigm shift in global thinking regarding the relationship between employers and employees. This

new relationship laid the foundation that has become the norm for today. Although far from perfect, the rights of employers and employees developed into better working conditions that resulted in a better economic balance where workers are rewarded for their labor and profits are not stymied but increased. The principles laid down by *Rerum Novarum* continue today and will continue if we are vigilant in making sure they are followed. *Rerum Novarum* created a paradigm shift in thinking and acting in the world of labor relations and economic development.

The time is ripe for a new paradigm shift in our worldview. Pope Francis has addressed this need with his encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. Andrew Hoffman in his article “*Laudato Si'* and the Role of Religion in Shaping Humanity’s Response to Climate Change” states, “Pope Francis lays blame for our ecological crisis on rampant consumerism, unrestrained faith in technology, blind pursuit of profits, political shortsightedness, and the economic inequalities that force the world’s poor to bear the brunt of an imbalanced system. His message calls for us to ‘promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.’” *Laudato Si'* offers a new way of thinking that responds to the issues facing the world today.

A key insight of *Laudato Si'* is the role religious belief plays in our worldview. Religion is the foundation and most important reason for our actions. All major religions have endorsed *Laudato Si'*. Identifying it as a challenge that is motivated by faith and offers a way to put faith into practice. *Laudato Si'* challenges all faiths to reexamine its moral responsibility towards civic action, political action and economic action. These three components, accompanied by one’s faith, will address ways that can improve our relationship with one another and with nature.

It is important that we get involved in making the teachings in *Laudato Si'* part of the world discussion. To do so, one must first be open to an awareness of world conditions; second, one must assess what is the situation and educate oneself on the issues, and third, one must take action. Once we know we cannot sit idle and let someone else act for us. We must put our faith into action. President Obama said, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” This is the time for a paradigm shift in our thinking regarding our global neighbors, the Earth and the role we have in bringing about a peaceful, just and loving world.

A study guide for *Laudato Si'* is available in English and Spanish from carmelites.info/publications.
by Jane Remson, O. Carm.

UN International Year:



International Year of Sustainable Development for Tourism

This is a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the contribution of sustainable tourism to development among public and private sector decision-makers and the public, while mobilizing all stakeholders to work together in making tourism a catalyst for positive change.

In the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to the SDGs.

UN International Decades



2016–2025

United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition

2015–2024

International Decade for People of African Descent

2014–2024

United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All

2011–2020

Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

Decade of Action for Road Safety

2010–2020

United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification

2008–2017

Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

with its evident effects, has led me, in union with the entire Christian people and many others, to take stock of my grave responsibility in this regard and to speak out, together with all those who are seeking urgently-needed and effective solutions. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ...is an important sign of hope.”

In fact, previous Popes and the rich body of Catholic social teaching have essentially urged the global community to come to grips with its most pressing problems, particularly those that impact the most vulnerable. So it is great to see in our lifetime a convergence of secular, governmental action with religious social teaching and morality to address serious global problems.

So, we listen to Pope Francis, Catholic social teaching, expert opinion, and the voices of ordinary people to become informed on the pressing issues of our day and the most effective path to social change. Then, we need to take action.

Action to address poverty, inequality and environmental destruction can take many forms. There is one form of action for change that I would like to highlight in the remainder of this article: education. We need to take what we have learned and teach it to others. We need to teach the science of climate change, the social science of inequality and poverty, and Catholic social teaching on these issues, to our friends, families, and our young people. From this education, meaningful social action can blossom.

This education can be informal, via conversations or blogs. It can be more formal via schools and churches. But we all have a moral obligation to speak out—to teach one another—on the pressing social and moral issues of our time.

As the Pope has written in *Laudato Si'*, we need educators who are “capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people...to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care.”

The Carmelites embrace this message from Pope Francis. Around the world we serve the marginalized, advocate for policy changes to promote sustainable development, and vigorously support Pope Francis’ call to hear “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” And we have certainly been involved in educating for solidarity and justice in our schools, parishes and communities.

Our NGO is particularly focused on education—educating ourselves and then educating others. For example, we have this quarterly bulletin, *CarmeNGO*, and our *One Page* electronic publication that comes out at least once each month. These are meant to inform and to stimulate action.

One very significant effort of ours is the Climate Change Curriculum Project. We developed and are promoting a high school curriculum that teaches *Laudato Si'*. This is a comprehensive effort to teach the Encyclical across the high school curriculum. Students learn about it not only in Theology and Science classes, but in Literature, Art, Philosophy, History and Government classes, as well.

We have also created a *Laudato Si'* study guide for parishes and other groups. It is essentially a simplified version of the Encyclical with questions for reflection. It is a wonderful resource.

Catholic social teaching has been called “the Church’s best kept secret.” Well, we are not happy with that reputation. We think the Church’s social teachings—and certainly the most recent Encyclical—should be read, understood and acted on across the Catholic world and beyond.

We are making our *Laudato Si'* curriculum and study guide available to all who wish to learn and teach. Electronic versions of this material can be found on our website: carmelitengo.org. If you would like a hard copy of either of these resources (which are currently available in both English and Spanish), please contact us at the Carmelite NGO Main Office (address listed below and to the right).

To be sure, the work before us is daunting. There is a great deal of suffering in this world and the problem of climate change threatens global catastrophe. Yet, many individuals and organizations, governments and businesses, people of science and people of faith are increasingly aware and coming together to change the world for the better. The Carmelites are certainly a part of this effort and we invite all people of good will to join the struggle and to remember the words that John F. Kennedy spoke at the conclusion of his inaugural address: “...here on earth God’s work must truly be our own.”

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