

CREATION CARE ACTION PLAN

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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Diocese of San Diego

Laudato Si'—On Care for Our Common Home **An Action Plan for the Diocese of San Diego**



*Submitted by the Action Plan Group of the
Diocese of San Diego Creation Care Committee*

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Bishop Robert W. McElroy for the opportunity and honor of writing this document to help Catholics and other faith communities throughout the Diocese of San Diego to do their part to implement Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si*. We thank the Archdioceses of Atlanta and Washington DC and their teams for providing us a structure for a Diocesan Action Plan in San Diego and for permitting the use of their research and ideas wherever needed.

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WELCOMING STATEMENT FROM BISHOP MCELROY

DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



July 13, 2021

My Dear People of God:

In May, Pope Francis invited the whole of the world to take up with renewed vigor the challenge of rescuing and caring for the earth which is our common home. He cast this vital mission of the Gospel within the concept of integral human ecology, which simultaneously answers the cry of the earth in its suffering and the cry of the poor. And he called upon Catholic organizations to rise up and form an international coalition designed build communities of faith and action at all levels to care for the creation which is God's first gift to us.

This creation care action plan for the Diocese of San Diego is a direct response to this call of Pope Francis. It provides clear, effective initiatives for us to undertake in our homes, our parishes, our businesses and our society as a whole. We as the Catholic community of San Diego and Imperial Counties must adopt a radical new commitment to such goals if we as a planet are to survive meaningfully and hand on a life-giving existence to the coming generations.

In taking up this mission, we must constantly act upon the need to form coalitions with people and organizations of all faiths and no faith to change the trajectory of our world. We must work closely with science and recognize the immensely vital role that children and young people will have in transforming our mindsets and our choices that despoil the earth. And we must reject complacency, the greatest foe of all.

I want to thank Father Emmet Farrell and the whole of Creation Care Committee which has labored so arduously to design this plan. And I ask every parish community and every believer to see the call to save the earth as God speaking directly to us in the depths of our soul.

Sincerely yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. W. McElroy", written over a horizontal line.

Most Reverend Robert W. McElroy

Bishop of San Diego



CANTICLE OF THE SUN, ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

“Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To You, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord

Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him. And He is beautiful and radiant in all His splendor! Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through **Sister Moon** and the stars; in the heavens You have made them bright, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through **Brothers Wind and Air**, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which You give Your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, my Lord, through **Sister Water**; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through **Brother Fire**, through whom You brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong. Be praised, my Lord, through our sister **Mother Earth**, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

Be praised, my Lord, through **those who forgive for love of You**; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned.

Be praised, my Lord, through our **Sister Bodily Death**, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them. Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility.

INTRODUCTION

On May 24, 2020 we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the signing of Pope Francis's monumental encyclical letter "*Laudato Si- On Care of Our Common Home*." On that date the Vatican Dicastery of Human Development announced the YEAR OF *LAUDATO SI* to take place from May 24th, 2020 to May 24th, 2021.

We of the Creation Care Committee of the Diocese of San Diego feel that the announcement from the Vatican for a Year of *Laudato Si* is a call to action and a challenge for us to respond by attempting to inform more of the pastors and the parishioners of our 97 parishes about the message and to urge them to respond by planning and carrying out action steps of conversion of our lifestyles (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 5).

With this as our motivation, the Creation Care Committee is asking pastors and parishioners to respond to the call of Pope Francis through collaboration with this Creation Care Action Plan. All aspects of our Plan are explained below and will be further explained by the Committee.

[Register Here](#)

[Go directly to the action steps in this document](#)

Setting the Stage

On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis released his environmental encyclical, *Laudato Si*, or "Praised Be" from the words of St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Sun*. In his encyclical, the Holy Father stated that "If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their **responsibility within creation**, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are **an essential part of their faith**." Pope Francis urges that "all of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvement and talents." This will not be an easy task, however, and will require honesty, courage and responsibility, as "humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption." By asserting that "truly, much can be done," he reassures us that "local individuals and groups can make a real difference."

History of Creation Care in the Diocese of San Diego

Catholics as a congregation are the largest religion nationally and in San Diego County. We are challenged by Pope Francis and *Laudato Si* to be leaders in educating our members and to form and follow a detailed and concrete Creation Care Action Plan. With this Plan we hope to animate and work with the pastors, pastoral councils and Creation Care Teams of all the parishes of our Diocese.

Our Diocese has a history of embracing sustainability even before the publication of *Laudato Si- On Care for Our Common Home*. Workshops have been held to promote more efficient use of energy through the use of LED lighting and motion sensors, sensor controls on landscapes to save water, the use of biodegradable products to replace plastics and Styrofoam and the installation of solar panels to provide electric energy for our parishes and schools. Today half of the 97 parishes of the diocese have installed solar energy systems and a half dozen have installed plug-in stations for recharging electric vehicles. Some parishes have included and even formally incorporated *Laudato Si* in their catechist training.

In 2006 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) formed the Catholic Climate Covenant (CCC) with headquarters in Washington, D.C. Bishop Robert W. McElroy became the sixth bishop of San Diego, only months before *Laudato Si*, on April 15, 2015, and we acknowledge his leadership in promoting the

ecological spirituality of *Laudato Si*. In December of 2016 the CCC directed a *Laudato Si* training workshop in San Diego on how to implement *Laudato Si* in parishes.

Early in 2017 the Creation Care Committee was inaugurated, with Fr. Emmet Farrell as its volunteer director, within the Diocesan Office for Life, Peace, & Justice to establish Creation Care Teams in the parishes of the Diocese and to spread the message of *Laudato Si*. A six-member volunteer Core Team was recruited.

Over its four and a half years of existence the committee has directed English and Spanish workshops and Sunday homilies in a third of the parishes of the Diocese. Eight parishes have established functioning teams. Homilies and workshops have also been given in the four Catholic High Schools and several Catholic Grade Schools.

Bishop McElroy was invited by the Catholic Climate Covenant as the keynote speaker at the First National *Laudato Si* Conference at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska in June of 2019. He was also invited to participate in the Vatican Synod on the Amazon in September of 2019. On October 30, 2019 Bishop McElroy discussed the Amazon Synod and Dr. V. Ramanathan, a renowned oceanographer at Scripps Institute and professor at the University of San Diego, shared the pulpit at a clergy study day at the Diocesan Pastoral Center.

Creation Care in the State of California and the City of San Diego

With a population of 40 million, California is the largest state and economically the fifth largest economy in the world. We are blessed with a great variety of distinct marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems including San Diego County's own Coastal Chaparral.ⁱ Indeed, the California Floristic Province is one of the 33 most biodiverse and most threatened "biodiversity hotspots" on the planet.ⁱⁱ Under former governor Gerald Brown Jr. and current governor Gavin Newsom, California has been a national climate change leader. Our state has developed programs such as cap and trade to lower carbon dioxide emissions and raise fuel efficiency for automobiles in our state. The City of San Diego has a very progressive Climate Action Plan, as do many other cities in the county. Many of our cities have been pro-active in advocating for Community Choice Energy.

Creation Care and the Current Environment

What has the Covid-19 pandemic taught us? A key message of *Laudato Si* is that what one member does affects all of us. At the height of the pandemic we also experienced racism and law enforcement brutality toward our black brothers and sisters. We cannot be silent or indifferent without being accomplices.

Laudato Si tells us in paragraph 23 that climate change is real and the principal cause is human activity, particularly the burning of fossil fuels. Climate change is at crisis level, an existential threat. It has taken 606,000 lives between 1995 and 2015. That is more lives lost to climate change than by Covid-19 and racism together.

As a Christian family, we cannot be silent or indifferent to this threat to our human existence. Scientists tell us that we have 10 to 12 years to lower fossil fuel emissions or we face catastrophic weather conditions. We must act now to avoid this threat from becoming a reality. Our response is "an essential part of our Christian faith" (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 64) and a moral obligation.

COVID-19, Justice, and *Laudato Si'*

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrates the intersection between “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” described in *Laudato Si'*. The causes of the pandemic are connected to environmental degradation. Increased human encroachment on wild habitats, growing urban densities, and environmentally harmful agricultural practices have made naturally occurring infections—like the COVID-19 coronavirus—more likely to leap from animals to humans and then spread more rapidly.

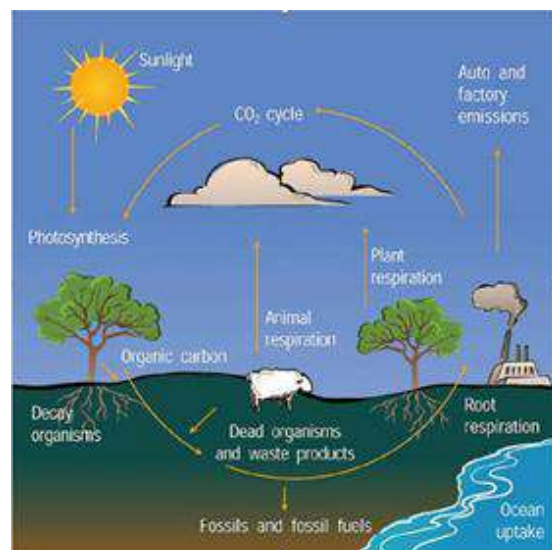
Unjust social conditions (such as overcrowded housing, lack of health insurance coverage, and lack of access to health facilities) resulted in the pandemic hitting hardest the poorest and most vulnerable. As of early June 2020, 74 percent of deaths from COVID-19 in the District of Columbia were among black residents, followed by 12 percent among Latino/a residents. In Maryland, the top hotspot statewide for COVID-19 cases and deaths was in Langley Park, a heavily Latino/a community in Prince George’s County. Vulnerable populations throughout the Archdiocese—like the elderly and those with environmentally sensitive pre-existing conditions—were disproportionately affected by COVID-19, with the likelihood of death from COVID-19 directly corresponding to the air quality of an individual’s ZIP code.

How can *Laudato Si'* provide us with a new roadmap for the era that will follow the COVID-19 pandemic? Many practices and forms of consumption considered “normal” until early 2020 appeared in the light of the pandemic to be less important to our lives, if not actually unjust and unsustainable. We should not relapse into them. Rather, the moral vision laid out in *Laudato Si'* should be our path forward—not only to reduce the danger from climate change and other future disruptions from our damage to the natural world, but to build a more equitable common future.

The Basic Science of Climate Change

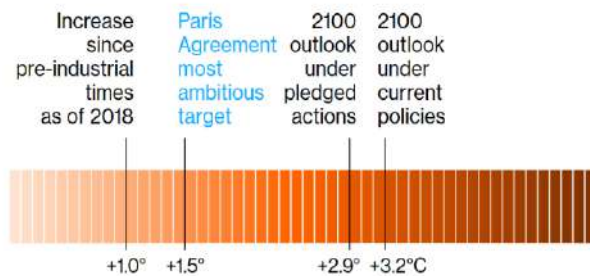
"Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day." (*Laudato Si'*, paragraph 25)

As *Laudato Si'* states, climate scientists are in global consensus that the Earth’s atmosphere has been heating up rapidly since the early 1800s, and rapidly in the last century. Carbon is the main building block of life on Earth, and it is constantly moving between land, water, beings, and the atmosphere. This is called the “carbon cycle” (pictured). Since the Industrial Revolution our burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas in our homes, cars, power plants, and factories has released large amounts of carbon dioxide or CO₂ into the atmosphere. The amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere is already higher than it has been for more than 800,000 years. CO₂ traps heat in the atmosphere and the burning of fossil fuels by humans is now the main cause of climate change.



Heating Up

Global temperatures are on course to exceed the [UN target](#)



Source: Climate Action Tracker

Notes: Figures as of September 2019. Outlooks for 2100 are median estimates.

The build-up of CO₂ in the atmosphere has already led to 1.0°C (1.8°F) of global warming and shifts in global climatic patterns. With 2.0°C (3.6°F) of global warming, 99% of our coral reefs will disappear. Ice-free summers will become common in the Arctic, with “irreversible loss of many marine and coastal ecosystems.” Yet current climate reduction commitments will still result in a far more catastrophic 3.2°C (5.8°F) of global warming.

If we don’t act soon to further reduce our generation of CO₂ in the atmosphere, our prosperity, our society, and our very civilization are in danger. Climate change is arguably the most urgent and complicated problem that humanity has ever faced.

The *Laudato Si* Message

It is our sacred duty to preserve the beauty and bounty of our local ecology for generations into the future. The Judeo-Christian tradition mandates care for God’s creation and begins with the Book of Genesis. The Old Testament is filled with beautiful images of nature and the revelation of God in nature. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: Jesus used nature as a teaching tool many times. St. Augustine, writing in the early 400s, said that: “Creation is the primary and most perfect revelation of God.” Bonaventure referred to nature as a vestige, or footprint, of God. Now Pope Francis, in the face of global environmental degradation, raises the care of creation to a central part of our Catholic faith. To this end, the Seven Goals of the [Laudato Si Action Platform](#) are:

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth
2. Response to the Cry of the Poor
3. Ecological Economics
4. Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles
5. Ecological Education
6. Ecological Spirituality
7. Community Engagement and Participatory Action.

The Goals of this Creation Care Action Plan

"Our goal is NOT to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather... to discover what each of us can DO about it." (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 19)

We members of the Catholic community of the Diocese of San Diego want to plan and act in Creation Care Teams in our parishes to implement the teachings and goals of Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. We also wish to join the forces of our parishes and schools to assist the City of San Diego with its target of 100% renewable energy and 50% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2035. We also wish to assist the County of San Diego and the State of California in reaching their greenhouse gas or carbon reduction targets of 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. These are among the most important local implementations of *Laudato Si* and the Seven Goals.

I. WE BEGIN TOGETHER

Chapter I utilizes Goal 5 of the Vatican's *Laudato Si* Action Platform, "Ecological Education".

All Christian communities have an important role to play in ecological education. It is my hope that our seminaries and houses of formation will provide an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment.

-- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 214

We are connected in a web of Creation that is simultaneously magnificent and damaged. In a human society that we can either nurture or destroy. In a Body of Christ that is called to relationship with our Creator and one another, but often falls short. The recommendations in this Action Plan can unite and empower us if we let God's love touch our hearts, inform our consciences, engage our participation. Let us resolve to begin together and to walk together.

Pope Francis continually speaks about and models this good news of connection and relationship. When he visited Washington, D.C., in 2015, he addressed the powerful and influential in a Joint Session of Congress. But first, he visited St. Patrick's homeless shelter to meet with poor residents being served a meal. In *Laudato Si'*, the Church's first encyclical on environmental issues, Pope Francis lays out the vast moral vision of "integral ecology": "an integrated approach to combatting poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature." (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 139)

The Need for Dialogue and Participation

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all... **We require a new and universal solidarity.**" – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 14

Addressing the root causes of social and environmental problems requires, as Pope Francis says, "a new and universal solidarity." It is urgent for us to listen to the voices of those who have been excluded. They are members of some of our most vulnerable communities. Stories from the impoverished and from migrants, many of whom have had to migrate because of climate change and environmental degradation in their countries of origin, can bring greater understanding of the gravity of the problems caused by climate change and social, racial, and environmental injustice that do by far the most harm to "the wretched of the Earth."

It is also essential for them to be at the table when potential solutions and approaches are discussed. Their personal experience will invariably improve the solutions and strategies being considered. Discussions on the actions suggested throughout this Action Plan need to be accessible to all communities in the Diocese. Access includes languages required, easy to reach locations, possible public transportation, and accommodations for the disabled.

We need to combine the contributions from vulnerable and marginalized populations with insights from those scientists and experts. In the next section, this Plan summarizes the scientific consensus on climate change and its urgency affecting Americans' physical, social, and economic well-being. Scientists and other key experts can provide valuable guidance.

Including everyone in the conversation also means listening to those who question the importance of these issues. The current polarization in American society is also present in today's Church. Opinion polling suggests that American Catholics are evenly split on their views concerning the nature of human impact on our climate. We are all together in the Body of Christ and in our membership in secular society. One approach to discovering common ground may be to focus on the beneficial opportunities created by action on climate and social justice—including less pollution, better-paying jobs, greater food, environmental, and disease security, and safer and more secure communities.

About This Plan and Its Implementation

The urgency of the problems we face, the moral vision laid out by Pope Francis, and the special characteristics of our region all provide the foundation for this Creation Care Action Plan. The Plan lays out a comprehensive approach for the Diocese to foster an integral ecology at every level of the Catholic Church: in the home; in parishes, schools, and other institutions; by the Diocese itself; and in all of our outreach to society as a whole. Every Catholic, every parish, and every Catholic institution in the Diocese can take strong action to address our climate and social challenges. And all can do so in ways that do not merely limit further damage, but also promote beneficial outcomes and solidarity in our communities.

The table at the end of this section gives a quick sense of the scope of this Plan and a brief flavor of each of its major sections. It is intended to invite readers deeper into the Plan and to help readers identify which sections might be of greatest interest.

The Action Plan focuses on and recommends concrete steps. Accordingly, measures of progress must be tracked to demonstrate that those steps are being taken and positive results are emerging. These measures of progress are included in a section at the end of this Plan. They reflect key indicators that *Laudato Si'* has been embraced and is coming to life in our diocese.

Individuals, parishes, and other Catholic institutions will vary in their ability to implement specific recommendations in this Plan. For that reason, the suggested actions are ranked as Easy (Silver), Moderate (Gold), and Advanced (Green). They are intended to reflect the reality that no parish or person can do everything at once, and that some actions can be implemented in a short period of time without significant resource demands. In fact, actions in this Plan can save parishes, schools, and Catholic institutions money that they will need to carry out their missions, going forward.

Actions in this Plan are ranked by difficulty or complexity to help you figure out how to get started:
Easy or Personal level
Moderate or Parish level
Advanced or Society level

This Plan should be seen in the context of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, the Catholic Church's overall strategy for implementing *Laudato Si'*. In conjunction with the fifth anniversary of *Laudato Si'* in 2020, the Vatican adopted seven *Laudato Si'* Goals (referenced in the below table) and invited the entire Catholic Church to start a seven-year journey towards sustainability.

The Diocese will be encouraging and equipping all 97 parishes in the Diocese to start implementing this Action Plan over that seven-year period through the following steps.

First, the Diocesan Creation Care Ministry will encourage interested persons in our Parishes that are ready to move forward with an implementation of this Plan beginning with the **Easy or Personal level**. Once our ministry is informed of a person's achievement at this level it will highlight their individual successes with a **SILVER RIBBON ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**.

Second, interested persons and study groups can move forward with a robust implementation of this Plan with action responses marked as **Moderate or Parish level**. When the Creation Care Committee of the Diocese is

informed of the parish's achievements at this level it will highlight their successes and provide the parish with a **GOLD RIBBON ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**. In order to accomplish parish- and society-level goals, **we strongly encourage interested members of each parish to form a Creation Care Team (CCT)**. Email Father Emmet Farrell at emmet.farrell619@gmail.com for information and assistance.

Third, interested Parish Creation Care Teams and other groups should move forward with implementation of action responses marked **Advanced or Society level**. Once we are informed of the parish's achievements at this level, we will highlight their successes and provide the parish with a **GREEN RIBBON ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** recognizing a model study group.

Starting in the second year and in each year thereafter, the Diocese will identify a new set of Leadership Parishes to begin the process of journeying to sustainability by focusing on developing their implementation of the Plan. They will draw on help from previous "classes" of Leadership Parishes. It is our hope that first-year Leadership Parishes and Green Ribbon awardees will become a resource for promoting the implementation of this Plan at other parishes in Year Two of the Action Platform.

To provide overall direction and impetus to the Diocese's effort to live *Laudato Si'* fully, and to track and recognize achievements, the Diocese has created a **Creation Care Committee** within the Office for Life, Peace and Justice. This Committee has major responsibility for championing and facilitating the implementation of recommendations in this Action Plan. The Committee also coordinates with key Diocesan offices and entities that oversee the pastoral, educational, and direct-service dimensions of the Diocese's ministries. Two key focal points of the work of the Committee are (1) to infuse the moral vision and urgency of *Laudato Si'* into the review and development of Diocesan operational policies and (2) to coordinate the identification and sharing of best practices among parishes and schools related to Action Plan implementation. Roles and assignments for the Committee are discussed in specific sections of this Plan.

Parishes undertaking the journey to sustainability will identify and designate their Creation Care Teams (CCTs), with authority and responsibility to review and guide parish actions in areas such as producing clean energy, improving energy efficiency and food security, purchasing, and recycling. Parishes will decide on their priorities among the actions contained in this overall Plan. These actions will be based on the needs of the parish and the communities it serves, and on the resources available.

Schools and other Catholic institutions within the Diocese could replicate this structure and process for their own areas.

A final key role in the Diocese's implementation of this Action Plan will be played by the communications channels of the Diocese. The Diocese will use its communication channels to help local Catholics and the larger community understand and act upon Pope Francis' call to hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. It will expand on the existing visibility of these issues in the *Southern Cross*, *Flocknotes*, and its social media. It will describe how parishes, schools, and other Catholic groups are putting into practice the teachings of *Laudato Si'*; and provide updates on progress made with the actions laid out in this Plan. It will also share this information through local radio stations that are popular with diverse audiences. Finally, it will cooperate with the Office of Life, Peace & Justice on the Diocesan [Care for Creation Webpage](https://www.sdccatholic.org/creation) (<https://www.sdccatholic.org/creation>) that will help readers of this Plan understand and implement specific recommended actions.

Getting Started – Registration

If your parish team would like to participate in this Creation Care Action Plan for the Diocese of San Diego, you can help to:

- 1) Implement the scientific and spiritual principles of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*
- 2) Protect all life and all the gifts of creation
- 3) Accomplish the seven goals of the Vatican Action Platform,

On page 47 of this document you will be asked to [register](#) your parish in this Plan if you intend to help implement *Laudato Si* and the Vatican Action Platform. If you accomplish the actions suggested for one of the levels of action steps, the Creation Care Ministry will recognize your parish's action with an Achievement Certificate for each level completed.

The following table, Going Deeper into this *Laudato Si*' Action Plan, consists of three columns to help the reader get the most out of this Plan. The first, Your Interest, identifies the area of Creation Care which one considers particularly important. The second column, Section of this Plan, directs the reader to the specific area to the Plan which addresses this interest. And the third column, Related Vatican *Laudato Si* Goals, identifies which of the seven goals the Vatican considers important in our journey to 'total sustainability' in the next decade is relevant to this area of Creation Care.

Now, please explore the substance of this Plan and consider how God's love can shine through in our reflection, dialogue, and actions.

"Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty toward nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith." -- Laudato Si, par. 64.

Going Deeper into this Climate Action Plan		
Your Interest	Section of this Plan	Related Vatican <i>Laudato Si'</i> Goals
Interested in exploring the Church's teachings around creation?	II. Learning from Catholic Teaching and Science	Ecological Education (Goal 5); Ecological Spirituality (Goal 6)
How do we protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, generally?	Environmental Justice: Addressing Pollution and Systematic Injustice	Response to the Cry of the Poor (Goal 2)
How to address individual needs of the poor relating to energy and water?	Assisting Vulnerable Individuals and Communities With Energy, Water and Disaster Needs	Response to the Cry of the Poor (Goal 2)
How to address inequities in our food system and reduce the impact of food choices on the environment?	Buying and Sharing Food and Reducing Waste	Response to the Cry of the Poor (Goal 2); Adoption of Simple Lifestyles (Goal 4)
How are we called to steward lands owned by Catholics?	Being Good Stewards of the Land	Response to the Cry of the Poor (Goal 2)
What are clean energy solutions for our parish and school buildings?	Purchasing and Producing Clean Energy	Response to Cry of the Earth (Goal 1)
How do we change the ways we think about and use energy in our daily and communal lives?	Reducing Energy Waste	Response to Cry of the Earth (Goal 1); Adoption of Simple Lifestyles (Goal 4)
Do you know where your water comes from and how much you consume?	Lowering Water Consumption	Response to Cry of the Earth (Goal 1); Adoption of Simple Lifestyles (Goal 4)
"Do unto those downstream as you'd have those upstream do unto you." Curious to know more?	V. Protecting Watersheds and Wildlife	Response to Cry of the Earth (Goal 1)
What if you had more transportation options available than you might be aware of?	VI. Making Smart Transportation Choices	Response to Cry of the Earth (Goal 1); Adoption of Simple Lifestyles (Goal 4)
75 percent of American waste is recyclable, but we only recycle about 30 percent. Can we do better? Do we need to purchase so many things?	VII. Purchasing and Recycling	Ecological Economics (Goal 3); Adoption of Simple Lifestyles (Goal 4)
How can we get governments to stop ecological damage and environmental injustices suffered by the poor?	IX. Advocating for the Earth and the Poor	Emphasis on Community Involvement and Participatory Action (Goal 7)

II. LEARNING FROM CATHOLIC TEACHING AND SCIENCE

Chapter II utilizes Goals 5 and 6 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#) (Ecological Education and Ecological Spirituality).

"It is my hope that this Encyclical Letter which is now added to the body of the church's social teaching, can help us to acknowledge the appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge we face."

-- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 15

Care for Our Common Home in Catholic Teaching

"Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience." – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 217.

Our Catholic tradition offers a rich array of teachings on the theology of creation and on the meaning and role of humans in the world. They center on recognition that creation is an act of God's love, that it is something good ("And God saw that it was good" Genesis 1:25), that it is permeated by the divine presence, and that it has its own laws and integrity. Creation's magnificence is also one of diversity, a system of relationships—with God, with one another and with the natural world. This interrelatedness is central to Pope Francis's call for integral ecology.



Earth as seen from the NASA Suomi NPP satellite. Credit: NASA/NOAA/GSFC/Suomi NPP/VIIRS/Norman Kuring

Regarding the ecological crisis, Pope Francis quotes Pope Benedict from 2005: "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast" (par. 217).

Humans have a uniqueness and dignity in the created order. We are not sovereigns over creation but rather stewards to care for creation in loving and sustainable ways. Our shared earthly home and all its goods belong to all. Creation is a common good necessary for a holistic and dignified life. Ecological concerns are moral concerns: they encompass issues of justice surrounding the impact of our actions on the natural world, on our brothers and sisters, and on the lives of future generations, "since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us" (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 159).

St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventure, and St. Hildegard of Bingen were notable in their day for raising up a "creation spirituality" that encouraged a contemplative and sacramental view of creation, and that promoted ecologically sensitive virtues like temperance and solidarity.

In the face of global environmental degradation, Pope Francis has joined his predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope St. John Paul II, in calling for "ecological conversion" (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 217). This change of heart and consciousness makes care for creation central to our faith experience, to our social justice tradition, and to our lifestyles and consumer choices.

A new, shared journey of ecological conversion is required by the times in which we live. It can also serve as a channel of reconnection to youth and young adults and to those wounded or alienated by the Church's past failings. It can be a bridge, too, to partnership with other faith traditions that are engaging in care for the environment and social justice.

The Amazonian Synod of 2019 showed what it means to take *Laudato Si'* seriously, to address all sins in a given region aggressively and bravely, and to start a shared journey of ecological conversion. This is a lesson to be followed here in our Diocese.

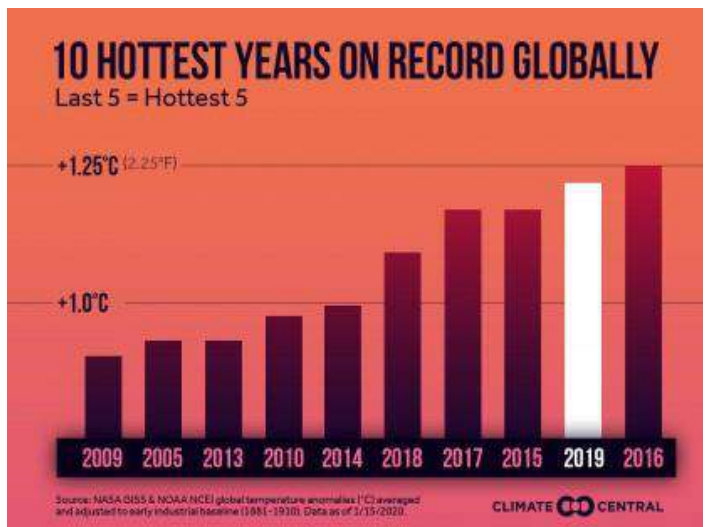
The Scientific Basis for Action to Protect Our Common Home

"There has been a growing consensus that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home." – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 164

"A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system." – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 23

What we know from our Catholic faith is amplified by what science tells us about the urgency of the challenges we face. In this, the truths from our faith are reinforced by [the truths we know from science](#).

The scientific truth is this. Earth's climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as the result of human activities. Since the late 19th century, humans have released an increasing amount of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels. This has caused the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide to increase by more than 40 percent since the 19th century. Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases absorb and reflect back to the Earth heat that would otherwise be lost to outer space. As a result, the last 10 years (2010-2019) were the hottest decade globally since reliable temperature records began to be kept 140 years ago. The last five years (2016-2019) are the five hottest years on record. As the *Fourth National Climate Assessment* states: "Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the only factors that can account for the observed warming over the last century.



Americans are already seeing the effects of climate change across the United States and in our region. Drought and high temperatures throughout the state have increased the length and severity of the fire season in California. Two of the most destructive wildfires in California history have occurred in the last three years. More high-temperature extremes and other climate changes are increasing exposure to airborne pollen allergens, and the frequency and severity of allergic illnesses—including asthma and hay fever—are expected to increase.

The 10 hottest years globally since 1880 have all been in the last decade.
Credit: NASA/NOAA and Climate Central.

Human-caused climate change is damaging our human community—locally, nationally, and globally:

“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” (*Laudato Si*, paragraph 25).



Catholic Teaching to Respond to the Cry of the Poor and the Cry of the Earth

The Church’s response to the teaching of *Laudato Si*’ must be integrated into all of its programs and activities. *Laudato Si*’ should not be considered divorced from the day-to-day mission of the Church, but needs to be part of every Diocesan and parish activity—including catechesis, young adult and campus ministry, evangelization, seminary formation, Catholic Charities, and the right to life ministry. The following actions should be undertaken by parishes and will be supported by the Diocese.

Speak from the Pulpit

Priests and deacons need to speak. *Easy*

Catholics need to hear about the Church’s teaching on care for our common home and related justice issues from the pulpit. Abundant material is available, including practical suggestions for acting. The initial training of priests and deacons and their ongoing formation should include ecological conversion and the importance of environmental justice and care for our common home.

Homilists should not have to strain to preach environmental justice. It demands no great leap to move from the Scriptures to today’s environmental concerns. The Lectionary already offers great variety for the homilist to address contemporary environmental issues of our Catholic tradition. —U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Caring for Creation: Resources for Liturgy, Preaching, and Taking Action](#), 2020 See the appendix for Homily texts.

Highlight Catholic teaching at appropriate times throughout the year. *Easy*

Pope Francis has joined with other Christian leaders in designating September 1 to October 4 of each year as a Season of Creation to be celebrated by the Church. Parishes should use this as an opportunity to focus on Catholic teaching on care for our common home. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ guide on Caring for Creation has ideas for making connections between the liturgy and care for creation throughout the liturgical year. Care for creation and concern for marginalized communities should also be integrated into celebrations of Right to Life Month in October. Concern for the life-support system of our planet and respect for vulnerable individuals in marginalized communities are important dimensions of what it means to be pro-life.

Make It Part of Faith Formation and Parish Education

Bring in expert speakers. *Easy*

They can talk about Church teaching related to climate change and social, racial, environmental, and immigrant justice. Make the connections between the environment and our health, justice for the marginalized, and connect the climate and migration crises. Our area is home to a vast array of universities, government agencies, environmental and justice groups, and religious communities who are willing to speak on these subjects.



Dr. Maureen K. Day, Assistant Professor of Religion and Society at the Franciscan School of Theology

Listen to voices from marginalized communities. *Easy to Moderate*

Reach out (within your parish, or to other parishes) to find persons in marginalized communities who can share their perspectives and experiences on environmental or justice issues. Recent immigrants in your parish have a story to tell about what is happening to our planet in their home countries. They may have had to migrate because of climate change and its impacts. Use it as an opportunity to explore the root causes of global migration.

Create or expand parish and school libraries. *Easy*

Most parishes and all schools have libraries. Make sure they feature books on justice and care for God's creation.

Organize local educational trips. *Easy*

Nature preserves in the area—as well as recycling, energy production, and water treatment facilities—offer tours and other programs for groups.

Incorporate justice and care for our common home into faith formation programs at all levels.

Moderate

Give priority to engaging youth but also provide family-based catechesis with resources that will enable families to live out the vision of *Laudato Si'*, including the suggestions in this Action Plan.

Involve Catholic schools. *Moderate to Advanced*

Broaden Catholic school curricula and develop networks among schools to give appropriate emphasis on the consistent ethic of life as part of the catechesis in parishes. Challenge students to come up with local solutions to social and environmental problems and affirm the ideas they put forward.



Student gardening at St. James Academy, Solana Beach

Organize

Form green/social concerns teams. *Easy*

Developing an effective parish response to this Action Plan requires parishioner involvement. Forming a Creation Care Team is a key step for a parish to take in implementing [this](#) Action Plan. Teams should be inclusive of people from different backgrounds and who speak different languages.

Train leaders. *Easy to Moderate*

Resources and training for green teams are available from groups like California [Interfaith Power & Light](#). The parish should also recognize leaders of these teams as an integral part of the leadership of the parish.

Involve other parish groups. *Easy to Moderate*

Groups such as school science or nature/environment clubs, youth groups, and the Knights of Columbus can contribute to activities that care for our common home. Green teams should be connected to the Parish Council and Finance Council.

Learn from others. *Easy*

Join with environmental and social justice efforts at other parishes on an interfaith basis through groups such as Interfaith Power & Light, San Diego Regional Interfaith Coalition (SDRIC), , and the [Interfaith Coalition for Earth Justice](#) (ICEJ).

Communicate

Use parish communications to spread the word. *Easy*

Create a regular place in Sunday bulletins or electronic newsletters for reflections and information on care for our common home, the needs of vulnerable neighbors, and social and environmental injustice. They can distribute materials and suggestions for environmentally beneficial practices and other ways to promote justice. Social media provide other ways to put Church teaching into practice.

Encourage parishioners to amplify. *Easy*

Parishes should encourage their members to use these channels to share news and information about care for our common home from parish and Diocesan websites, communications, and social media. Parishes should provide easy links to use for that purpose.

III. CARING FOR THE VULNERABLE, FOR THE EXCLUDED, AND FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Chapter III utilizes Goals 1, 2 and 4 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#) (Response to the Cry of the Earth, Response to the Cry of the Poor and Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles).

Environmental Justice: Addressing Pollution and Systematic Injustice

"For human beings to contaminate the earth's water, its land, its air, and its life - these are SINS. For to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God."

– *Laudato Si*, paragraph 8

Vulnerable populations include persons with lower incomes, the elderly, children, immigrants, people with disabilities, homeless or transient people, racial and ethnic minorities, and indigenous people. Many vulnerable populations in the Diocese of San Diego already suffer from the effects of structural racism and from political, social, and economic neglect.

Excessive consumption and extraction of Earth's natural resources, and the culture of waste in affluent countries, has led to dire repercussions on the most vulnerable countries of the world. In these countries, rising temperature, sea-level rise, intense flooding, and drought, which have resulted in water scarcity, have forced people to flee their countries for better lives as climate refugees. Climate refugees, e.g., from Central America and Africa, can be found in our communities, and some of them encounter discrimination here.

Polluting facilities and housing affected by lead contamination are often located in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Local examples include low air quality and the consequently high rates of asthma and other respiratory problems for children in Hispanic communities of Barrio Logan and Southeast San Diego, and the contamination of the bay and ocean of Imperial Beach due to raw sewage and contaminants from the Tijuana River. As stated by the Fourth National Climate Assessment in 2018, "People who are already vulnerable, including lower-income and other marginalized communities, have lower capacity to prepare for and cope with extreme weather and climate-related events and are expected to experience greater impacts."

Did You Know? In terms of ozone pollution three of the most polluted cities in the country are in California, and those in lower socioeconomic classes often live near freeways or industrial areas which are disproportionately affected where pollution is a particular problem.

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

– *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 49

The impacts of pollution and systemic injustice are not distributed equally. As Catholics we have a moral obligation to address those inequities, and to do so in a fashion that is itself equitable. We must undertake these actions in concert with these affected communities.

Address How Environmental Protection Intersects with Other Justice Issues

There is a need to highlight the intersections between the environmental degradation and issues of poverty and income inequality, racism, health inequality, and social injustice—including policies concerning immigration, housing, access to medical care, and the economy.

The Office of Life, Peace & Justice, Catholic Charities, and other appropriate entities will identify environmental injustices and the communities affected by them and work with members of those communities to develop an overall environmental justice strategy. This will require careful consideration of the ways in which the existing programs and direct services of Catholic Charities address these issues and could both leverage and be supported by broader efforts in the Diocese. This planning and cooperation will enable the Diocese (including Fr. Joe's Villages, jvargas@neighbor.org, 619-446-2100; Catholic Charities, vpajanor@ccdsd.org, 619-323-2841, Catholic Relief Services, maria.arroyo@crs.org, 619-618-2363) to work with parishes and schools as they carry out the following actions.

Raise awareness. *Moderate*

Parishes should work with their Creation Care Teams and affiliated groups to train additional leaders and conduct social and environmental justice workshops within their parishes to raise awareness and plan actions to address social and environmental injustices.

Develop curricula. *Moderate*

Schools should create an environmental justice curriculum that is relevant to the local socioeconomic and environmental realities, tying environmental justice to everyday issues and provide a path for students to become environmental justice leaders.

Engage Overburdened and Underserved Communities

"It needs to be said that, generally speaking, there is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the MAJORITY of the planet's population." – *Laudato Si*, paragraph 49

Through Catholic Charities, the Diocese already addresses several needs related to this Action Plan in vulnerable populations in the region. The Diocese will find additional ways to identify vulnerable populations and develop plans to protect, support, and advance them. This will enable the diocese to work with parishes, schools, and parishioners to strengthen existing programs and to help them as they carry out the following actions.

Partner locally. *Easy*

The Creation Care Committee, parishes, and schools should develop partnerships with other faith-based institutions and community groups such as Feeding San Diego, San Diego Food Bank, and the Environmental Health Coalition. Together they can address some of the root causes of the closely related climate and migration crises and protect vulnerable communities. They can collaborate in advocacy, education, and organizing events.

Listen and learn—and then act. *Easy to Moderate*

Consult, as a parish, with affected communities and populations on environmental and social justice issues of importance to those communities and, if requested, assist them with projects and activities they have identified. These might include service trips with parishioners and students to carry out activities that relate to environmental protection, such as cleanups of parks, riverbanks, and other public spaces.

Opportunities can include helping bridge language and cultural barriers for immigrants, helping access health care or school systems, offering rides to health appointments, or helping write resumes.

Learn to create and appreciate natural and artistic beauty, which invigorates and ennobles the soul. This might include activities as simple as taking kids for a hike in our outdoors, or as complex as creating a park in an underserved area. As Pope Francis puts it: “Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called “safer” areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live.” “If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple.”

As a parishioner, participate in a rally or a community-oriented service project, or volunteer your talents and skills with local organizations. Look for opportunities to get to know and collaborate with partners from vulnerable and marginalized communities. Make sure that they have a voice in the group itself.

Increase Awareness

"Political institutions and various other social groups are also entrusted with helping to raise people's awareness. So too is the Church." – *Laudato Si*, paragraph 214

Stimulate a broad discussion. *Moderate*

The Creation Care Committee, parishes, and schools should organize in-person and/or online seminars, town halls, and similar events to address key environmental justice questions across the Diocese. These events should reflect and include the diversity of our communities and include members of affected communities, community leaders, experts, and policymakers.

Engage in your community. *Easy to Moderate*

Environmental issues and how they affect us are often presented at a global scale. Many of the environmental injustices occur at the local level. Engagement in our local community networks is crucial to increasing awareness.

Organize workshops, house meetings, ecological fairs, and other informational events and invite community organizations working on social and environmental injustices to share their work with attendees.

Display a yard sign highlighting a local environmental injustice and your solidarity with those affected.

Motivate fellow parishioners to participate in social and environmental justice events.

Engage in Dialogue with Environmental Offices

The Creation Care Committee will enter into a dialogue with local, state, and federal offices responsible for environmental justice. Specific actions will include contacting the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council that addresses sustainability, environmental justice, disaster preparedness, resource and recovery plans.

Assisting Vulnerable Individuals and Communities With Energy, Water and Disaster Needs

"As the United States bishops have said, greater attention must be given to the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the 'globalization of Indifference'." -- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 52

Here we address individual energy and water needs and community resilience to extreme weather events and other disasters which is a matter of justice. Vulnerable communities must be supported by becoming more resilient to the effects of climate change that allows them to withstand and more easily recover from climate-related harm and emergencies.

Marginalized peoples must be encouraged and enabled to lead in improving their resilience. We want to avoid gentrification or other changes that lead to the displacement of vulnerable populations from the neighborhoods and communities in which they live.

Assist Individuals

Provide or facilitate direct assistance to vulnerable persons in need. *Easy*

Parishes can assist parishioners experiencing financial hardship to gain access to emergency funds. Several government and private programs also provide direct assistance with energy and water bills. Most states and regions have energy assistance offices that help low-income households with heating and cooling costs through the Federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

In addition to financial assistance, several organizations like SDG&E (sdge.com, 1-800-411-7343) help vulnerable individuals upgrade the quality of their homes to waste less energy and be safer and more comfortable year-round. They also provide free or low-cost weatherization and repairs to homeowners in need.

Parishes, schools, and parishioners can help vulnerable persons through the following actions:

- Create or expand parish emergency assistance funds to help vulnerable individuals with energy, water, and other emergencies.
- Develop awareness by parish staff of programs and direct vulnerable individuals to them.
- Support Habitat for Humanity and similar programs and encourage parishioners to participate as volunteers.

Strengthen Communities

Participate in education partnerships. *Moderate*

Partner with local universities such as the University of San Diego to promote sustainability throughout the region, in areas such as homelessness, poverty, and social justice. The University of San Diego has a focus on these issues via its Service and Social Justice Ministry, Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies, and Franciscan School of Theology.

Improve community resilience and emergency preparedness. *Moderate to Advanced*

Since lower-income and other marginalized communities have lower capacities to prepare for and cope with extreme weather, it is important to strengthen their emergency preparedness and increase their resilience. There are several ways for parishes and schools to address this need:

- Parishes and schools can improve awareness of local extreme weather and climate-related threats and can reach out to the most at-risk parishioners to help minimize them.
- Parishes and schools can form Community Emergency Response Teams through the CERT program. CERT teams can connect vulnerable parish or community members with disaster preparedness agencies for emergency response.
- Work with local authorities and Goodlands to identify the parts of the parish that are most vulnerable to flooding or storm damage. The parish could then consider how it might mobilize in response to an emergency, such as opening its infrastructure for use.
- Develop a parish telephone tree or visitation list to check on vulnerable parishioners. Encourage parishioners to connect with their vulnerable neighbors. Neighbors might require assistance during heat waves or cold weather or be helped by one of the assistance programs described above.

Buying and Sharing Food and Reducing Waste

"Whether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. For believers, this becomes a question of fidelity to the Creator, since God created the world for everyone." – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 93

Food nourishes our bodies and relationships. It celebrates cultural identities. It takes on spiritual significance in the Eucharist and giving thanks before a meal. Injustices and inequities in our food system remind us that eating is also a moral act. Many can choose foods that are less damaging to the environment, that inflict less cruelty upon animals, and that uphold the dignity of workers. Others of us have little choice at all, living in "food deserts" where convenience stores are the only places to purchase food and obesity, diabetes and other food-related health problems are rampant.

Our food system also reflects broader inequities in society. Farmers experience economic insecurity at the hands of large corporations by unpredictable events and government policies. Insecurity is also felt by farm workers and amplified by other inequities, especially if they are migrant workers. COVID-19 highlighted additional injustices. Many people of color work in jobs that put them at risk in the food supply chain, meatpacking and food processing plants, and in grocery stores. They are more likely to lose their jobs and

become food-insecure working in sectors of the economy that could not be shifted to working at home during the pandemic's shutdowns.

There is much we can do to address these inequities using the principles and vision of *Laudato Si'*. We can share our stories from around the Diocese of success in growing, sharing, and accessing nutritious and environmentally friendly food.

Improve access to nutritious food. *Moderate*

San Diego's food deserts are mainly present in neighborhoods where black and brown residents make up more than half the population. We can reach out to these communities to learn how poverty, income inequality, racism, health inequality and social injustice contribute to nutritional challenges. All our parishes and schools can offer educational programs about food insecurity in the area, and advocate for policies that improve food access and nutrition. We can partner with neighborhood organizations. Project New Village in Southeast San Diego is a fine example.

Feed the hungry. *Easy to Advanced*

Parishes can assess the nutritional needs of their members and start a food pantry, a regular community meal, or a summer lunch program for students. We can donate to or volunteer in the food assistance programs of Catholic Charities or other local food pantries and food banks. Fast during Lent and donate the money saved to a local food program or to Catholic Relief Services' Operation Rice Bowl to assist impoverished communities overseas.

Reduce food waste. *Easy*

Food is the single largest category of material placed in municipal landfills. The landfill cover deprives this food waste of oxygen, causing it to release methane as it decomposes. Methane is 30 times more potent than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas. Food waste therefore accounts for eight percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Invite parishioners to take home leftovers from events, or research food recovery programs in your community that divert leftovers to organizations serving people in need. Teach children about not wasting food.

Compost food scraps. *Moderate to Advanced*

Composting can divert food waste from landfills, reducing methane emissions, while enriching our soil and reducing the need for pesticides when applied to our gardens. Households can use a countertop or under-the-counter compost bin, participate in a fee-based compost pickup service, or in some communities join a compost cooperative or drop off compost at designated sites. Also consider advocating for curbside compost pickup along with your trash and recycling.

Did You Know? We generate 21.5 million tons of food waste each year. If we composted that food, it would reduce the same amount of greenhouse gas as taking 2 million cars off the road.

Buy locally produced and prepared food. *Easy to Advanced*

Buying local food in season reduces carbon emissions from transportation of goods across vast distances, supports regional agriculture and provides opportunities for consumers to inquire how food is produced.

Farmers' markets are sprinkled throughout the Diocese (see attached list). To extend the buy-local concept further, choose locally owned restaurants when dining out or ordering food for parish events.

Buy organic and humanely produced food. *Moderate to Advanced*

Organic produce is free from chemicals that are harmful to workers and to the environment. Free-range, grass-fed, or humanely-raised animal products are becoming more readily available. Unfortunately, they are often more expensive. If your budget allows, choose at least some organic produce, and consider reducing the amount of meat you eat so that what you do buy is raised in a way that you can feel good about.

Model healthy and just purchasing. *Moderate*

"Purchasing is always a moral - and not simply economic - act. The Issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyles." – *Laudao Si*, paragraph 206

Reinforce ethical eating principles in parish and schools. Serve local foods, vegetarian and plant-based options, and fair-trade coffee, tea, and chocolates. Educate parishioners about how their food choices impact our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world. Children labor in cocoa fields in Africa, Southeast Asia destroys rainforests for palm oil production, and the Amazon rainforest is logged to create cattle ranches.

Eat less meat. *Moderate*

Meat production consumes large amounts of grain and water and leads to massive deforestation. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has determined that if 50 percent of the world's population restricts their diet to 2,500 calories a day and reduces meat consumption overall, at least 26.7 gigatons (a gigaton is 1,000,000,000 tons) of greenhouse gas emissions could be avoided by 2050. Extend your Friday fast from meat during Lent to the rest of the year or participate in the Meatless Mondays campaign. Reduced meat consumption also has substantial health benefits.

Grow your own food. *Moderate*

Growing your own food is one of the best ways to appreciate God's abundant blessings. Schools can incorporate lessons in ecology by engaging students in on-site gardens. Parishes can set aside a plot for a community garden. Households can grow food in their back yards and on their decks and patios.

According to the Environmental Working Group, over a year:



If you eat one less burger a week, it's like taking your car off the road for 320 miles or line-drying your clothes half the time.



If your four-person family skips meat and cheese one day a week, it's like taking your car off the road for five weeks – or reducing everyone's daily showers by 3 minutes.



If your four-person family skips steak once a week, it's like taking your car off the road for nearly three months.



If everyone in the United States ate no meat or cheese just one day a week, it would be like not driving 91 billion miles – or taking 7.6 million cars off the road.

Give thanks. *Easy*

Offering a prayer at the start of a meal is a time-honored tradition that recognizes the gifts of creation and the labor of many hands to bring food to our table. Use prayers that give attention to environmental and labor injustices within the food supply chain.

Being Good Stewards of the Land

"Our dominion over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship." – *Laudato Si*, paragraph 116

The Diocese of San Diego is home to over 3.5 million people, including over 1 million Catholics, and encompasses a land area covering two counties, with 1,200 miles of ecologically critical shoreline. With 97 parishes, 34 pre-schools, 43 elementary schools, and six high schools, Catholic institutions are one of the largest blocs of land and building ownership in the region. This Diocesan body—Catholic institutions and laity—controls real estate with vast potential to address “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.” How are we called to steward these precious resources to heal the ecological damage to the Earth?

“Lack of housing is a grave problem in many parts of the world, both in rural areas and in large cities, and having a home has much to do with a sense of personal dignity and the growth of families. This is a major issue for human ecology.” — *Laudato Si*, paragraph 152

Immigrant Catholics in the Diocese come from countries that suffer from destructive land-use practices. In many cases, these practices were a factor in their migration to the United States. They remain concerned about the effects on the families and communities they have left behind. What is our response, as a Diocese, to their concerns? How do we combat the global devastation?

Consider alternative uses of property. *Easy to Moderate*

We can assess our properties and evaluate land-use alternatives that could improve the environment and advance their social and environmental justice mission. Possibilities include affordable housing, special-needs housing, health-care facilities, community gardens, food distribution, organic food co-ops, or solar fields. Catholic institutions could likewise enroll in these types of efforts.

Harness the power of the Diocesan and volunteer network to implement projects like community gardens and tree planting. Such projects need not be expensive but can have a big neighborhood impact. Parishes can support efforts to create or preserve green spaces.

Parishes and schools can engage students in creating schoolyard wildlife habitat Eco-School programs, or through youth-driven projects to turn vacant lots into urban or community gardens. Consider supporting such projects through fundraising events.

Expand housing options. *Moderate*

Advocate for inclusive zoning and smart growth. Land use regulation is controlled by local governments under zoning statutes and other regulations. Restrictions have often resulted in patterns of economic segregation that limit housing options for low- and moderate-income people.

Renovate wisely. *Easy to Moderate*

Enhance the environmental condition of church-owned properties when making choices about renovations. Where possible, improve the insulation and airtightness of buildings, and the energy and water use efficiency of their appliances and HVAC systems. Consider installing greywater systems, composting systems, induction stoves and heat pump water heaters.

Join efforts to halt global deforestation. *Easy to Moderate*

“The equilibrium of our planet also depends on the health of the Amazon region. Together with the biome of the Congo and Borneo, it contains a dazzling diversity of woodlands on which rain cycles, climate balance, and a great variety of living beings also depend. It serves as a great filter of carbon dioxide, which helps avoid the warming of the earth.” – *Pope Francis, Querida Amazonia, paragraph 48.*

Scientists and Pope Francis have noted the Amazon basin and the African equatorial forest play important roles in absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and mitigating climate change. The rate of deforestation in both areas is alarming and increasing. The largest deforesting nations are Catholic—Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a combined population of over 300 million. We should join with the global church to support initiatives that reduce deforestation. The indigenous people are the best stewards of the forest, but their lives are threatened by mining and other extractive industries.

IV. ENERGY, WATER, AND WASTE REDUCTION

Chapter IV utilizes Goals 1, 3 and 4 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#), (Response to the Cry of the Earth, Ecological Economics and Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles).

Purchasing and Producing Clean Energy

“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.” – *Laudato Si*, paragraph 26

In most areas, nearly two-thirds of our electricity comes from the burning of two fossil fuels—coal and natural gas. The electric power sector accounted for 28 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2017. By generating cleaner electricity and by reducing electrical use (discussed in the next section), we can reduce harmful emissions. The price of producing renewable electricity has dropped significantly in recent years. Cleaning up our electricity supply can also save money!

The Diocese has already taken significant steps to purchase and produce clean energy. In the Diocese 50 percent of our parishes get the majority of their electric energy from parking structure and rooftop solar panels, saving huge sums of money each year on electric costs. More can be done.



Workers installing more than 5,000 solar panels in 2019 on Archdiocesan land in Washington, D.C. Credit: CS photo/ Andrew Biraj

Choose renewable energy. *Easy to Moderate*

Because of the abundance of sunlight during most of the year in the San Diego area building owners that install solar can save as much as 80 percent in electricity costs. For every Diocesan solar project, several things happen at once: significant electric bill savings; fewer emissions of greenhouse gases; and a witness to young people and the wider community that the Church is concerned about our common future. Solar investors and developers are willing to partner with Catholic parishes. For these reasons, every parish and school with a suitable rooftop should investigate this option. Solar websites contain additional information and relevant policies on these projects. The Diocese's Creation Care Committee will champion and facilitate this initiative. Even parishes that cannot install solar panels can purchase solar and other renewable energy generated by others. Parishes and schools that have not already taken advantage of the solar-generated electricity should investigate switching their source of electricity. They can do so on their own or through consultation with the Office of Construction Services at the Diocese.



Parishioners should strongly consider switching the source of their electricity energy to renewables. Some cities in San Diego County have implemented Community Choice Energy, so customers can choose their electricity supplier, and the cost of wind or solar generated electricity can be lower than the price one would otherwise pay for non-sustainable electricity from SDG&E, and other local utilities.

Access and share information. *Easy*

The Diocesan Creation Care Committee, the Catholic Climate Covenant and its affiliate Catholic Energies, Community Purchasing Alliance, and California Interfaith Power & Light can all provide reliable and actionable steps to move our Catholic community in the direction of good energy stewardship. Parishes and schools should also work with these entities to provide information to individuals and families on how they can purchase electricity from renewable sources and investigate the potential of rooftop and community solar projects.

Divest/reinvest. *Moderate*

Catholic institutions around the world are divesting their portfolios of fossil fuel investments and reinvesting that money into renewable energy companies. The Catholic Bishop's Conferences of the Philippines and Ireland have declared total divestment from fossil fuel stocks. Because the value of fossil fuel stocks is both volatile and declining, these changes make economic as well as moral sense. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has a set of Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines, comprising principles and policies. In addition to the Diocese's implementation of these Guidelines for its own investments, parishes, schools, and Catholic institutions should have their Finance Committees and boards review their investments for compliance with the Guidelines. Parishioners should also learn about the Guidelines and use them in their personal investment decisions.

Create a green revolving loan fund. *Advanced*

The Diocese could investigate creating a "green revolving fund," for the purpose of facilitating its transition to sustainability. +The fund would be available for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects at parishes, schools, and other Catholic facilities. A small portion of the savings generated by these projects would be returned to the fund to accelerate additional sustainability projects—creating a virtuous circle of financial support.

Reducing Energy Waste

"A person who could afford to spend and consume more but regularly uses less heating and wears warmer clothes, shows the kind of convictions and attitudes which help to protect the environment. There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions!"

—*Laudato Si'*, paragraph 211.

Deciding to use energy more **efficiently** is a moral, communal, and economic decision we should pray about and act upon. It is a moral and communal decision because we are helping to care for our common home—Earth—and reducing the threat of global warming for all. It is also an economic decision as becoming energy efficient can save money!

The Diocese has committed to becoming more energy efficient. It encourages its parishes and the faithful to become more energy efficient. The Diocesan Creation Care Committee will facilitate actions identified for the Diocese below.

Connect to key (and free) resources and expertise. *Easy*



The nation's premier energy efficiency resource is the **EPA ENERGY STAR®** program, and it has a subprogram focused on helping congregations. Some Diocesan parishes may have already signed up as partners to this program, which requires nothing more than a good-faith commitment to save energy. Partners have access to free resources and training, including an extensive guide to energy efficiency for congregations and access to the free, industry-standard, and widely used analytical tool for building energy performance—ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. Every parish and school should sign up as an ENERGY STAR partner to access these free resources.

Establish energy baselines. *Moderate*

Portfolio Manager allows Catholic institutions to easily see totals and trends relating to energy use, energy expenses, and greenhouse gas emissions. It also allows for comparison of important types of facilities (e.g., schools) to national averages. The ENERGY STAR score from Portfolio Manager is the basis for EPA's national recognition program for highly efficient buildings. Energy auditors and consultants typically ask clients for a few years of utility bills that they then input into Portfolio Manager, at the client's expense. Parishes can save money by having a parishioner do this instead.

Catholic facilities can benefit from **energy audits**, which can range from informal walk-throughs looking for the most common sources of energy waste in buildings to "investment-grade" audits that rank the financial benefit and calculate the payback period for specific energy efficiency measures (e.g., upgrading all the lighting fixtures in a building).

Parishioners should make use of free home energy audits that are provided by local utilities (e.g. SDG&E). Some free energy- and water-saving devices are typically provided at the time of the audit.

Develop a facilities plan and action steps. *Moderate*

Owners of Catholic facilities can tap expertise in developing plans to improve energy efficiency. These organizations include the Catholic Energies affiliate of the Catholic Climate Covenant and California Interfaith Power & Light. Commercial consultants and building operations contractors may also be able to help in planning for actions such as upgrading lighting and fixtures, upgrading insulation, installing/retrofitting doors and windows, or installing motion-sensor lighting within and outside.

Did You Know? According to the nonprofit Alliance to Save Energy, buildings—including offices, homes, stores, churches, and schools—use 40 percent of U.S. energy and 70 percent of U.S. electricity. Most buildings needlessly waste energy—taking money away from other needs, making power plants work harder and pollute more, and putting stress on the electric grid.

Conserve Energy at home. *Easy to Moderate*

Parishioners may want to begin making their homes more efficient by taking the following actions ranked as *Easy*:

- Replace all lights with LED bulbs.
- Seal or caulk around window and door frames.
- Install shades or heat-shielding film on windows directly exposed to the sun and pull drapes at night to keep in the heat.
- Turn off lighting when not needed.
- Install timers or motion sensors on outdoor lighting.
- Purchase power strips to turn off electronics when they are not in use.
- Adjust temperatures to 68 degrees or lower in winter and 78 degrees or higher in the summer—an extra sweater in winter or lighter clothing in summer will help one's body adapt to these new temperatures.
- Purchase a programmable thermostat to reduce heating or cooling use when not at home or in the evening while asleep.
- Open windows and use fans for cooling rather than air conditioning on cooler days and nights in summer.
- Utilize EPA's ENERGY STAR ratings when buying or replacing appliances.

The following actions are also recommended but are ranked as *Moderate*:

- Plant deciduous trees in front of south-facing windows to shade your house from summer's sun while still letting the winter sun through.
- Dry clothes and bedding on an outdoor line or rack in summer rather than using a gas or electric dryer.
- When buying a new home or renting an apartment, factor in its energy efficiency.
- Finally, explore replacing coal/oil/gas-fired heating systems with more energy-efficient electric-powered heat pumps for both heating and cooling of homes.

Did You Know? An electric clothes dryer accounts for a whopping 12 percent of electricity use in a typical household. And clothes drying is one of the easiest places to save energy, because you can erase 100 percent of the energy cost by simply hanging your clothes up to dry. At an electricity rate of \$0.15/kWh and 7.5 loads per week, that would mean savings of \$196 per year by line-drying instead of using an electric dryer.

Lowering Water Consumption

“We know that water is a scarce and indispensable resource and a fundamental right which conditions the exercise of other human rights. This indisputable fact overrides any other assessment of environmental impact on a region.”

—*Laudato Si'*, paragraph 185

Water is one of the most basic and essential requirements for sustaining life. Water ignores political and all other manmade boundaries, both as it descends from the sky as rain and when it flows on the ground as runoff or within streams and rivers. It can be somewhat controlled on the ground by dams and levees, but such infrastructure is far from perfect and can harm the environment.

We must also prepare for the future impacts of climate change on rainfall. Increasing temperatures are expected to simultaneously lead to more frequent extreme storms and droughts. Expanding urban development will increase water demand. We need to reduce our water consumption to prepare for a less predictable water supply and increased water demand.

The most basic and direct use of water is for drinking. Other direct needs include water consumed for flushing toilets, taking showers, cooking, washing clothes, and watering gardens. Watering lawns is environmentally detrimental and often unnecessary.

We also consume water in less obvious ways. The production of food in agriculture (including raising livestock and poultry) is one of the largest users of water. For example, it takes approximately 450 gallons of water to produce a quarter-pound hamburger.

Did You Know? Production of one smart phone requires approximately 3,190 gallons of water.

Discover where your water comes from. *Easy to Moderate*

Schools and church staff/ministries should take time to research their water source and discuss how to be better stewards of the water that they depend on. **Water is life.** Start by contacting your water utility or visiting the EPA’s website and searching for “Where does my drinking water come from?” Parishes and schools can arrange visits to watersheds, water treatment and water recycling facilities.

Ban bottled water. *Easy*

Ending the use of bottled water at Diocesan, parish, and school events promotes both less water consumption and reduced plastic pollution. Individuals and families can avoid purchasing bottled water by using water filters and reusable water bottles instead.

Reduce indoor water consumption. *Easy to Advanced*

Retrofit kitchen and bathroom plumbing by installing low-flow and self-closing sink faucets as well as low-flow toilets. This can reduce water consumption by 25 percent or more). Standard faucets require a flow of 2.2 gallons per minute without losing performance, whereas faucets labeled through EPA’s WaterSense faucets use a maximum of 1.5

Did You Know? Seventy percent of single-use water bottles end up in a landfill, the ocean, on the ground, or eaten by animals.



gallons per minute. Repair leaks and remember to turn off faucets when not in use. Install composting toilets and a greywater system.

Regularly test drinking water. *Easy to Moderate*

Regularly test drinking water for lead and other contaminants using end-of-tap testing methods. Contact the local health department for guidance. It is important to understand the risks, but it is also important to reassure everyone that tap water is safe.

Reduce outdoor water consumption. *Moderate to Advanced*

Evaluate lawns and gardens and convert to native plants that require less water. Install rainwater collection tanks and rain gardens to catch and use storm water runoff from rooftops and driveways for irrigation purposes. Water gardens in the evening, during the night, or prior to 10:00 A.M. This allows water to soak into the ground.



V. PROTECTING WATERSHEDS AND WILDLIFE

Chapter V utilizes Goals 1, 4, 6 and 7 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si Action Platform*](#), (Response to the Cry of the Earth, Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles, Ecological Spirituality and Community Engagement and Participatory Action).

“Do unto those downstream as you’d have those upstream do to you.” – Wendell Berry

The County of San Diego contains 11 watersheds. A watershed is a landmass defined by ridges and valleys such that all rain that falls within the watershed flows to the same low point. How we care for or mistreat the land on our church grounds has a direct impact on those downstream of us.

Storm water is a large source of pollution and is greatly increased when rain falls on unnatural surfaces and cannot soak into the ground. The rainwater becomes polluted with all kinds of wastes. This combined waste stream is referred to as “runoff” and is carried from street drains to the nearest creek or stream, where it is dumped without treatment. Large rain events are one of the primary causes of life-threatening flash floods in urban areas.

Large church parking lots have replaced natural habitats; they generate tremendous amounts of storm water pollution; and for most days during the week, they are largely unused. Catholic churches and schools can improve water quality and reduce storm water runoff by reducing the size of these parking lots, and by converting them to permeable materials to reduce runoff and allow rainwater to recharge the aquifer.



The figure shows a permeable affordable decomposed granite parking lot in National City's Olivewood Gardens.

Our laws do not require that storm water pollution be treated. Water flowing on the streets and other impermeable surfaces goes directly into the ocean. Neglect of sewage and storm water infrastructure has led to severe pollution of our downstream, often poorer, brothers and sisters. It is time to change this.

Reduce storm water pollution. *Moderate to Advanced*

The key to reducing runoff is to “slow rain down and get it into the ground.” This can be accomplished by installing rain gardens and other natural ground cover that capture runoff. Install cisterns to capture roof runoff, green roofs, permeable pavement, and even increase tree canopy directing water to the trees’ roots. There are tremendous resources within the various cities and counties to assist you. Some counties offer voluntary incentive programs to help offset the costs. To begin with, check for guidance on local grant programs.

Reduce turf grass. *Easy to Moderate*

Turf grass is a poor landscaping choice. It wastes huge amounts of water, supports very few beneficial insects and generates no food for human or animal life. Fossil-fueled mowers are a major source of air pollution. Replace as much turf grass as possible with a vegetable garden or with native plantings that support diverse wildlife, including pollinators. Find beauty in a natural landscape that honors the diversity and creativity of the web of life.

Did You Know? American lawns cover an area about the size of Texas. Turf grass is the most grown, the most heavily fertilized, and the most heavily irrigated crop in the United States. Each year, Americans spend \$27 billion caring for turf and lawns. That's ten times more than is spent on school textbooks!

Increase tree canopy. *Moderate*

Did You Know? A tree can sequester one ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old. A native oak tree provides food for 534 species of beneficial insects and small mammals.

Trees are a wonder! They sequester atmospheric carbon into their bodies, filter pollutants out of the air, provide cooling shade, slow rainwater down, prevent soil erosion, and provide natural habitat for hundreds of insects and animal species. Increasing native tree canopy is one of the greatest gifts a Diocesan, parish or school facility can leave for the next generation. Free trees are available through some city or local programs. (Check Trees San Diego). Environmental groups or local forestry councils can design planting plans and provide guidance on how to protect saplings from deer.

Plant pollinators and conservation landscaping. *Easy to Moderate*

Landscaping around sidewalks and main entrances to Diocesan, parish, or school buildings can be converted into conservation landscaping, which includes native shrubs and plants, pollinators, and native fruit trees. Install signage to teach passersby what the species names are so that they can replicate these choices at home. Use these spaces as outdoor prayer gardens or memorials to lost loved ones. Host a native plant sale at the church around Earth Day. Educate parishioners about the importance of choosing native plants and pollinators. Concentrate on useful or native plants and shrubs including those that will benefit birds and pollinators. Invasive species can destroy the diversity of our ecosystem and require far too much watering. Look for lists of native plants for this region.

Eliminate chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and deicers. *Easy*

Eliminate or significantly reduce the use of chemical deicers during winter and fertilizers/pesticides on Diocesan, parish, or school grounds. These chemicals wreak havoc on the ecosystem.

Create school gardens. *Easy to Moderate*

Demonstrate living in harmony with the Earth by teaching students how to garden and grow food. Create school gardens, and schoolyard wildlife habitats, that attract songbirds with native plants, and use these spaces to teach science and ecology.

Did You Know? Schools where students participate in school gardens show a significant increase in science achievement scores.

Educate parishioners and students. *Easy*

There are numerous nonprofit organizations with expertise in wildlife and watershed protection. Any of them would be delighted to speak to your community in person or virtually for evening educational programs or to host an informational table in the back of the church. Celebrate installing a rain garden or other watershed protection project. Leverage these installed practices as teaching and demonstration tools.

Become a community leader. *Advanced*

Parishioners can become a Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Watershed Steward, or citizen scientist through various local programs, including those at our local universities. Once you have learned you can serve your church and the broader community in raising awareness and changing hearts.



1Landscaping project near St. Didacus Parish

Compost at home. *Easy to Moderate*

Compost yard clippings, fruit/vegetable scraps, and coffee grounds to reuse around the garden and eliminate the need for store-bought potting soil.

Create Sustainable Landscapes. *Moderate*

In Cantic of the Sun, St. Francis of Assisi understood and appreciated our connectedness to nature with his words, “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.” By using sustainable gardening, farming, and landscaping practices, parishes and parishioners can create an oasis for people and wildlife around their churches and homes and restore local ecosystems.

We applaud the parishes of St. Pius X, Our Mother of Confidence and Good Shepherd for their implementation of *xeriscaping* (low-water use landscaping to save on water and maintenance costs).

VI. MAKING SMART TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Chapter VI utilizes Goals 2, 3 and 4 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#), (*Response to the Cry of the Poor, Ecological Economics and Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles*).

Transportation is a lifeline to affordable housing, jobs, grocery stores, health care, recreational opportunities and so much more. At the same time, it accounted for about 28 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States in 2017. Our area is blessed with many environmentally sustainable options, with public transit and increasing miles of bike lanes. Government leaders closed some streets to traffic to enable safer walking, cycling and outdoor dining.

Advocate for transportation equity. *Moderate*

Many of us face long commutes to jobs via public transit. Some of our communities too often also bear the brunt of polluting transportation infrastructure such as highways and diesel bus garages. We can advocate for safe, accessible, affordable, and just transportation solutions. This includes supporting the transition from diesel to zero-emission school buses to protect children and lessen forced relocation of low- and moderate-income residents and businesses along new public transit routes.

Promote green transportation choices. *Easy to Moderate*

Facilities throughout the Diocese can encourage the use of public transportation by posting information about nearby bus and train stops. They also can install electric vehicle charging stations and premium parking for carpools. When appropriate, parishes and schools can help arrange carpooling groups to reduce the number of miles driven to attend Mass, classes, and other functions.

Purchase fuel-efficient vehicles. *Advanced*

Choosing electric and highly fuel-efficient cars can greatly reduce our carbon footprint. Electric vehicles can reduce or even eliminate greenhouse gas emissions depending on the source of their charging electricity. Emissions drop to close to zero when cars are charged by solar or wind power. The Diocese can institute a policy to purchase only electric or highly fuel-efficient vehicles for its operations and encourage priests to do the same. All of us can consider fuel efficiency as a factor in purchasing cars.

Did You Know? San Diego average commute time is 26 minutes. While not as bad as many large metropolitan US cities, we rank 19th in the nation and we contribute to 7.6 billion miles of vehicular traffic. These miles represent lost productive time, and contribute significantly to a greenhouse gases and air pollution. Efforts are ongoing to increase the use of mass transportation and the use of hybrid and all electric vehicles.



EV charging stations near St. James and St. Leo Parishes

Carpool rather than rideshare. *Moderate*

Arranging rides with others reduces pollution in low-income communities situated near busy roads, and nurtures relationships. But don't confuse these benefits with the impacts of ride-sharing apps. A study by the Union of Concerned Scientists found that using commercial ride sharing increased carbon emissions by 69 percent because ride-sharing drivers roam for miles to find their next passengers. Ride sharing is also more often a substitute for public transit than for solo car trips, according to a survey of California users.

Use your car efficiently. *Easy*

Reducing idling of your car and combining trips can go a long way in reducing carbon emissions. Stop for groceries on the way home from church or work rather than making a separate trip; run a couple extra errands when dropping your children off at activities. It's okay to turn your car off at long stops; keeping the car running for more than 10 seconds uses more gas than re-starting the engine. Finally, choose where possible to drive during times of low traffic.

Don't forget walking and biking. *Moderate*

Bicycling and walking to Mass, church meetings, work and school is fun, provides exercise and is gentler on our environment. Facilities throughout the Diocese can install bike racks and promote a culture that accepts people arriving for Mass and meetings in casual clothes and footwear. Arrange cycling and walking pairs or small groups, especially after evening meetings.

Re-think meetings and travel. *Easy to Moderate*

While fostering relationships through in-person gatherings is important, consider alternating in-person and virtual meetings to reduce car usage. When plane travel is necessary, it can be offset by purchasing carbon credits. We can request our employers mandate such offsets.

Plan green vacations. *Easy to Moderate*

When shelter-at-home orders were in place, many of us discovered nearby parks and other natural areas. Make exploring your local area and taking trips within driving distance part of your vacation planning as well. If you're traveling farther, consider taking the train or bus. You can save money by using public transportation instead of renting a car when you get to your destination, particularly if it is a major city.

VII. PURCHASING AND RECYCLING

Chapter VII utilizes Goals 4, 6 and 7 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#), (Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles, Ecological Spirituality and Community Engagement and Participatory Action).

“Purchasing is always a moral — and not simply economic — act.” – *Laudato Si*, paragraph 206.

Pope Francis calls upon us to adopt a prayerful and intentional approach to the purchases we make, and to be mindful of the toll our choices have on God’s creation and the world God has given us to live in. This leads us away from plastics, toxic household and garden products, energy-wasting appliances, and a meat-based greenhouse-gas-intensive diet toward renewable products, energy-efficient appliances, and a plant-based diet that is healthier for the planet.

We also have a unique opportunity to use what Pope Francis calls the “circular economy of materials” by actively seeking to purchase paper, textiles, furniture and other products that are either manufactured from recycled materials or that have a second or third service life. We can advocate to recycle plastics more aggressively, to reduce their toxic effect on our environment.

The Diocese can lead the way in its own operations, and the Creation Care Committee will promote the adoption of policies and practices that can serve as a model for parishes and schools. Such actions would include expanding the use of purchasing cooperatives and identifying parishes or schools with good procurement procedures or active recycling programs to serve as peer leaders.

Did You Know? The EPA estimates that 75 percent of the American waste stream is recyclable, but we recycle only about 30 percent.

Implement ecological purchasing. *Moderate*

The Creation Care Committee will work to ensure that Diocesan purchasing procedures correspond to best practices on ecological purchasing. Parish and school sustainability leaders or committees could consider the same types of policies.

These practices could include:

- Purchasing office supplies made from natural, recycled, or recyclable materials.
- Eliminating the use of single-use plastics and foam-based food containers in all Diocesan operations and events.
- Purchasing only products (e.g., coffee) that are fair-trade and sustainably produced.

The Creation Care Committee will seek opportunities to connect parishes and schools with cooperatives that can make eco-friendly purchases more affordable.

A waste audit of parish facilities should be carried out to identify and reduce unnecessary paper, supplies, and furniture in parish and school operations.

Encourage recycling. *Easy to Moderate*

Excellent resources are plentiful in San Diego and surrounding jurisdictions to help the Diocese and its parishes and schools make recycling a reality. Resources specifically for religious organizations include the [Catholic Climate Covenant](#), [Community Purchasing Alliance](#), [California Interfaith Power & Light](#), and [Zero Waste Church](#). The Diocesan Creation Care Committee will collaborate with these potential partners to develop and provide parishes with resources and tools to achieve more sustainability through recycling. The Creation Care Committee will encourage the active participation of pastors, social concerns teams, youth groups, and other groups to implement and monitor parish recycling.

We will also help focus action on materials that are not accepted by municipal recycling programs, such as plastic bags. In addition to the collection of plastic bags by private entities such as grocery stores, several companies offer recycling alternatives; one is Trex, which recycles plastic bags and bottles into deck material and provides communities with free park benches.

Did You Know? Each year, Americans use 100 billion plastic bags that require 12 million barrels of oil to manufacture. 100,000 marine animals are killed by plastic annually. And disposable shopping bags are typically used for less than half an hour.

Parishes and schools should promote and monitor recycling bins in daily operations and special events and disseminate information on the recycling programs and schedules of local governments, including special collection events for electronic devices. They can place a permanent plastic bag recycling bin next to the standard recycling bin. Parishes should also consider cooperating with local governments to conduct periodic collections of paint, batteries, and other toxic materials.

Parishioners can learn what can and cannot be recycled by visiting the website of their city, village, or county. Some of the most common items that cannot be recycled, because they spoil the recycling process, are plastic bags and pizza boxes. Recycle bags on your next visit to the grocery store, if it collects them. Look for other ways you can recycle. For example, by returning excess metal clothes hangers to your local dry cleaner.

Coordinate campaigns to persuade. *Moderate*

Merchants and businesses can be persuaded to adopt practices that support Pope Francis' "circular economy of materials" if they receive multiple customer requests for a specific sustainability improvement at the same time, as opposed to receiving requests that are scattered and infrequent. We could establish a focus for certain months or periods of the ecclesiastical year in which parishes and parishioners can ask merchants they patronize to put specific changes into effect (e.g., providing biodegradable produce bags or only providing a plastic straw upon request).

Engage students. *Easy*

As part of the everyday life of Catholic schools, discuss and model the purchasing and consumption behaviors that are consistent with the principles of *Laudato Si'*. Engage students in making their school an example of putting these principles into action.

Cut down on plastic. *Easy*

Reducing our individual plastic consumption is a matter of urgency. Micro plastics, from the breakdown of plastic waste in the environment, are being ingested daily by animals and humans alike. We can reduce our household plastic consumption by bringing our own grocery bags and advocating for biodegradable produce bags wherever we shop. Switch out bottled water for water purified at home. Opt for products that use minimal or no packaging. Bulk buys use less packaging than those with smaller or individual portions and in addition they often cost less. Several grocery stores offer bulk goods direct from dispensers. At home, use reusable containers rather than plastic wrap and resealable plastic bags.

Did You Know?

Americans ingest at least 74,000 micro plastic particles every year.

Shop mindfully. *Easy to Moderate*

As mindful consumers, we need to consider the environmental and social justice impact of every purchase we make. We can avoid retailers who facilitate unfair or illegal work practices including child labor and avoid using products that pollute our common habitat. Bleaches, ammonias, and many household cleaners that appear to make our homes fresher and healthier are not only bad for our environment but also for our health. Use soap, white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide instead. Opt for biodegradable detergents.

Did You Know? The product not purchased is the most eco-friendly, sustainable purchase. It never needs to be recycled. The choice not to purchase is a response to Pope Francis' call for a simpler lifestyle.

Live simply. *Easy*

Laudato Si' calls us to live more simply. It can be hard to insulate ourselves from the materialistic noise, especially in the United States, which has more retail store space per capita than any other country in the world. A first step can be to unsubscribe from the many e-mails and catalogs that clog our in-boxes and doormats, often sidetracking us from real communication.

"Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack." –Laudato Si', paragraph 222

Enrich lives through genuine social sharing. *Easy*

Rather than buy something you are likely to use infrequently, you can often borrow it instead by simply asking a friend or neighbor. People are glad to assist, and you can reduce your carbon footprint while building relationships and a sense of community. In the same way, you can offer possessions you no longer need to several organizations that will find new users for them (e.g., Goodwill, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Value Village, A Wider Circle). These organizations serve communities in need and some will even pick up at your home. For gently-used business attire, look to DressForSuccess.org; for children's toys, contact the Homeless Children's Playtime Project; and for household items and building materials, go to Habitat for Humanity or Community Forklift.

VIII. OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YOUTH AND THE FUTURE

Chapter VIII utilizes Goals 5 and 7 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#), (Ecological Education and Community Engagement and Participatory Action).

"We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently." -- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 159

The Power of Engaging Youth

St. James Academy in Solana Beach has made teaching sustainability a significant part of its academic program. In addition to classroom instruction on the importance of the environment to everyone, its role in faith formation based on *Laudato Si* is central to the message.

The school was recently recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Green Ribbon School for its sustainability program, making it the first Catholic school in Southern California to achieve this honor.

St. James Academy has freed its campus of single use plastic water bottles. Instead, the campus provides hydration stations where students can fill and refill their reusable water bottles from home.

Energy wise, the school installed energy efficient LED light fixtures throughout the campus, which resulted in a 30% energy savings. And in 2017, the school installed a rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system which provided 98% of the school's energy requirement the first year.

Pope Francis points out our vitally important linkage with, and responsibilities to, future generations. He poignantly asks,

"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" -- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 160

An entire generation of Catholic youth is looking to their elders for action, but they are also beginning to act themselves. In 2019, the Washington area witnessed an unprecedented Global Youth Climate Strike, organized by young people (including Catholic students supported by their schools). Inspired by Greta Thunberg and other leaders of their generation, they protest lack of government action in the face of the looming climate crisis by demonstrating instead of attending classes. The involvement and passion of youth is also reflected in concrete proposals they are making to improve the environment.

In 2020, we see youth at the forefront of conversations and protests aimed at creating a society with greater racial justice. Their passion across the full range of social and environmental issues is summed up by Pope Francis:

"Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded."

-- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 13.

This Action Plan is part of our intergenerational responsibility to them. Our Catholic tradition recognizes the importance of repentance and conversion of heart, so to the younger members of our community we say: Do not lose courage in the face of the slowness and hesitation that you see. We ask your forgiveness for not having

acted more decisively to leave you a better world. You are right to urge us to change our actions and lifestyles so that they become more sustainable and more just.

Stimulated by these expectations from young people and our responsibilities to them, this Action Plan will focus on empowering all parts of our Diocese to take concrete steps that will benefit everyone—not just by improving the use of energy and water, protecting habitat, and expanding recycling, but by addressing inequities and injustices that connect to these challenges and impede progress on them.

IX. ADVOCATING FOR THE EARTH AND THE POOR

Chapter IX utilizes Goals 1 and 2 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si' Action Platform*](#), (*Response to the Cry of the Earth and Response to the Cry of the Poor*).

"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'*, par. 139

"Public pressure has to be exerted in order to bring about decisive political action. Society, through non-governmental organizations and intermediate groups, must put pressure on governments to develop more rigorous regulations, procedures and controls. Unless citizens control political power – national, regional and municipal – it will not be possible to control damage to the environment."
–*Laudato Si'*, par. 179

Pope Francis tells us that our ecological conversion includes not only personal behaviors, but also "macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones" (par. 231). Such a conversion inevitably leads us to the public square, where Catholics are called to be advocates for our Mother, Sister Earth, and for the poor. He reminds us that "the gravest of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest" (par. 48). We are thus called to be prophetic and persistent advocates at the local, state, and national levels of government.

Guided by Catholic social teaching, American Catholics have historically engaged in collective and individual action across a range of issues. *Laudato Si'* has been "added to the body of the Church's social teaching" (par. 15) and we are called to exert public pressure for decisive political action for the common good. Prior sections of this Plan have discussed the *Laudato Si'* mandates for environmental justice and for care for vulnerable individuals. We now focus on how we, the people of the Diocese of San Diego, can be effective advocates and heed the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

The Diocese of San Diego already works to shape public policy to reflect Catholic social teaching. The following groups employ professional staff to advocate with legislators, organize grassroots initiatives and represent the Catholic voice for the common good:

- California Catholic Conference: Advocates for one Archdiocese and 10 Dioceses. It mobilizes grassroots action and surveys and reports on candidates on their stances regarding issues of concern to Catholics.
- The Diocesan Office of Life Peace & Justice provides another forum to engage and encourage Catholics in fulfilling their moral obligation to participate in political action.

Advocacy issues will change during the implementation phase of this Action Plan as current concerns are addressed and new matters come to the fore. The following list of current issues, though (and it is not an exhaustive list), gives a sense of what the longer-term scope of the **Diocese's climate advocacy concerns and activities** should be:

- Reduction in carbon emissions, equitable implementation of the San Diego Climate Action Plan and other environmental policies throughout the Diocese and a strong commitment to cooperative global solutions to the climate crisis.

- Reinstatement of EPA regulations and other environmental regulations repealed by the current Administration.
- Access to clean, safe drinking water: ensure rigorous local testing and immediately address contamination.
- Remediation of toxic wastes and environmental degradation in historically neglected areas.
- Elimination of air and water pollution resulting from the operation of power plants, sewage plants, trash incinerators, garbage transfer stations and other sources.
- Protection from and preparedness for extreme weather events (e.g., heat waves and heavy precipitation).
- Protection for climate refugees: current laws do not extend asylum status to climate refugees or consider climate change in immigration applications.
- Availability of affordable, nutritious food: eliminate food deserts, support urban agriculture and farm markets, educate people on nutrition and gardening, and support an adequate network of food banks.
- Access to safe and affordable housing: stimulate construction of more affordable housing, implement inclusionary zoning policies, and equitably enforce building codes.
- Creation of quality jobs at a livable wage and programs that train underemployed people to transition to such jobs.
- Public health programs to address higher mortality and morbidity in marginalized communities and protection from and preparedness for epidemics and bio-natural threats, such as COVID-19.
- Access to safe public transportation in the era of COVID-19.
- Preservation and restoration of global biodiversity including our forests, oceans, and endangered species.



Any conversations and advocacy efforts must engage people from vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. The Diocese should also establish linkages with other faith communities and interfaith groups that are seeking to affect public policies related to creation care and environmental justice (e.g., California Interfaith Power & Light, Citizen's Climate Lobby, San Diego 350, Climate Action Campaign, and Global Catholic Climate Movement, Interfaith Coalition for Earth Justice).

Encourage church advocacy for our common home. *Easy*

"We are faced with an educational challenge...aimed at creating an 'ecological citizenship'."

– *Laudato Si*, paragraphs 209,211

Laudato Si' makes it clear that climate change and environmental justice are issues of fundamental human survival. The Diocese will work with the Catholic Climate Covenant, and other groups to elevate these issues accordingly.

- The California Legislative Network will maintain awareness of, and provide support for, legislation in local and state issues that addresses environmental justice and environmental protection issues.
- The Diocese will be a voice within the California Catholic Conference in support of legislation in the California General Assembly that addresses environmental justice and environmental protection issues.
- The Diocesan Office of Life, Peace & Justice will serve as a touchstone to mobilize and empower Catholics to become effective citizen advocates at local, state, and federal levels. The Creation Care Committee will work with appropriate partner organizations to provide policy and advocacy training to accomplish this goal.

Provide leadership nationally. Easy

The Diocese's location in the second largest city in the most populated state with the largest economy in the country provides it with the opportunity and the responsibility to engage in federal advocacy as well.

- The Diocese will help develop programming for the annual USCCB Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in January.
- Each spring Catholic religious orders and organizations gather for Catholic Lobby Day where they lobby state legislators on legislation. The Creation Care Committee will work to include creation care and environmental justice issues.

Empower parishioners and youth. Easy

The Creation Care Committee will encourage pastors and principals to engage in coordinated advocacy with local, state, and regional groups. Parish and school facilities can host meetings of advocacy groups. Catholic school-based advocacy actions should be connected to other youth-focused climate organizations and initiatives.

Reflect and celebrate annually. Easy

The Creation Care Committee will host events tied to the annual anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si'* and the annual **Season of Creation** or some other appropriate date. Such events could include a "Green Mass" (to complement the annual Red and White Masses) coupled with parish environmental justice action days, a Diocesan lobby day, or special school teach-ins.

Become an informed and active community member. *Easy*

There is no better way to become an inspired advocate than to make *Laudato Si'* our touchstone and beacon as parishioners, come together in community, and become informed and empowered to influence the debate over current creation care and environmental justice issues. Join one of the many local, regional, and national organizations in the San Diego area dedicated to promoting social justice and protecting the environment. Work to address the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable people. Write letters, attend teach-ins, lobby elected officials in person, testify at relevant public hearings, and engage in rallies and demonstrations. Ask your leaders exactly what they are doing to ensure the survival of humanity. Be bold. We want a proven safe and healthy climate. Nothing less.

Be a *Laudato Si'* values voter. *Easy*

Learn where candidates stand and make voting decisions across the spectrum of Catholic social teaching.

“What we all need is an ‘ecological conversion’ (par 217)...an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith, since the teaching of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living.” – *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 216

X. IMPLEMENTATION ACTION STEPS IN THE PLAN

Chapter X utilizes all seven Goals of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#).

We intend to achieve the goals mentioned earlier by implementing the action steps listed in the following table. The action steps are divided into ten Measures of Success: Catholic Social Teaching, Environmental Justice, Transportation, Buying and Sharing Food, Land Use, Purchasing and Producing Clean Energy, Reducing Water Consumption, Protecting Watersheds, Wildlife, and Drinking Water, Purchasing and Recycling, and Advocacy. These Measures of Success are further categorized as to being relevant for accomplishment by the Individual (I), the Parish (P), or Society (S).

To encourage participation in the Creation Care Ministry, the Action Plan begins when a parish registers as a Creation Care Team in our Diocesan Creation Care Action Plan. This includes an Action Achievement Award System as described below.

Register your parish here to form a Creation Care Team: <https://forms.gle/ffSqJR88om5cfAs78>

Once a parish has registered, the Creation Care Ministry will explain the process of studying the message of *Laudato Si*, the action responses, and the three levels of achievement and recognition, as follows.

1. The first level of action is accomplished by individual parish members (I), and is referred to as the “Silver Achievement Award”. This level requires five or more members of the Creation Care Team to achieve a new action from the following table denoted by ‘I’. Once the CCT members have completed the actions, the Diocesan Creation Care Ministry should be Emailed at efarrell@sdccatholic.org describing what actions were accomplished. Then the parish CCT will receive a Silver Ribbon digital certificate for the achievement.
2. The second level of action is accomplished together by the Creation Care Team within the parish. This level requires a parish CCT to have done two actions marked ‘P’ on the list of actions steps, or other similar sustainability measures in their parish. Once the CCT has completed two actions on the list marked ‘P’, the CCT will advise the Creation Care Ministry at efarrell@sdccatholic.org, and a Gold Ribbon Achievement Award will be emailed to the CCT coordinator at the parish.
3. The third level of action is accomplished by the parish Creation Care Team beyond the community of the parish coordinating with elected officials or other civic organization regarding environmental or sustainability policy issues. This level requires that a parish team achieve one action in the civic community marked ‘S’, for Society, from the table. Once your CCT has completed the action, advise the Creation Care Ministry at efarrell@sdccatholic.org, and a Green Ribbon Achievement Award will be emailed to the CCT coordinator at your parish. Your CCT will then be considered a model parish CCT and qualified to assist another CCT or parish to register in the program and begin the study and action process.

Measures of Success	INDIVIDUAL	PARISH	SOCIETY
Catholic social teaching			
Bring in a speaker on environmental topic of interest in your area. - S			
Study <i>Laudato Si</i> using the prepared study guide. - P			
Place Laudato Si quotes in parish bulletin. - P			
Arrange and hold workshop or homily for Sunday masses. - P			
Ask Creation Care Ministry to talk on Laudato Si. - P			
Create a <i>Laudato Si</i> and environmental library including digital materials. - P			
Incorporate <i>Laudato Si</i> into school curricula and formation classes - P			
Have your Creation Care Team participate in an educational webinar - S			
Celebrant homilies focused on "care for the earth and care for the poor". - P			
Parishes complete a "Season of Creation" program. - P			
Parish or school events or activities with an explicit <i>Laudato Si'</i> focus. - P			
Use social media to share lessons and experiences. - S			
Environmental justice			
Use parish bulletin boards to post environmental facts and quotes. - P			
Join community organizing groups on initiatives. - S			
Reach out to help an immigrant or refugee group. - S			
Invite candidates from both parties to learn their positions. - S			
Forego plastic water bottles or bags and use your own reusable bag or bottle. - I			
Use signage about native plant, wildlife, or pollinator habitats. - I			
Conduct poster faire on environmental themes. - P			
Have trees planted on parish property. - P			
Start a recycle program in your parish or school. - P			
Have parents accompany on a field trip to study nature. - P			
Make parish policy to buy Fair Trade and/or in bulk - P			
Organize a telephone tree or social media blast on environmental issues. - S			
Join a campaign to support an environmental action.- S			
Investigate and start a voluntary carbon reduction fund. - S			

Transportation			
Have speakers and displays on sustainable transport. - P			
Organize walking and biking ventures to parks or trails. - I			
Plan shorter, more local vacations and buy carbon credits. - I			
Substitute in person meeting with videoconferencing or phone call. - I			
Promote carpooling to Masses and drop-off lot for weekdays. - P			
Install EV charging station near church or school buildings. - P			
Buying and Sharing Food			
Reduce red meat consumption to several days a week.- I			
Start a compost pile for all household food scraps and peelings. - I			
Grow vegetables , or eat organic or locally grown produce. - I			
Start a parish food bank or receive food for a local pantry. - P			
Collect and distribute safe excess food from supermarkets and restaurants.- P			
Teach parishioners the use of household compost bins. - P			
Land use			
Remove a grass lawn for a more desert styled lawn. - I			
Start and maintain a parish community garden. - P			
Have a master gardener explain native plants and trees. - P			
Create a desert style prayer garden, or habitat for pollinators. - P			
-Ask for a property audit of vacant public property. - S			
Promote smart growth for underserved populations - S			
Work with youth to develop parks and recreational areas. - P			

Purchasing and producing clean energy			
Completion of an energy audit and implementation plan for the parish. - P			
Suggest and advocate for solar energy for the parish. - P			
Find and share data on renewable energy purchased by the utility. - S			
Learn how to seal doors, window frames, and sun block windows.- I			
Learn about and use Energy Star for appliance replacements. - P			
Perform an energy audit of the family home. - I			
Install LED light fixtures in majority of fixtures in home.- I			
Adjust thermostat in home to 68/70 in winter and 75/78 in summer. - I			
Install motions sensors in church restrooms, offices, and conference rooms. - P			
Create a parish energy plan and chart the results. - P			
Parish Council implement Diocesan sustainable energy practices. - P			
Reducing Water Consumption			
Retrofit kitchen and bathroom fixtures and use low-flush toilets. - I			
Install sensor activated water sprinklers in gardens and lawns.-I			
Install rain barrels to catch rain run-off water for plants. - I			
Implement a rain garden to avoid flooding and chemical run-offs. - S			
Arrange for timed showers as recommended by the water supply utility. - I			
Use grey water for plants and gardens. - I			
Protecting Watersheds, Wildlife, and Drinking Water			
Encourage permeable parking surfaces in your parish. - P, I			
Discourage the use of chemical soaps, fertilizers, and pesticides. - I			
Organize a tree planting day in your parish or school. - P			
Install a filter for tap water as the family drinking water. - I			
Install a water station in the parish hall or school. - P			
Invite and have speakers on improving watersheds - S			

Purchasing and Recycling			
Ask attendees to sign the St. Francis Pledge after Masses in your parish. - P			
Hire a Diocese sustainability officer. - P			
Adopt Diocesan-wide recycling plan. - P			
Comply with Diocese purchasing standard. - P			
Comply with Diocese recycling plan. - P			
Commit to the Catholic Climate Covenant "Reduce your Carbon Footprint" sustainability pledge. - P			
Advocacy			
Schedule an Advocacy Training session for your parish leaders. - P			
Visit and share experiences with another parish on faith traditions. - P			
Celebrate St. Francis Day with a "Green Mass" or blessing of animals. - P			
Encourage video conferencing for meetings after COVID-19. - P			
Do a waste audit and educate parishioners about practices. - P			
Email, or visit in group an elected representative. - S			
Bring an elected representative from your district to visit your parish. - S			
Prepare a letter the editor, or opinion editorial, for publication your local newspaper. - S			
Bring your team's banner or signage and join a march. - S			
Participate in lobbying for environmentally favorable candidates. - S			
Lobby local businesses to encourage sustainability practices. - S			

XI. LOOKING FORWARD

Chapter XI utilizes Goal 7 of the Vatican's [*Laudato Si* Action Platform](#), (Community Engagement and Participatory Action).

The San Diego Creation Care Action Plan wants to follow the lead of the Vatican seven-year plan. After talking with Bishop McElroy, our core team has reorganized to better serve the people of our Diocese. We have assigned a qualified organizer to each deanery to accompany and resource interested people in any parish in their area to study *Laudato Si* and our Diocesan Creation Care Action Plan to respond to Pope Francis' encyclical. As outlined in Chapter X, parishes that form Creation Care Teams and make changes in accordance with this Action Plan will be awarded Gold or Green certificates to honor their achievements.

[Register Here](#) to be part of our effort!

These action responses to *Laudato Si* will help us to bring the ethical and spiritual values of *Laudato Si* into practice in our daily lives. They will also contribute to what Pope Francis calls an “ecological spirituality and citizenship”. Finally, these practices will make the Church’s contribution toward realizing our final goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050, thus reversing harmful climate change. We encourage you to join in this, our living prayer that love for Creation may be enacted “on Earth, as it is in Heaven”.

O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.

-- *Laudato Si*, paragraph 246 (end of closing prayer for the encyclical)

ⁱ <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/ecoregions-map>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.conservation.org/priorities/biodiversity-hotspots>,
<https://web.archive.org/web/20120327075212/http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/Documents/cihotspotmap.pdf>