



**Education for Justice**  
Ignatian Solidarity Network  
1 John Carroll Blvd.  
University Hts., OH 44118  
[efj@ignatiansolidarity.net](mailto:efj@ignatiansolidarity.net)  
[www.educationforjustice.org](http://www.educationforjustice.org)



# Care for our Common Home



Connecting Catholic Social  
Tradition and Earth Day

Copyright © 2016, *Education for Justice*, a project of the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

## Catholic Social Thought and the Environment

---

"We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation" (USCCB, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, Pub. No. 7-085).

"The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change" (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 13).

"Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society." (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 91).

"The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water, and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must, above all, protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 51).

"Protecting the natural environment in order to build a world of peace is thus a duty incumbent upon each and all. It is an urgent challenge, one to be faced with renewed and concerted commitment; it is also a providential opportunity to hand down to coming generations the prospect of a better future for all" (Pope Benedict XVI, 2010 World Day of Peace Message, 14).

## How You Can Celebrate Earth Day

---

Get resources from [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) on *Laudato Si'*, sustainability, and comprehensive creation care.

[www.catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org)

Learn about the work [UNANIMA International](#) is doing on the issues of climate change and water and learn how you can get involved.

[www.unanima-international.org](http://www.unanima-international.org)

Follow the issue of environmental justice through the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#) and get resources to help you care for creation. [www.ignatiansolidarity.net](http://www.ignatiansolidarity.net)

Select a film that has an environmental message from the [Education for Justice Social Justice Film guide](#) and host a screening.

[www.bit.ly/EFJ\\_SJFilms](http://www.bit.ly/EFJ_SJFilms)

Equip and empower mothers to become Water Women — compassionate agents of change in their communities who filter clean water for their families and neighbors — by supporting [Water with Blessings](#).

[www.waterwithblessings.org](http://www.waterwithblessings.org)

## Reflection Questions

---

- What is your relationship with God's creation? What are three small lifestyle changes you can make to protect "our common home?"
- What does your family, school, parish, religious community, etc. do to care for the natural environment?
- How are the current social justice issues in our world related to care for our common home (migration, terrorism, poverty, etc.)?

## A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation

---

by Pope Francis

Father, we praise you with all your creatures. They came forth from your all-powerful hand; they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love. Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus, through you all things were made. You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother, you became part of this earth, and you gazed upon this world with human eyes. Today you are alive in every creature in your risen glory. Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light you guide this world towards the Father's love and accompany creation as it groans in travail. You also dwell in our hearts and you inspire us to do what is good. Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love, teach us to contemplate you in the beauty of the universe, for all things speak of you. Awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that you have made. Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined to everything that is. God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. 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.