



Catholic Climate Covenantsm
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.



2022 EARTH DAY PROGRAM

Integral Ecology

Pursuing the Common Good
for Our Common Home

PARTICIPANT PROGRAM GUIDE

2022 Earth Day Program

PROGRAM GUIDE

Opening Prayer (1 MINUTE)

OPENING PRAYER (READ IN UNISON)

A Prayer for Our Earth

~Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

Readings (10 MINUTES)

READING #1:

[The] common good is to be understood [as] “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. ***Catechism of the Catholic Church #1906***

READING #2

Working for the common good requires us to promote the flourishing of all human life and all of God’s creation. In a special way, the common good requires solidarity with the poor who are often without the resources to face many problems, including the potential impacts of climate change. Our obligations to the one human family stretch across space and time. They tie us to the poor in our midst and across the globe, as well as to future generations. The commandment to love our neighbor invites us to consider the poor and marginalized of other nations as true brothers and sisters who share with us the one table of life intended by God for the enjoyment of all. **~*Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2001, #25.**

READING #3

Integral ecology is a key concept in chapter four of *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment. It flows from his understanding that “everything is closely related” and that “today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis.” ... Human ecology, Pope Francis argues, cannot be separated from the notion of the common good, which he calls “a central and unifying principle of social ethics.” Quoting *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, he defines the common good as “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment.” ... For Pope Francis it is obvious that “where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.” ***Integral Ecology: Everything is Connected*, Fr. Thomas Reese, S.J. NCR Aug 27, 2015**

READING #4

Laudato Si’ excerpts:

.. “the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all” **(#23)**

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” **(#139)**.

“An integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics. The common good is “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment” **(#156)**

Video (11 MINUTES)

You can watch directly on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/udDqptXKGS0>) or download (<https://bit.ly/34RJxcD>) the video to your computer.

Small Group Discussion (20 MINUTES)

- 1) Why is the concept of the common good so central to Catholic social teaching and to our understanding on how we live our faith as a community?
- 2) How are the concepts of integral ecology and the common good raised in the video segment about the Economy of Francesco? Can you think of examples of the common good and integral ecology in your life and in the life of your community?
- 3) We share a communal responsibility to build a present and future that is sustainable and just. As a group, brainstorm (use Appendix A, Primer on Sustainability), and list (on Appendix B- Sustainability Ideas Template) steps we can take, individually, in our communities (households) in our institutions (parishes, schools, campuses, facilities, etc.) and in our public policy choices to ensure a just and abundant life for all. See Appendix A for some ideas. Fill out Appendix B (Sustainability Ideas Template) with some actions that you might be interested in taking.

Suggested Actions (10 MINUTES)

1) Action Alert on Climate Action

U.S. Senators are considering substantive climate provisions in budget legislation. Catholic Climate Covenant and our partners have launched "Encounter for Our Common Home," a coalition-wide advocacy campaign. By signing this Action Alert, you can send a letter to your senators, inviting them to support climate solutions from a place of faith and reason.

This Action Alert is a critical part of the Encounter for Our Common Home campaign, which includes trainings and community-building efforts for encounters with U.S. Senators in May.

We invite you to sign this Alert now and join this transformational effort by scanning the QR code or visiting [https://bit.ly/3i6P3eC!](https://bit.ly/3i6P3eC)



2) Personal Sustainability Commitment

Look at the sustainability actions you and your group brainstormed and listed in the Sustainability Ideas Template (Appendix B). Pick one of the sustainability actions and make a **personal commitment** to act upon it. On Appendix C, write in the boxes 2-4 things that you care about that relate to hear the cry of the Earth and the Cry of the poor (hunger, poverty, deforestation, climate change, biodiversity, etc.) then write your **one** personal sustainability commitment inside the circle.

Closing Prayer (1-3 MINUTES)

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

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

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

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

Amen.

~U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Appendix A

PRIMER ON SUSTAINABILITY

	FOOD	WATER	ENERGY
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Eat lower down on the food chain ◆ Eat local food ◆ Eat seasonal food ◆ Join a community garden ◆ Educate yourself on fishing/overfishing practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Turn off water when brushing teeth and doing dishes ◆ No bottled water ◆ Read labels and get less toxic cleaning products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use LED bulbs ◆ Check calibration of your thermostat ◆ Power down/unplug electronic devices (use sleep mode) ◆ Use timer/motion control lighting ◆ Turn off lights
Community/Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Consider joining a CSA: Community Supported Agriculture ◆ Look into biointensive gardening methods ◆ Increase the number of meatless meals you share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Limit watering ◆ Greenscape – choose native and drought resistant plants, leave leaves where they fall ◆ Dual-flush toilets ◆ No fertilizer ◆ Green household products ◆ Low-flow showerheads ◆ Fix leaks ◆ Become a non-toxic home ◆ Join Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Household energy audit ◆ Energy efficient appliances ◆ Get programmable thermostats ◆ Consider solar panel installation ◆ Switch from oil to natural gas as a bridging step
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Engage students in equitable, sustainable gardening ◆ Minimize pavements and plant fruit trees around campus ◆ Designate vegetable garden space ◆ Consider rooftop gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce your water use ◆ Harvest rainwater and use for non-potable purposes; purify for potable uses ◆ Improve cooling systems ◆ Separate out gray water for flushing toilets and yard water ◆ Treat your own waste water (Biosystems) ◆ Use root irrigation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Build on brown fields using green building design ◆ Low impact development ◆ Solar panels (generate more energy than used) ◆ Take advantage of natural ventilation for cooling ◆ Save money and energy by generating power from harvesting heat, a waste by-product (e.g., refrigerator)
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Incentivize sustainable local agriculture ◆ Support small and mid-sized farmers to decrease their vulnerability to natural disasters ◆ Advocate for community gardens ◆ Support a change in our US Food Aid policy ◆ Ensure that food assistance programs are funded in your state ◆ Increase food security by disincentivizing the diversion of corn for ethanol production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use Biosystems to treat waste water and storm water ◆ Provide incentive for improved/green manufacturing processes ◆ Subsidize low-impact development (rain gardens, porous pavements, etc.) ◆ Subsidize root irrigation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Support sustainable, responsible impact investing ◆ Advocate for subsidies to convert to combined heat and power cooling/heating systems ◆ Invest in solar thermal panels in desert areas ◆ Advocate for tax incentives for renewable energy technology ◆ As a bridging technology, advocate for the production of ethanol away from corn and to woody plants and switchgrass

Credit: <https://ipjc.org/publications/a-primer-on-sustainability>

Appendix A

PRIMER ON SUSTAINABILITY

	WASTE	EQUITY	TRANSPORTATION
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use small kitchen compost bin ◆ Volunteer simplicity (reduce) ◆ Recycle and reuse ◆ Reusable bags ◆ Eat lower on the food chain ◆ Buy blemished/bruised fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Buy Fairtrade ◆ Practice voluntary simplicity ◆ Recycle and reuse products ◆ Read and act on the intersection of issues on poverty and climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Walk ◆ Carpool/vanpool ◆ Use alternative transportation ◆ Use farmer markets and local food ◆ Maintain your vehicle ◆ Avoid night flights & minimize winter flights
Community/Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Compost ◆ Purchase in bulk or less packaged products ◆ Cut the use of paper products-napkins ◆ Eliminate mercury in home (in lamps, thermostats, wash machines, light switches) ◆ Buy non-mercury alternatives and dispose properly ◆ Plant trees ◆ Plant/vegetable swales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Educate yourself on the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW) and Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) as substitutes for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) measure of our economy ◆ Pay a liveable wage for house maintenance and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Combine trips ◆ Use fuel efficient vehicles ◆ Telecommute for meetings
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Buy recycled paper and paper products ◆ Read, save and use electronic documents ◆ Use worm bin ◆ Institutional wide education, policy and practice for waste reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institute equitable pay throughout supply chains ◆ Minimize water waste, CO2 emissions, ground water pollution ◆ Reduce non-green resources, packaging and products in your manufacturing processes ◆ Consider creative ways of tithing to support justice and systemic change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Decrease parking spaces and increase parking fees ◆ Rebates for not using parking spots ◆ Make emergency rides home readily available
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use methane from landfills for power plants ◆ Plant switchgrass and poplar trees on banks downstream from waste ◆ Convert brownfields to mixed-use neighborhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advocate for smart mixed use and equitable housing ◆ Use shareholder advocacy to vote proxies on ecological sustainability and economic equity ◆ Institute a cap and trade system ◆ Advocate for pricing to reflect the true cost of products ◆ Tax pollution, ground water consumption and carbon dioxide emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advocate for lightrail and street car systems; subsidize green cars ◆ Advocate for smart growth development with walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-use urban planning ◆ Incentivize local and urban food growing ◆ Incentivize car sharing

Credit: <https://ipjc.org/publications/a-primer-on-sustainability>

Appendix B

SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS TEMPLATE

Use info from Appendix A and your group discussion to write possible things you, your family, your community could do to “hear the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor”

	FOOD	WATER	ENERGY
Personal			
Community/Household			
Institutions			
Policy			

Appendix B

SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS TEMPLATE

	WASTE	EQUITY	TRANSPORTATION
Personal			
Community/Household			
Institutions			
Policy			

Appendix C

PERSONAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT

The diagram consists of a large central circle. Surrounding the circle are four rectangular boxes, two on the top and two on the bottom. Each box is connected to the circle by a double-headed teal arrow, pointing both towards the box and towards the circle. This layout suggests that the boxes are used to list concerns or values, which then inform the central sustainability commitment.

In the boxes, please write 2-4 things that you care about that relate to our common home and/or our brothers and sisters on Earth. They could be general, such as poverty, deforestation, hunger, environmental injustice, etc. Then write a personal sustainability commitment in the circle. Use the info from your group brainstorming (ideas in Appendix B) to help you with the commitment. You can share (if you wish) the commitment prior to the Closing Prayer. Take this paper home and have it serve as a reminder of your commitment.