

ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

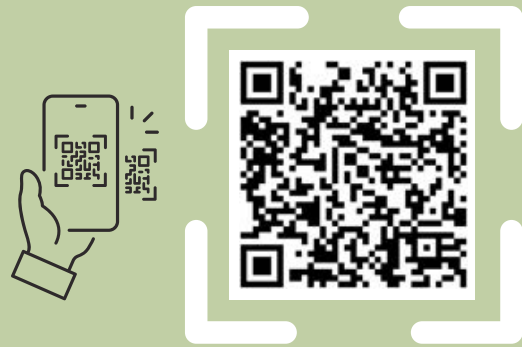


DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

As a Diocese we have set out an environmental plan that is ambitious and understands the scale of change that is needed, and one that is grounded in Christian Hope and guided by prayer and Church teaching.

Visit the Diocese of Salford website for more information about the diocesan plan.



The Laudato Si' Centre



The Laudato Si' Centre was announced by Bishop John in Lent 2019, in response to the ecological crisis and Pope Francis's call for us all to care for creation. The vision for the Laudato Si' Centre is to develop and operate an education and outreach mission which is able to generate environmental hope, rooted in the belief that we can all make a difference through the actions we take. The mission will aim to provide the tools and learning needed to enable all to hear and respond in hope to the cry of the earth and cry of the people.

Guardians of Creation



The diocese of Salford has led on and piloted the Guardians of Creation project, a systematic decarbonisation and sustainability research programme, which is being applied across England and Wales. The diocese is collaborating with St Mary's University in Twickenham and the Laudato Si' Research Institute at Campion Hall, Oxford, along with other partners, to develop this work.

This guide is to help school groups begin their sustainability journey, and can be used with other resources from the project, available online.

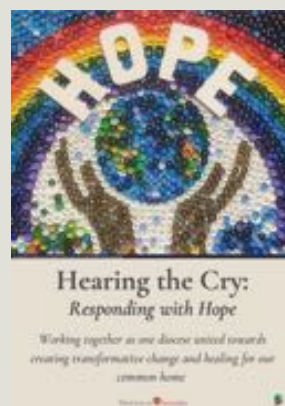


AN ECOLOGICAL PLANNING GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS

Young people are increasingly concerned with the sort of world they will grow up in. Many schools have started 'eco-groups' or committees, but others are not sure where to start. Some may have 'eco-groups,' but have not explicitly linked care for our common home to Catholic Social Teaching.

This guide gives some pointers towards starting an 'eco-group' in your school, and ways you might go about linking it to the practice of faith. Treat it as a series of ideas to inspire you rather than a 'how to' guide to be followed stringently. Where it differs from the many other guides available is that it starts from the fact that we are in a particular diocese with particular goals, and that we have a wonderful tradition of Catholic Social Teaching to draw inspiration from. In particular, we have the teaching of Pope Francis in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

In the Diocese of Salford, "Hearing the Cry: Responding with Hope" outlines the strategic plan for the diocese on sustainability, and promises further materials to support schools. This document, as well as the *Laudato Si'* Champions Toolkit, are parts of the Guardians of Creation project for supporting school groups.



Getting an eco-team (or whatever you choose to call it) together is a great way of energising students to care for our common home, and to encourage their interest in what will likely be the most pressing challenge of their lifetime.

This guide proposes some simple activities to get you started, and follows a “**see, judge, act**” process. The aim is to learn more about the school as it is, to dream about what it could be, and then identify the steps that are possible to bridge those two realities. There is no pressure to do this under a particular timeframe. If you want to work towards an award or goal, there are lots of suggestions given in the appendix and throughout.

"We have inherited a garden:
**WE MUST NOT LEAVE A DESERT
TO OUR CHILDREN."**

Interfaith appeal for COP26 presented by Pope Francis.

THE DIOCESE OF SALFORD'S VISION TO CARE FOR CREATION

“ We recognise the scale of challenge; we are living in an ecological crisis created by humanity with the responsibility to respond to the crisis in our hands. We gladly accept this challenge, and in doing so we will be guided by four interconnected self-supporting themes that we have developed through engaging with our diocesan community and building on work already underway. (Hearing the Cry: Responding with Hope) ”



These themes act as a framework for us to think through where we are now, and where we are trying to get to. As a people of hope, we look for signs of God's grace in the local community and natural world around us, and use them to plan a hopeful vision for the future.



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GET THE ECO-GROUP TOGETHER



There is no 'one size fits all' approach to school eco-groups. Here are some things to consider as you set out.

How do clubs or extracurricular groups usually work in your school?

Understand the responsibilities associated with running a club in your school. Find other staff that have experience, and ensure you are following relevant safeguarding regulations.

Where is the energy coming from?

Do students or staff want a group set up? Listen to the motivations of those requesting it to make sure needs are met.

Who will help you?

You will need at least two staff members to take responsibility. Initially the group may be shaped by a few individuals, but over time students will become more involved. A good idea is to have Student Ambassadors, which also provides opportunities for student leadership.

What do you want to achieve?

Is this an opportunity to educate or to explore? This may depend on the pre-existing levels of engagement in your school, and the motivations of the leader. If the energy is on the staff side, pupil engagement may be low, and raising awareness of key issues may be the first step. If the energy is on the student side, awareness may already be quite high and the exploratory 'see, judge, act' approach outlined here should be helpful. See the appendix for useful materials to raise awareness.



Remember, 'eco' should stand for 'ecology,' not just 'environment.' We are looking for actions that care for all creation, and that includes our local and global brothers and sisters, not just the biological or built environment that we interact with.



Where will you hold your club, and when?

Is there a classroom or space that can be used for the club? How could you make simple changes to the furniture or layout for a less formal atmosphere?

How regularly will you meet?

This will depend on staff capacity, and whether you want to hold sessions in breaktime or after school. Using lunchtime will mean more students will be able to attend, but make sure you factor in time to eat! Keep it regular to keep momentum going.

Who can join?

Is the group open to everyone, or is there a capacity? Should students be self-selecting, or more formally designated as representatives of year groups or houses? The approach will affect the formality and potentially be determined by the levels of pre-engagement the students have. One way of finding this out would be to ask students to do a presentation on sustainability. The interested ones will be evident!

How will you let the school know that you exist?

If there is already a school newsletter or noticeboard (on/offline), teaching app, or method of communication that you know will reach students, parents, the parish, school governors etc, could you use this to raise awareness and to provide a termly update? Or is there a display board somewhere public that could be reserved to display the work of the group, and identify the Eco-Group or Student Ambassadors?



Your diocese is always keen to get news stories from its schools, which will allow many more people to hear about the work you do. You can also find inspiration and suggest materials on the Laudato Si' Centre website, and send stories to the diocesan communications team at communications@dioceseofsalford.org.uk





DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

Care for Creation Promise

A statement of hope - rooted in the belief that we can make a difference.

Guided by our Catholic faith and a desire to protect God's creation for future generations, we make this promise to care for creation and our brothers and sisters around the world:

We have heard and will respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the people;

We recognise the need for urgent action to address the ecological crisis and the damage it is doing to our brothers and sisters;

We will set an example by making positive change and standing up to this injustice.

By signing this Promise, we commit to making better choices and to develop an action plan for change within our community.

Signed *Print name*

*May God guide us as we strive to live out His call to be responsible and compassionate stewards of the earth.
St Francis of Assisi, pray for us.
Stay with us Lord on our journey.*



When you have a team together, sign the diocese of Salford 'Care for Creation Promise' to show your commitment to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor in the life of the school. It also provides a good first step towards creating a larger school sustainability policy or School Stewardship Charter.





Where are you starting from? Helping students think about the geography of the school and local community, and of the spaces that they value and visit often (or avoid and worry about) will help you target actions. It will also help build skills in observation, research and interviewing.

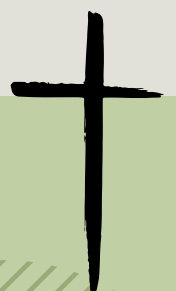
What will you need?

- Large sheets of paper.
- Stationery supplies (paper, pens, glue, scissors, post it notes).
- If stationary supplies are unavailable, use a whiteboard or interactive whiteboard. Take a photo or save your progress at the end of the session.
- Clipboards and cameras.
- A printer.
- A computer with internet to research on.

Ask the students to draw the school site from memory together on a large piece of paper. See how they go about it and what places they are most excited about. Is there anything they have missed? What the drawing looks like is less important than understanding the students relationship with the space they are in.

"Stay with us Lord, on our journey."

Prayer of Salford Diocese.



When you have a map of the school, work with the students to identify examples of the four diocesan themes, or places where opportunities might present themselves. Where are there good examples of these principles in action? Where are they absent? This map will also provide you with a baseline to show progress against.

Tackling even one of these themes is a big task. It is better to tackle them one at a time and make a difference than spread yourself too thinly and feel exhausted. Depending on time available and the size of your group, you could tackle one theme a session, or even half term, or divide into four groups focusing on different themes, or use themes that make more sense to your context. Take your time and keep it manageable and engaging.

WORKING WITH NATURE

- WHERE IS THE GREEN SPACE?
- WHAT SPECIES ARE PRESENT?
- WHERE COULD NATURE BE MORE PRESENT?
- WHAT OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES DO YOU ENJOY?



SPIRITUALITY, RENEWAL AND WELLBEING OF SELF?

- WHAT SPACES IN THE SCHOOL ARE SPIRITUALLY ENRICHING? WHERE DO WE FEEL CLOSEST TO GOD?
- DOES YOUR SCHOOL HAVE A SAINT? WHAT CAN YOU LEARN ABOUT ECOLOGY THROUGH THEIR LIVES?
- IS THE SCHOOL ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES?
- HOW DO PEOPLE TRAVEL TO SCHOOL? IS IT SAFE TO WALK OR CYCLE?

REGENERATIVE LIVING

- IS THERE EVIDENCE OF LIVING SIMPLY?
- WHAT IS USED THAT IS NOT CARING FOR CREATION?
- HOW IS THE SCHOOL HEATED AND COOLED?
- ARE WE REDUCING WASTE AND REUSING WHAT WE CAN?

FAIRNESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE?

- WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL BUY A LOT OF? HOW IS IT PRODUCED?
- HOW IS THE FOOD SUPPLIED IN THE SCHOOL PRODUCED?
- IS EVERYONE TREATED EQUALLY?
- HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE LOCAL AREA. CAN THE SCHOOL CONTRIBUTE ANYTHING TO MAKE IT BETTER FOR EVERYONE?

"Neighbourhoods, even those recently built, are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space. We were not meant to be inundated by cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature." Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #44



A whole school activity

Between meetings, if possible, pin the map up somewhere for the whole school to see, and ask the students to explain what is happening at an assembly. Encourage the whole school to make additions by having post it notes colour coded to the theme available. Staff can get involved too!

Remember to celebrate the good things that you find, and if you find yourself jumping to solutions straight away, take a note of these to come back to later.



Did you appoint Student Ambassadors? If each class has a representative, it may be less intimidating to give a report to their own class than an assembly. One full assembly per term could feature a presentation by some of the older students and staff.



If you are finding the four themes outlined difficult to work with, there are other ways to ensure you are incorporating Catholic Social Teaching in this process. Whatever you choose, ensure that the link between environmental effort and your identity as a Catholic school is clear.

You may find that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, or the 'Laudato Si' Goals' give you an alternate and helpful starting point.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING	DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON	FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	SOLIDARITY AND THE COMMON GOOD
OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE	RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	DIGNITY OF WORK	STEWARDSHIP
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT	RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE EARTH	RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR	ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS
ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES	ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION	ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY	LAUDATO SI' GOALS



For more guidance on Catholic Social Teaching, talk to Caritas Salford, and for more information on the Laudato Si' Goals visit the Laudato Si' Action Platform.

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JUDGE



Now move from seeing the school as it is to how you would like it to be. **How would it look if everything turned out perfectly and anything was possible?**

If you are the group facilitator, read the 'Dream School' text. An excerpt is below, and the full version can be found on the Journey to 2030 site.

DARE TO DREAM - AN EXCERPT

THE YEAR IS 2030. THE KATERI TEKAKWITHA LAUDATO SI' CENTRE, ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE PARISH CHURCH ST CLARE, COMBINES ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, ST DENIS CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND THE SR DOROTHY STANG PARISH HUB.

THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE ABOUT THE SCHOOLS ARE HOW ATTRACTIVE THEY LOOK. THE OLDER BUILDING IS NOT EXCITING, BUT WELL CARED FOR, AND BRIGHTENED UP WITH MURALS PAINTED BY THE STUDENTS, OFTEN ON RELIGIOUS OR NATURE THEMES. NEW SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND THE AREAS AROUND THE BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO FIT IN WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS, WITH THEIR CURVED LINES, NATURAL SURFACES AND USE OF PLANTS, TREES AND WATER FEATURES AND EVEN 'GREEN ROOFS'. THEN YOU SEE THE PEOPLE: CHILDREN, TEENAGERS AND ADULTS ARE ALL MOVING ABOUT THE PLACE WITHOUT RUSHING - SMILING, LOOKING AROUND, MAKING EYE CONTACT, NOTICING THEIR SURROUNDINGS, AND LISTENING - THERE ARE NO ELECTRONIC SOUNDS AND NOT A SINGLE EARPLUG IN SIGHT! IMMEDIATELY YOU KNOW THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT THIS PLACE. HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

SCAN ME

Go to the Journey to 2030 school webpages to find the full version of Sr. Margaret's dream school, as well as the 'Let us Dream' activity page, and more resources for schools. You can share your work online here too to inspire others!





When you have read the 'Dream School', **ask the group to draw their own.** First, allow the group to be creative with a dream of the perfect school individually. When they have had a chance to draw, gather them back in to talk about their dreams and add them to a fresh copy of the school map. The process is the same as for 'See,' but this time you will be creating a dream school together.

Remember, it may be easier to concentrate on one theme at a time, or a theme per group, or to use different divisions of Catholic Social Teaching that better fit your school context.

WORKING WITH NATURE?

- HOW COULD YOU TRANSFORM THE SPACE TO BE KINDER TO NATURE, MORE BEAUTIFUL, AND HEALTHIER?

SPIRITUALITY, RENEWAL AND WELLBEING OF SELF?

- HOW COULD THE SPACE BE USED TO BRING US CLOSER TO GOD, HAPPIER AND MORE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE?

REGENERATIVE LIVING?

- HOW COULD THINGS BE DONE IN SIMPLER, MORE SUSTAINABLE WAYS?

FAIRNESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE?

- WHERE ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE THINGS FAIRER FOR EVERYONE, ALL DOWN THE SUPPLY CHAIN?

Make sure everyone gets a chance to be heard. One way to do this would be to give each student a turn to write something on the map and explain it, with everyone agreeing not to interrupt until it is their turn to speak again. You can keep going round until everyone feels they have got what they want on the map, or you run out of time.

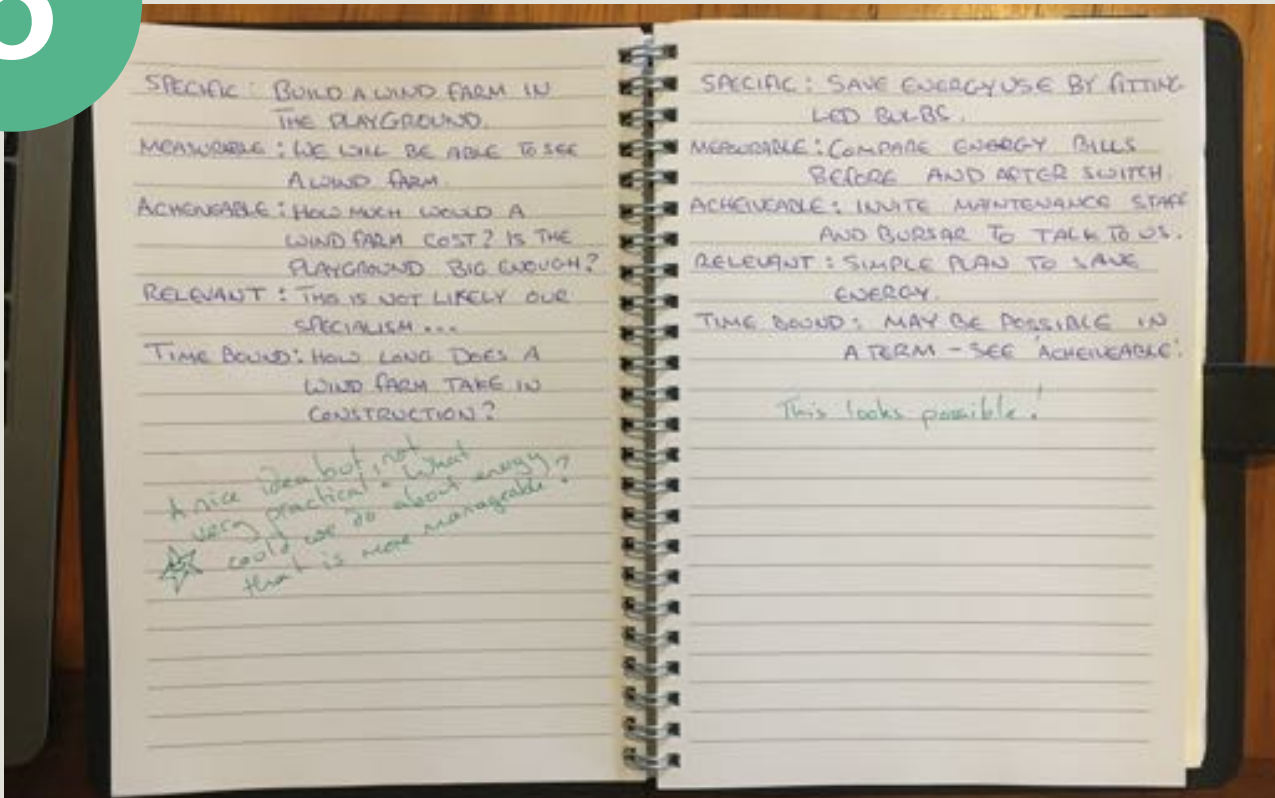
The next step is to compare the 'dream schools' with the map you created in the 'see' stage. What could be done with the space you have to bring it closer to the dream school you have been drawing?

Make a list of all the ways in which the 'see' and 'judge' maps differ. **What actions could you take to bridge the gap?**

"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."

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #13.)



You should now have lots of ideas to think about. Some of them will be wildly overambitious, some quite manageable, and some you could find compromises on. The difficult part is deciding what might be possible with the time and resources available to you. **Choose your favourites, then discuss keeping your goals SMART to help narrow your options.** It may be most motivating to focus on one project at a time, allowing impact to be more easily seen.

SPECIFIC. WHAT WILL YOU DO?

MEASURABLE. HOW WILL YOU KNOW YOU'VE DONE IT?

ACHIEVABLE. DO YOU HAVE THE MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH IT?

RELEVANT. IS THIS SOMETHING STUDENTS CAN DO, OR INFLUENCE?

TIME-BOUND. CAN YOU DO IT IN THE TIME AVAILABLE?

It is important to be sensitive and positive about your goals. There may be reasons why something has not happened yet, so make sure to involve the relevant people to the planning. If, for example, you decide that energy is your priority and your specific action is to have solar cells installed, invite the headteacher and grounds staff to the eco-group to understand what this would mean. Then plan some actions!

For help designing project action plans, assigning responsibilities and scheduling, use the 'Don Bosco Environmental Project Act Now!' workbook, which contains a range of techniques and activities.





At the end of the academic year, celebrate your achievements! Remember to share any good news stories with your school (perhaps in assembly), as well as to parents, the diocese and perhaps local news outlets. People will be interested in and hopefully inspired by what you have managed.

You will also want to consider ways to recognise the effort put in by students, perhaps with badges or certificates. Remember to recognise the effort put in by staff also!

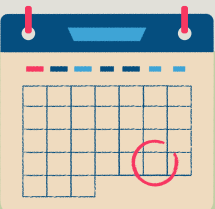
What next?

Hopefully by this point there are lots of engaged students and energy to carry on next year. No student should be discouraged from carrying on in subsequent years, and will act as useful 'institutional memory' and mentoring for any new members.



Start each new year by looking at motivations again, but there is no need to repeat the 'see, judge, act' process every year. Once your eco-group is up and running, you might want to work towards an award, which will give another way to structure your time together. There are lots of examples to be found in the appendix.

Good luck!



In previous years, there has been a celebration event for eco groups at the Laudato Si' Centre at Wardley Hall, as well as a school 'eco-summit.' Keep an eye on the calendar for future events!

Appendix

Follow the linktree link by scanning the QR code or going to <https://linktr.ee/ecoguide> for web links to further resources, including;

- Awards and programmes
- School activities and curriculum
- Project planning
- Catholic Social Teaching resources



Sharing your story



There are lots of ways to let people know what you are doing.

You might like to try;

- Have a designated space on a school notice board and update it regularly.
- Do you have a school newsletter or newspaper that goes to students or regular ways to communicate with parents?
- Do you have links to your local parish? Would they be interested to hear what the students have been doing, perhaps in the parish newsletter? Are there projects they could help with at the parish?
- The diocese communications team are always looking for good news stories. Get in touch!
- What local news outlets do you have? Build links with local media to encourage people you might not normally be in contact with.
- Send your stories into the Laudato Si' Centre at Wardley Hall. Bring your students to learn more about sustainable living.
- Send your stories to the Journey to 2030 to share them beyond the diocese.
- Send your stories to the Catholic media publications, many of which carry stories of local projects.

FAQ

What is the Diocese of Salford?

A diocese is the collection of people and their parishes, in a particular geographic area (a bit like a county) under the care and direction of a particular bishop. There are 22 such dioceses in England and Wales. The Diocese of Salford covers Greater Manchester and Lancashire and includes 208 Catholic Schools. Our Bishop is Bishop John Arnold.

The Laudato Si' Centre

In March 2019, Bishop John wrote to everyone in the Diocese calling on them to play their part in responding to climate change and to 'think global, act local'. Responding to his own challenge, Bishop John started a major project in the grounds of his residence Wardley Hall - the 'Laudato Si' Centre.' School pupils, parishioners, community members and organisations have been welcomed at the Laudato Si' Centre. The Centre is for people of all faiths and none, and has an emphasis on being accessible to everyone. The site is wheelchair-friendly, including access to planters and the greenhouse. Learning, wellbeing and spirituality programmes are offered for all.

Visit: www.laudatosicentre.org.uk



What is Laudato Si'?

Laudato Si' is a 'encyclical,' a letter of great importance, written by Pope Francis to every person living on the planet, on care for our common home. Pope Francis explains that the environmental and social crises we face are happening because we are failing to cultivate good relationships with God, our neighbour and the planet. These are all linked - we cannot solve the environmental problem without solving the social problem, and what is in our heart affects how we approach both. They are all connected. This is why we talk about an 'ecological' crisis; ecology studies the relationship between living organisms (including us) and the environment they live in.

To rebuild these relationships, Pope Francis encourages us to undergo an 'ecological conversion,' whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us. "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."