

Climate Crisis Resource and Engagement Packet

Assembled by the CP Shalom Care of Creation Committee

Summer 2020



"In a real sense all life is inter-related. All are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be...this is the inter-related structure of reality." — Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail

Our network of mutuality includes the whole of God's creation. Air and water pollution, the mistreatment of our lands and the life that inhabit them, hurts us all. But not equally. Women and children, the poor, and people of color are disproportionately impacted by pollution and climate change.

In this *Climate Crisis Resource and Engagement Packet*, your CP Shalom Care of Creation Committee invites you to take time this summer to consider the climate crisis through the lens of racism. Racist policies and practices that impact housing, mobility, transportation, economic opportunity, health care, and so much more have left our Black sisters and brothers particularly vulnerable to impacts of pollution and the climate crisis. Until and unless our society truly reflects that Black lives matter and all life is sacred, we will never realize the oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.

***"God's creation is diverse and interdependent. What happens to one part affects all other parts, calling us to live an ecologically sound life."* (The SSND CP Land Ethic; Principle #3)**

The impacts of the climate crisis are already being felt here in the U.S. and around the world. The good news is we are not too late. With individual and collective action, we can address the climate crisis and keep it from having a much more devastating impact. To that end, we have prepared this resource and engagement packet for your use this summer. The packet includes the following:

- Prayer resource – *Celebrating Oneness with All That Is*
- Reflection on our food choices and their impact on climate change
- Article on the connection between climate change and racism with invitation to action
- Good news story about things you can do to make a difference
- Chart highlighting the interconnections between our climate crisis and other social justice priorities, spotlighting in particular the relationship to racism.

We hope you find this packet informative and that it motivates prayer and other actions to address the climate crisis. Your feedback is important to us. Please let Tim Dewane tdewane@ssndcp.org or your EA Shalom Rep know what you think about these materials and any suggestions you have for us.



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

Celebrating Oneness with All That Is

By Suzanne Moynihan, SSND

You are welcome to use these with your community, another group, share with a relative and friend and, of course, for your own personal reflection.



*God's creation is diverse and interdependent.
What happens to one part affects all other parts, calling us to live an
ecologically sound life. (The Land Ethic; Principle #3)*

Opening Prayer:

Oh, how beautiful are your ways,
the works of your creation.

Raise our consciousness to know and feel deeply in our hearts
our connection to all that is.

Instill in us the gift of being co-creators and sustainers of Life.

Teach us new and unsuspected ways of living so that current and future
generations can walk humbly in beauty,
Love all compassionately
And live justly in solidarity with all creation. (SSND Shalom Green Team)

You Are Sent Psalm

Because the earth and its resources are God's gift to all humanity, we are reverent, just
and sparing in our use of created things, concerned for the needs of present and future
generations (C:#19a)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

We are enabled to grow in communion with God and with one another and in
acceptance of responsibility for the earth and its people. (C: #25)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

As the desire of Jesus that all be one becomes more fully our own, our striving for unity
embraces all humanity and the whole of creation. (C: #9)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

Our internationality challenges us to witness to unity in a divided world...(C: #26)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

Realizing that unity can be expressed in and enriched by diversity we endeavor to be a
unifying force among God's People. (GD: #10)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

By our unity, especially evidenced where we live and serve together internationally, we
witness to the possibility of overcoming national and cultural barriers. (GD: #36)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

Our mission is to proclaim the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our
entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. (C: #4)

Response: Divine Oneness, Universal Gift, Make Us Aware

Readings:

And the People Stayed Home

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.



Kitty O'Meara

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6dTkcMhlaE>

Reflections from Laudato Si

...ancient stories full of symbolism, bear witness that conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others. (#70)

Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment. (#141)

Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal" (#202).

Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn. (#160)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only by dependence on each other to complete each other, in the service of each other. (#340)

From the Chinook Psalter

May all things move and be moved in me
and know and be known in me
May all creation
dance for joy within me.
Earth Prayers; p. 364



A Reflection

When you act on behalf
of something greater than yourself,
you begin to feel it acting through you
with a power that is greater than your own.

This is grace.

(*Joanna Macy: Active Hope; p. 114-116*)

The Power of Allurement, by Betsey Crawford

“In the face of this devastation, is there space for contemplating beauty? The power of allurement says yes, we must. This power draws us out of ourselves, brings us to life, again and again. It strengthens us to carry the weight of disappointment, grief, rage and move toward regeneration. This isn’t beauty as a surface attractant. The ultimate beauty of flowers doesn’t lie in how pretty they are. That, of course, is a lovely thing to contemplate. But they lived for 160 million years before we arrived to take delight in them.

Their great power lies in what the universe wanted of them, not in what we want. These are cosmic beings, forged out of chaos, molecule by molecule. The soul of the earth emerging from the soil at our feet. Formed for relationships and adept at creating them. With that soil. With the air they breathe and the sunlight they turn to nutrition. With the creatures, including us, with which they form intimate, mutually beneficial relationships.”

Closing Prayer

Prayer by Pope Francis in honor of 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si

Loving God, Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.
Be present to those in need in these difficult times,
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity
as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing
the changes required to seek the common good.
Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and
interdependent.
Enable us to succeed in listening and responding
to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.
May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs
of a more fraternal and sustainable world.
We pray through Christ our Lord,
under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians,
Amen.



<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-05/pope-francis-appeals-for-laudato-si-year-prayer.html>

A Reflection on Food

By Suzanne Moynihan, SSND

Three times a day we sit down and eat. Three times a day we make choices that affect our bodies, our mental state. Three times a day we choose to be one with other expressions of life: plants, animals, and microbes in the soil. We are one with the farmer who raised them, the migrant workers who picked them, the truck industry that shipped them, the grocer who sold them and the fossil fuels that helped get them to our plates.



When we eat our carrots or our spinach, that energy comes into our bodies renewing the life of the planet. When we eat meat, we eat an animal that has been killed for our sake. Our bodies, too, absorb that energy.

Eating meat and dairy products, we take in the stress of the animal that has been killed. We impact the amount of grain and water and carbon emissions needed to raise an animal.

A Prayer Before We Eat

This food which we are about to eat

is Earth, Water, and Sun,

compounded through the alchemy of many plants.

Therefore Earth, Water and Sun will become part of us.

This food is also the fruit of the labor of many beings and creatures.

We are grateful for it.

May it give us strength, health, joy.

And may it increase our love.

A Unitarian Prayer; [Earth Prayers](#), p. 345.

Have a bit of fun! Try something you may have never done before!

What's the impact of your diet on the environment?



Tap to find out >

You've heard about the water and the energy calculator. Now you can try your hand at a calculator that measures the relationship between climate change and the food on your plate. Another adventurous experiment perfect during this period of hibernation!

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-46459714>

Like to eat? You may not have the stomach to read this report:

<https://www.sciencealert.com/our-food-supply-is-under-threat-unless-we-change-how-we-use-the-land-un-report-warns>

The Connection Between Climate Change and Racism

By Paul-Mary Draxler, SSND



Does climate change affect people of color more than it does whites? Yes, in two ways.

First, the same pollutants which cause climate change, also damage hearts and lungs. This is particularly true in what are termed '[heat islands](#)', those sections of cities near high-traffic areas, train yards, power plants, etc. Here we find a higher concentration of [fine particulate pollution](#), those particles so tiny that they easily enter the body through our breathing. [Pregnant women](#) are particularly susceptible because the fine pollutants make their way to the fetus, causing possible premature births, low birth-weight, or brain damage. Who lives in 'heat islands'? People who cannot afford, or are not allowed, to live in healthier sections of a city, often people of color.

Then there are the effects of climate change itself. Heat! If one has sufficient funding, air conditioning is available. If not, one survives the heat as best as possible, or dies. On the other hand, if one owns a car, drive to the country for a respite. More severe storms! When the power goes out, for example, which neighborhoods are last to have power restored? As an extreme example, recall the effect of '[Katrina](#)' on the 9th ward in New Orleans.

Do you see an undercurrent of racism here? Why are sections where Black and Hispanic/Latinx live *not* granted the same attention given to 'white' areas? Why do People of Color earn *less for the same* job? The answer is simple (though difficult): White people must change attitudes. Change of attitudes is a matter of 'will'. Thanks to the persistence of the Protesters, we see change happening and none too soon. As climate expert Ayana Elizabeth Johnson explains, "Climate work is hard and heartbreak as it is.... When you throw [racism and bigotry](#) in the mix, it becomes nearly impossible." Changing the perception of the reality and the consequences of climate change is the next hurdle!

Regarding climate change, we have two challenges. First, we must alert people to the seriousness of the situation here and now. [People of color understand much better](#) that most whites. 69% of Hispanic/Latinx and 57% of Black population know that climate change is very serious, in contrast to only 49% of the white population. Only 35% of the white population think climate change sufficiently serious to consider when voting. We must *talk and write* until people hear and understand.

Second, we must enact laws that will slow down climate change, protect Earth's health, which will guarantee our health. One such proposal is ready: [H.R. 763, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Bill](#), which will reduce carbon emissions 40% in 12 years and 80% by 2050. The dividend, the total of carbon fees collected, would be divided equally among all lawful residents, thus benefiting [vulnerable populations](#) whose 'carbon footprint' is lighter.



Use [SSND's Voter Voice Tool](#) to let your Congressperson know that you are concerned about the climate and the serious effects it has on all aspects of our lives.

GOOD NEWS STORY

By Diane Buckman, SSND

Climate change affects all our lives as well as that of all creation here on earth. The Good News is that we are realizing we can make choices in our everyday lives that reflects our ongoing care for creation.



Climate change is not new to our planetary home. Known by scientists to occur naturally on earth there has been a pattern of warming and cooling over periods of time. However, when CO2 levels jumped rapidly by some unusual or unnatural catastrophes (i.e. The Chicxulub Impact), the global warming that resulted was highly disruptive and sometimes caused mass extinctions. "Humans today are emitting prodigious quantities of CO2, at a rate faster than even the most destructive climate changes in earth's past". [Skeptic Science]

Could this recent 2020 pandemic be the result of Climate Change? Theories are being investigated by scientists to have very plausible causes. We know various insects and animals with microbes are being forced out of habitats by human population growth and industries seeking more in earth's resources. The Good News is that more people are beginning to listen to what scientists are discovering and telling us. With this rising awareness we must continue to make necessary changes to offset practices large and small for the health of our planet. The worst thing we could do is to do nothing.

As School Sisters of Notre Dame, we are educators in all that we do and by that we likewise strive to teach by our example. We realize that we must change the climate of our hearts as well as the climate of the earth to affect genuine transformation. And to this end, many of our Sisters are finding significant ways to affect climate change by exercising care for creation in unsuspected ways. Individual gardening and community gardens on our campuses are increasing throughout our Provinces. Our food choices at meals use the produce from our gardens. Flowering plants invite pollinators. Bees are an essential part to life on earth as we witness the rise of bee keepers. Many articles we read explain this phenomenon.

By choosing a healthier diet of leafy vegetables and various other organic vegetables, people are lured away from the advertisements promoting the increase meat consumption. Indirectly but most assuredly, this is affecting climate change. We know this from our neighbors in the Brazilian rainforests. US Food companies are encouraging cattle ranchers to raise cattle for the USA meat markets and to do this, loggers are hired to cut down trees at an alarming rate. Trees in the Rainforests of Brazil and in other countries are essential on earth for lowering the planet's intake of greenhouse gasses.

If we learn and practice the A, B, C's of Climate Change we can lower CO2 levels on our planet significantly? One school of thought is Attitude, Behavior, and Choice. Others people are exercising qualities of Altruism, Balance, and Care. As people learn, believe, and make their voice heard, they are able and have found ways of encouraging governments and corporations to make those necessary changes at higher levels with their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint on the planet. The Good News is realizing it's far easier to change our climate's temperature by 2 degrees than flying people to the moon.



The climate crisis has an impact on every Shalom-related priority of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Central Pacific Province. Take time to consider the relationship between these concerns.

