



**Year 1 Action Plan for Our Participation in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform
Catholic Diocese of Arlington, Virginia USA
September 2022**

“I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly.” John 10:10

Introduction

As recounted in our reflection document, the Diocese of Arlington enrolled in the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform (LSAP) in February 2022. Bishop Burbidge has committed our diocese to journey with the Holy Father for the next seven years to learn and practice the teachings of *Laudato Si'*, embracing the Church's commitment to uphold and protect human life from conception until natural death, and preserving God's material world, which makes that life possible.

This Year 1 Action Plan commits our diocese to put our faith into action by embarking on a process of ecological conversion, embracing and exercising responsible stewardship of our place in the Creator's plan and by caring for the most vulnerable. We will place human flourishing at the heart of our relationship with the natural world so that, in Jesus' words, “we may have life, and have it more abundantly.”

How the Diocese will Pursue the Seven *Laudato Si'* Goals (LSGs) in Year 1.

Cry of the Earth

- Through provision of resources, instruct clergy and faithful in the consequences of environmental deterioration for the health of the planet and its ability to sustain life – e.g., biodiversity loss, increase in disease-bearing insects, water-borne disease, loss of cultivable land for agriculture.

Cry of the Poor

- Provide opportunities for members of multicultural communities in the diocese to educate clergy and faithful about the impact of climate change in their native lands – e.g., sea rise, agricultural changes leading to hunger and forced migration, extreme weather disasters and conflict over scarce resources -- and ask them to teach us how we should respond as their brothers and sisters. Education to be provided in the form of speaking engagements, short videos, social media postings, etc.
- Encourage and facilitate the expansion of charitable works to mitigate and alleviate the suffering of the poor of our diocese as the climate warms – e.g., assistance with increased cooling costs and ensuring that the elderly poor have access to cool environments.

Ecological Education

- Create K-12 curriculum using already-available resources and encourage use by schools.
- Develop, collect and disseminate to families and parishes, resources for home and parish use to educate about the environment and environmental justice. These would include information about Church teaching on stewardship of the environment as well as climate impacts on vulnerable people in the United States and around the world.

Ecological Economics

- Provide formation resources on Church teaching about the preferential option for the poor – environmental justice, impact on the vulnerable, including workers.
- Furnish tools to individuals, families and parishes to live ecological economics, recognizing that our economy is a part of human society and thus a part of our common home (see Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles below).

Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

- Help families to build a family mission to care for our common home and for our vulnerable brothers and sisters. These would include information on sustainable eating, energy and water conservation, planting of native gardens and other home practices.
- Continue and expand existing diocesan efforts to implement sustainable practices in construction and retrofit projects and in diocesan facilities.

Ecological Spirituality

- Provide formation to help to foster in our diocesan family an understanding that preserving God's material world, which makes life possible, is essential to embracing the Church's commitment to uphold and protect human life from conception until natural death. These will include the ecological teachings of *Evangelium Vitae* and other teachings of St. John Paul II and Popes Benedict XVI and Francis.
- Integrate this understanding into our spiritual lives, cultivating a true Ecological Spirituality that incorporates our reverence for God the Creator fully into our personal and communal prayer and our liturgy, by:
 - » rooting our relationship with the environment in a strong Eucharistic connection through Church teaching and practices such as Holy Hours, Eucharistic Adoration;
 - » making available traditional prayers and devotions with environmental themes and connections – examinations of conscience, Rosaries, meditations, holy hours, novenas; encouraging parish holy hours and prayer services regarding creation;
 - » providing preaching aids to priests and encouraging preaching on Church teaching about stewardship of the environment;
 - » encouraging and providing tools for small group study of Church documents and other formation vehicles.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

- Encourage common projects for all cultural communities to participate in – cleanups, cultivating native gardens (which can also feed the poor), etc. Surmount language barriers through working on a project together, where gestures, learning the names of things in the

other's language and laughing together, can build community more effectively than meetings and events that rely primarily on verbal communication.

Conclusion: This represents the Year 1 commitment for our diocese. Year 1 is primarily about educating our diocesan community about *Laudato Si'* and the intimate connection between our faith and our duty to care for the earth, and engaging them in participation. Our Year 1 effort is particularly directed toward encouraging members of our community who may not previously have been aware of or interested in these matters to learn and be prayerfully open to the message. In Year 2 we hope to move more toward implementing more extensive action steps.