2022 EARTH DAY PROGRAM

Integral Ecology
Pursuing the Common Good for Our Common Home

PARTICIPANT PROGRAM GUIDE
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 fulfilment” (#156)
**Video (11 MINUTES)**

You can watch directly on YouTube (https://youtu.be/udDqptXKGS0) or download (https://bit.ly/34RJxC) 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!

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD</th>
<th>WATER</th>
<th>ENERGY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>♦ Eat lower down on the food chain</td>
<td>♦ Turn off water when brushing teeth and doing dishes</td>
<td>♦ Use LED bulbs</td>
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<td>♦ Eat local food</td>
<td>♦ No bottled water</td>
<td>♦ Check calibration of your thermostat</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Eat seasonal food</td>
<td>♦ Read labels and get less toxic cleaning products</td>
<td>♦ Power down/unplug electronic devices (use sleep mode)</td>
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<td>♦ Join a community garden</td>
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<td>♦ Use timer/motion control lighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Educate yourself on fishing/overfishing practices</td>
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<td>♦ Turn off lights</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Consider joining a CSA: Community Supported Agriculture</td>
<td>♦ Limit watering</td>
<td>♦ Household energy audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Look into bio-intensive gardening methods</td>
<td>♦ Greenscape – choose native and drought resistant plants, leave leaves where they fall</td>
<td>♦ Energy efficient appliances</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Increase the number of meatless meals you share</td>
<td>♦ Dual-flush toilets</td>
<td>♦ Get programmable thermostats</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community/ Household</strong></td>
<td>♦ No fertilizer</td>
<td>♦ Consider solar panel installation</td>
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<td>♦ Engage students in equitable, sustainable gardening</td>
<td>♦ Green household products</td>
<td>♦ Switch from oil to natural gas as a bridging step</td>
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<td>♦ Minimize pavements and plant fruit trees around campus</td>
<td>♦ Low-flow showerheads</td>
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<td>♦ Designate vegetable garden space</td>
<td>♦ Fix leaks</td>
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<td>♦ Consider rooftop gardening</td>
<td>♦ Become a non-toxic home</td>
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<td><strong>Institutions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Incentivize sustainable local agriculture</td>
<td>♦ Reduce your water use</td>
<td>♦ Build on brown fields using green building design</td>
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<td>♦ Support small and mid-sized framers to decrease their vulnerability to natural disasters</td>
<td>♦ Harvest rainwater and use for non-potable purposes; purify for potable uses</td>
<td>♦ Low impact development</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Advocate for community gardens</td>
<td>♦ Improve cooling systems</td>
<td>♦ Solar panels (generate more energy than used)</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Support a change in our US Food Aid policy</td>
<td>♦ Separate out gray water for flushing toilets and yard water</td>
<td>♦ Take advantage of natural ventilation for cooling</td>
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<td>♦ Ensure that food assistance programs are funded in your state</td>
<td>♦ Treat your own waste water (Biosystems)</td>
<td>♦ Save money and energy by generating power from harvesting heat, a waste by-product (e.g., refrigerator)</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Increase food security by disincentivizing the diversion of corn for ethanol production</td>
<td>♦ Use root irrigation systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Support sustainable, responsible impact investing</td>
<td>♦ Use Biosystems to treat waste water and storm water</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Advocate for subsidies to convert to combined heat and power cooling/heating systems</td>
<td>♦ Provide incentive for improved/green manufacturing processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>♦ Invest in solar thermal panels in dessert areas</td>
<td>♦ Subsidize low-impact development (rain gardens, porous pavements, etc.)</td>
<td>♦ Advocate for tax incentives for renewable energy technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>♦ Advocate for tax incentives for renewable energy technology</td>
<td>♦ Subsidize root irrigation</td>
<td>♦ As a bridging technology, advocate for the production of ethanol away from corn and to woody plants and switchgrass</td>
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Credit: https://ipjc.org/publications/a-primer-on-sustainability
## Appendix A
PRIMER ON SUSTAINABILITY

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<th>WASTE</th>
<th>EQUITY</th>
<th>TRANSPORTATION</th>
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| ♦ Use small kitchen compost bin  
♦ Volunteer simplicity (reduce)  
♦ Recycle and reuse  
♦ Reusable bags  
♦ Eat lower on the food chain  
♦ Buy blemished/bruised fruit | ♦ Buy Fairtrade  
♦ Practice voluntary simplicity  
♦ Recycle and reuse products  
♦ Read and act on the intersection of issues on poverty and climate change | ♦ Walk  
♦ Carpool/vanpool  
♦ Use alternative transportation  
♦ Use farmer markets and local food  
♦ Maintain your vehicle  
♦ Avoid night flights & minimize winter flights |
| ♦ 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 | ♦ 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 | ♦ Combine trips  
♦ Use fuel efficient vehicles  
♦ Telecommute for meetings |
| ♦ Buy recycled paper and paper products  
♦ Read, save and use electronic documents  
♦ Use worm bin  
♦ Institutional wide education, policy and practice for waste reduction | ♦ 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 | ♦ Decrease parking spaces and increase parking fees  
♦ Rebates for not using parking spots  
♦ Make emergency rides home readily available |
| ♦ Use methane from landfills for power plants  
♦ Plant switchgrass and poplar trees on banks downstream from waste  
♦ Convert brownfields to mixed-use neighborhoods | ♦ 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 | ♦ 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”

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# Appendix B

## SUSTAINABILITY IDEAS TEMPLATE

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Appendix C
PERSONAL 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.