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Summary

Introduction

Thank you for considering and developing a Laudato Si' Plan for your Congregation. You give hope to all who look for signs of change as we face this ecological crisis. This step in

your path is cause for celebration: *Laudato Si'*!

You are invited to encourage the involvement of your religious and your ministerial connections. Your support is important for the fruitfulness of the program. If you have not yet made your commitment, the Laudato Si' Action Platform Commitment Statement for Religious may be helpful in your prayer ritual. (*See statement included in this mailing.*)

At the end of the Season of Creation, on **October 4th**, we were asked to engage in 40 days of preparation to discern whether to enroll into the LSAP which was opened on **November 14th, 2021**. You have made a commitment to take this journey for 7 years. Prayers and resources will be available on the www.laudatosiactionplatform.org and <https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org>

There are four main domains that are encouraged in a focused commitment by the leadership of Congregations involving their communities:

1. Animating and accompanying local communities in their efforts towards integral ecology.
2. Promoting opportunities for the personal formation of religious members.
3. Providing financial resources and support to engage in, for example, alternative energy plans and new investment strategies.
4. Developing policies and guidelines essential to sustainable ecology.

It is recommended that each Congregation name a Laudato Si' Contact Person(s) who will promote the overall process of actualizing the LSAP. They will provide coordination, facilitation, and reporting of engagement and implementation. This work will need support and will be considered a team effort. Pope Francis calls us to "*an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us].*" (LS 217)

Congregations are gifted with charisms to live the Gospel by engaging in the LSAP. With our own planning, actions, and attitudes we hope to bring about a global conversion to 'total sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology'. Pope Francis reminds us: "*Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds.*" (LS 219) We need networks strong enough for systemic change. Through the practice of nonviolence, we heal the pain in creation and sow hope for peace.

All are invited to participate in this platform. The more we can find ways to work together, the stronger will be our contribution, for "everything is connected". *"By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God 'as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable' (Rom 12:1)" (LS 220).*

This guide is written to provide an opportunity to build an integrated effort for a sustainable ecology. If we can integrate our voice we can speak prophetically for needed change in the areas of the greatest needs.

This is the work of the Dicastery Promoting Integral Human Development. It is for all Religious, including International and Diocesan congregations. All are invited to participate in this Laudato Si' Action Platform.

The Context

About Laudato Si'

Laudato Si' is one of the three encyclical letters written by Pope Francis. It is available to read or download [here](#). The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, which has primary responsibility for promoting this encyclical, has created a Laudato Si' website, available [here](#).

Exploring the teachings of our faith in the light of today's ecological crisis, *Laudato Si'* shows us that *"everything is connected."* (LS 91) As our relationship with our divine Creator has been neglected, human relationships have faltered, and our world faces extreme and unpredictable weather events and the loss of precious biodiversity. As a result, we all suffer, but the poorest and most vulnerable suffer above all. We face a *"complex crisis that is both social and environmental."* (LS 139)

There is hope. Pope Francis calls us to develop a *"loving awareness"* of this home we share and to act on the values we hold dear. (LS 220)

Standing on the firm ground of *"three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with the Earth itself,"* we commit to setting out *"on the long path of renewal."* (LS 66, 202) We embrace our rightful place in the *"order and dynamism"* that our Creator ordained, and we urgently embark on new ways of living with *"creativity and enthusiasm"* (LS 221, 220).

About the Laudato Si' Goals

Discerning a response to the ecological crisis is a profound act of care. At this moment of *kairos*, action is needed.

The Laudato Si' Goals established by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development guide our actions. They serve as a common destination for our individual journeys to integral ecology, as *"the urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together."* (LS 13)

The Laudato Si' Goals redefine and rebuild our relationship with each other and our common home. The holistic approach acknowledges the limits of all socio-economic systems and the human roots of the ecological crisis. The goals call for a spiritual and cultural revolution to realize integral ecology.

The Laudato Si' Goals are as follows:

1. The **Response to the Cry of the Earth** is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.
2. The **Response to the Cry of the Poor** is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth.
3. **Ecological Economics** acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home.
4. The **Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles** is grounded in the idea of sufficiency and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy.
5. **Ecological Education** is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action.
6. **Ecological Spirituality** springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to "discover God in all things," both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities.
7. **Community Resilience and Empowerment** envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

Reflecting on the Laudato Si' Goals

The Laudato Si' Goals are the destination of our journeys. They represent a holistic vision of integral ecology. They encourage us to bring about radical changes in our relationships and ways of living, moving away from the destructive technocratic paradigm and towards our loving God's embrace.

While the Laudato Si' Goals are relatively new – being published on the occasion of the Laudato Si' Special Anniversary Year in 2020 – they express intrinsic concepts of our faith. Caring for each other, being moderate in our use of resources, celebrating the love of our Creator are not new themes, but rather have been part and parcel of our faith from its beginning. In the light of today's ecological and social crises, these ancient ideas are being expressed in a new way, giving clear goals to those who are grappling with a response to the signs of the times.

Similarly, women and men religious have long been leaders on integral ecology within the Church. For many in your Congregation these values are not new, but rather have been embraced for decades. Whether you already have an ecological program or are in the first steps of its development, your Congregation has long embraced the themes that underlie integral ecology.

As Catholics, we are called to draw upon the Scriptures and Catholic Social Teaching. You are likely already deeply engaged in caring for the vulnerable, celebrating the love of our Creator, and using resources wisely and soberly. Working towards the Laudato Si' Goals is not a change of direction, but a deepening of purpose.

About the Laudato Si' Action Platform

The Laudato Si' Action Platform is a unique collaboration between the Vatican, an international coalition of Catholic organizations, and *"all men and women of good will."* (LS 3) Taking a truly ground-up approach, it is rooted in the strengths and realities of communities around the world, empowering all to take *"decisive action, here and now"* as we journey towards a better future together. (LS 161)

Action is urgently needed. The Laudato Si' Action Platform, a program of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, includes a website, available [here](#), and an engagement program that is intended to accompany you and your Congregation on the journey to integral ecology.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform brings together the efforts of people and institutions around the world, building a global community that is committed to walking together,

one human family dedicated to realizing our loving God's plan for balance on Earth.

Because you have registered your commitment to creating a Laudato Si' Action Plan, you know that the website includes a list of suggested actions that can help you substantiate your commitment to the Laudato Si' Goals. It can also guide you in evaluating and celebrating progress in your commitment, within annual planning cycles in view of completing your conversion to integral ecology within a period of 7 years.

The website also includes a library of resources from hundreds of partner organizations and ways to connect with other Communities and Catholic communities all around the world. **Our faith calls us to develop authentic relationships with each other, and it is sincerely hoped that the Laudato Si' Action Platform will help you do that.**

We are responding to the call for healing in our relationships with God, our neighbors, and the Earth itself as we build a better future. Through the Laudato Si' Action Platform, we are walking the *"path to renewal"* together (LS 202).

About the Laudato Si' Action Planning Guide

How This Guide Was Developed

As Pope Francis says in Laudato Si', *"Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan."* (LS 164) Although our faith encompasses diverse regions and perspectives, the gifts of the Holy Spirit unite us as one, enabling us to see the ties that bind us together in the common home we share.

In keeping with this spirit of unity, this planning guide was developed through a cooperative process led by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in partnership with nearly 200 Catholic organizations and leaders from around the world, including networks of the religious such as Sowing Hope for the Planet (coordinated by the Justice and Peace Commission of the UISG and USG) and CLAR (the Confederation of Religious of Latin America). Over 100 benchmark programs were examined in-depth, dozens of subject matter experts were consulted, and on-the-ground volunteers in 20 countries contributed perspectives about the challenges and strengths of their communities.

The precious wisdom contributed by these co-leaders has been fundamental to the development of this planning guide, and indeed to the development of the Laudato Si' Action Platform itself. This guide is not intended to be definitive or mandatory. **This is a living document, open to new invitations from the Holy Spirit and new perspectives**

from the community of the faithful, both of which are essential to its usefulness.

The Invitation to You

Your Congregation is warmly invited to continue the collaborative process that has helped shape this planning guide. **You are a co-leader in this work, endowed by our Creator with unique gifts that you alone can bring to our shared project of protecting our common home and all who share it.**

You are invited to create your own Laudato Si' Plan by using this planning guide. This guide offers well informed suggestions in the spirit of humble collaboration. You are welcome to adapt these suggestions to your needs, to incorporate outside expertise and existing programs, and to use this guide and the Laudato Si' Action Platform itself in whatever way is best for you.

Because you live and work within the family of the religious, you may be approaching this process from the perspective of your role as the head of a network of Communities, or as a local community.

Primarily, the concrete journey towards sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology takes place at the level of local communities. These are invited to discern about their commitment to Laudato Si' Goals (LSGs), to develop a Laudato Si' Action Plan, implement it, evaluate and celebrate the process.

However, at Congregational level, there are some dimensions that need to be taken care of and which go beyond the competencies of local communities. That means that as a Congregation you may consider establishing processes to:

1. develop reflections on the connections between your Congregational charism/spirituality and LSGs;
2. align your Congregational discernment (e.g. Chapter Acts, Multi-year Plans, etc.) to the LSGs;
3. animate, support and accompany local communities towards the achievement of the LSGs;
4. develop and adopt financial policies that promote integral ecology (e.g. divestment from fossil fuels, etc.);
5. include integral ecology in formation programs, both at the level of initial and on-going formation;
6. review Provincial and General Directories to promote the attainment of LSGs.

You are entirely welcome to use this Planning Guide and the Laudato Si' Action Platform itself in the way that works best for you; however, please be aware that the proposed actions, tracking tools and suggested resources are developed for the reality and needs of local communities who might be called to complete their own Laudato Si' Plan under your guidance.

If you also intend to develop a Laudato Si' Action Plan as a Congregation, you may follow the same process, while focusing on the distinct domains mentioned above which pertain to that level of competence.

Participants would begin their engagement with Laudato Si' Plans by the process of:

1. *Reflecting.*
2. *Acting,* and
3. *Evaluating and celebrating!*

Those three steps could be used by participants in the way that works best for them. **The Laudato Si' Action Platform only requires that reflection statements, annual Laudato Si' Plans, and the completion of annual evaluations be shared through the Platform.**

Other than that, participants would be left to follow this process as it suits them best.

You may find information about this on your dashboard, which will be available once you have enrolled/registered at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org.

Overview of Suggested Phases

The group of partners who wrote this guide, to support the development of your Laudato Si' Action Plan, took their inspiration from the '**See, Judge, Act**' methodology with which many Religious are familiar. **If you or your Congregation finds another organizing model that is helpful, please feel free to use it.**

The suggested phases in this process are: Reflect (See and Judge), Act, and Evaluate/Celebrate. A brief description follows.

To begin this process the person designated as the Laudato Si' Action Platform Contact Person could develop specific approaches for their program.

Use these suggestions as you find them supportive of your Laudato Si' Plan, particularly at the local community level. They outline a simple process that is cyclical, to be repeated each year, until the completion of your transition to integral ecology.

1. Reflect (See and Judge)

See:

- = Begin with an assessment of your engagement as a community with the Laudato Si' Goals to see to what extent you have already advanced. This will establish a starting point for your reflection on your practices for your Laudato Si' Plan.
- = Identify the issues in your region, town, village or city where you are located which relate to the seven Laudato Si' Goals. Share and record stories or examples of the challenges to action they raise for your group.

Judge/Discern:

- = Examine and discuss the causes of these challenges in the context of each of the seven Laudato Si' Goals and record your responses to these challenges as a part of your Laudato Si' plan.
- = Consider and record how the unique charism and the mission of your Congregation, together with the Laudato Si' Goals, help you address these issues and the challenges they raise.
- = Mindful of your reflection process to "Judge/Discern", you may draw on applicable Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching.

2. Act

Draw on your reflection and discernment to develop your Laudato Si' plan of responses and actions.

- = Establish overall SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound) objectives you would like to reach through your Laudato Si' Plan.
- = Review a suggested list of actions provided by the Laudato Si' Action Platform (or others, as you prefer) and plan actions that will allow you to achieve your SMART objectives.

- = Create an annual plan of action and upload it to the Laudato Si' Action Platform.
- = Implement the actions you have chosen.

3. Evaluate and Celebrate

- = Complete an annual Self-Assessment to see how your practices have evolved.
- = Based on the results of your annual Self-Assessment, reflect on your journey thus far.
- = Consider revisions to your plan for action in the coming year.
- = Upload the results of these three exercises to the Laudato Si' Action Platform website (as written documents or videos).
- = Although the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will host a shared moment of celebration through an annual recognition ceremony, it is hoped that your Congregation will weave prayer and celebration into every aspect of its Laudato Si' Plan.

Your commitment to realizing integral ecology and protecting our common home is cause for joy. Your journey is embraced with the warmth and love with which our Creator embraces all creation, and we are called to embody the spirit of joyful celebration which led St. Francis to proclaim, *"Laudato Si'!"*

Suggested Phase I: Reflect (See, Judge/Discern)

About Reflection

Laudato Si' tells us that *"an integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence 'must not be contrived but found, uncovered'."* (LS, 225) It is suggested that you incorporate a profound period of reflection in your Laudato Si' Plans, deepening the "ecological conversion" to which St. John Paul II and Pope Francis call us.

The steps that are outlined below are suggestions, informed by the co-creators of this document. You are entirely welcome to adapt and implement them in any way that is suitable for you.

First Annual Self-Assessment

As a first step in your journey to integral ecology, you are invited to complete an assessment of your current situation OR an assessment of your sustainability programs, your energy/utilities use, your carbon footprint measurement, etc. The first annual Self-Assessment form for recording this information will be available on your dashboard at the LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org website.

Having an overall view of our current practices in integral ecology can be very helpful. **Being able to see where we stand gives us a sense of direction, an understanding of how far we've come and where we might want to go from here.**

The annual Self-Assessment asks about your practices across the Laudato Si' Goals. The process of answering these questions may spark new ideas about ways your Congregation can grow into its Laudato Si' calling.

At the beginning, an initial survey will help provide a clear, comprehensive, snapshot of where you stand as you begin your journey. It establishes a baseline and enables you to celebrate your progress from year to year.

The annual Self-Assessment, at the end of each yearly cycle, asks about your practices across the Laudato Si' Goal. It is intended to focus on the life of your local community or group of communities. To begin, you will see a few questions on the Laudato Si Action Platform about what life is like in the regions surrounding the places in which the process of Reflection, Action, Evaluation and Celebration will be held.

Then, you will see questions about the practices of your local communities who live and/or work in this region. These **questions** address the holistic Laudato Si' Goals, so you can expect to explore everything from your electricity and water use to your educational and spiritual practices.

Exploring the principles and intentions of the Laudato Si' Goals is a way to further refine and deepen your thinking. By further exploring these goals and integral ecology, you may enrich your understanding of how *"everything is connected,"* and how your efforts to protect the most vulnerable, for example, are linked to changing weather patterns that increase the severity and length of storms, heat waves, and droughts which make small-scale farming more difficult. (LS 91) Praying and talking about these subjects may offer an

opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work, leading you to greater community and purpose.

Your Congregation may already be engaged in a reflection process that touches on similar themes in relation to the Laudato Si' Goals, and you may have already identified your Laudato Si' needs and priorities. If this is the case, please consider ways that this reflection might be integrated into your existing process.

It is hoped that this reflection offers you joy and richness of spirit, rather than being an obligation that does not serve your needs. You will approach it in your own way, bringing your special gifts and your local practices to it. Please feel free to pursue it in whatever way works best for you.

Sharing Your Reflection

You are invited to create a brief reflection document or video that explores how your mission and values connect with the Laudato Si' Goals.

As you begin this reflection, you are invited to consider who should take part in it. For example, at local community level you would involve community members, but you may also invite other stakeholders or helpful persons with needed expertise or resources. If you are planning your process as a larger administrative unit, you may wish to involve those within the domains of formation, Congregational ministries, finances and other sectors, and include consultation with members.

In the experiences of the Congregations that have helped develop this guide, these conversations add nuance to the flow of reflection within religious life. As a simple, flexible process that builds on the spiritual reflections that you already embrace, reflecting on the Laudato Si' Goals is a way to deepen your charism in response to the signs of the times. This reflection can help articulate what is already happening and become conscious of what remains to be done.

If you are already engaged in a reflection process, then you are warmly invited to consider ways that this reflection might be integrated simply. If not, these suggested steps might be useful.

These steps are suggestions, offered in the spirit of providing guidance.

- = If you are holding this reflection process as a central planning body, inform local Communities that key points from the reflection will be shared with them in the future. Convene this reflection process with all Communities in your network,

share why this period of reflection is important to the Congregation and how it is connected with any other ongoing processes.

- = Identify a reflection group.
- = Schedule a day or several days for reflection.
- = Review the Laudato Si' Goals.
- = Review the ways your Congregation already connects with the LSGs, for instance in your Chapter documents; or the founder's writings and any circulars of Superiors; guidelines for your mission and for the management and administration of goods; and strategic (or multi-year) plans.
- = Ask participants to reflect on a set of questions that will help them connect the values of the Congregation with the Laudato Si' Goals. You may either develop your own questions or use these suggestions:
- = What particular experiences within the Congregation respond to the challenge of integral ecology?
- = What do we learn from them?
- = How do such experiences connect with the Laudato Si' Goals?
- = What is the particular contribution that the charism of the Congregation is invited to make to the movement toward integral ecology?
- = How is the Spirit inviting the Congregation / Local Community to embrace the journey of integral ecology?
- = How do the Laudato Si' Goals connect with our overall vision for ourselves as a Congregation in service of God's Kingdom?
- = Share your reflection with others in the Congregation/Province or Congregation/Institute and with any networks to which you belong.
- = Invite discussion and articulate a focus by the end of your reflective gathering.

Create a reflection document or video. Upload it to your dashboard at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org where it will be shared with others.

The hope is that the website of the Laudato Si' Action Platform will be a real source of inspiration, created by all and shared by all, a use of technology that is *"put at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral."* (LS 112).

Uploading a Laudato Si' Reflection is necessary to remain enrolled as a Laudato Si' Congregation.

A few practical details may be helpful:

- = The reflection may be submitted in the form of either a document or a video. Please feel free to use the format that is most comfortable and natural for you.
- = The reflection may be any length you wish. For a written document, you may wish to create a reflection of a few pages or longer. For a video, you may wish to create something short and informal on a smartphone or something more professional in a video studio. The hope is that you create whatever fits your needs and local culture.
- = There is no required content for the video. Please include whatever themes seem most relevant, and act in the way that the Spirit leads you. The hope is simply that you will reflect and connect your values with the Laudato Si' Goals.
- = Your reflection will be uploaded on your dashboard, available at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org.
- = If you choose to create a video, please upload it as a YouTube link. This will help comply with security requirements. If you do not have a YouTube account, one can be easily created by following the instructions that are widely available online.
- = If you choose to upload a document, there is a wide choice of formats. Documents may be in the form of a Microsoft Word doc, a PDF, or even an Excel spreadsheet, if you prefer to reflect in that form.
- = All reflections will be passed through a minimal security review and will be made publicly available a few days after they are uploaded.

You will likely want to share your reflection document or video with your Congregation and with other local Communities. You may also wish to share your reflection more publicly. Depending on your needs, you might prefer to circulate a more detailed version internally and a condensed version externally, perhaps via social media, a newsletter, or your website.

Conclusion to Suggested Reflection Phase

Your Congregation's growing culture of care for our sisters and brothers, for our Creator and all creation, deepens the roots that you've already planted. This period of reflection brings you into communion with all the Congregation's Communities and other Catholic communities around the world that are engaging in similar efforts. The conversations that you have in community contribute to the "*joyful noise*" that all on the Laudato Si' journey are making before our Creator. (Psalms 100:1)

This period of reflection allows us to embrace together “the spiritual treasures bestowed by God upon the Church, where the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us.” (LS 216)

Suggested Phase II: Act

About Action

Laudato Si’ tell us that *“the effects of the present imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive action, here and now.”* (LS 161) As our spirits deepen, as we become attuned to the suffering of all creation and to the movement of Catholics who are building a better future together, we are naturally called to take action.

The steps that are outlined below are suggestions, informed by the co-creators of this document. You are entirely welcome to adapt and implement them in any way that is suitable for you. Please be aware that only three things are necessary for your continued enrollment as a Laudato Si’ Congregation: sharing a reflection document or video, completing an annual Self-Assessment, and sharing an annual Laudato Si’ Plan.

Setting Your SMART Objectives

Your Reflection portrays your vision of the direction you are called to follow to concretize your conversion to integral ecology. At this point, you need to think strategically, to be able to attain your vision in a concrete, practical way and within the time frame of 7 years provided by the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

Your vision provides you with a path for your journey aligned with the LSGs. You will need to describe what you wish to accomplish specifically, in a measurable way, and in terms that are achievable. Also, the end results that you foresee need to be relevant to the path you have discerned and should be time bound.

Many Congregations have found that having clear and specific objectives can help generate enthusiasm. They can also help prioritize and shape the actions you take. Setting SMART* (explain?)* objectives might also help organize your efforts from year to year.

Greenhouse gases contribute to atmospheric warming and include carbon dioxide and methane, produced from burning fossil fuels, and livestock and agricultural practices. For instance, perhaps you'd like to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions by 25% over the next three years. In this case, you might both select practical actions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and shape community events to focus on that objective. The milestones of 10%, 15%, or 20% reductions that you achieve along the way to your objective might be the occasion for shared celebrations, helping all to see and embrace the tangible progress that is being made.

As another example, perhaps you'd like to ensure that formation and professional development programs for your Congregation Members and Staff include Catholic social teaching, particularly the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, before you pursue deeper actions. In that case, you might have a short-term objective of completing training within the year. Over the coming three to five years, your objectives might encompass establishing an annual practice for the Season of Creation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25%, and ensuring that the environmental minister in every country where you're active has received information about *Laudato Si'* values.

Additionally, you might seek to define objectives by speaking with others in your area, learning what other Provinces, Congregations, and Institutes hope to achieve (via the shared plans

available on the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform), or simply brainstorming objectives that would represent meeting the *Laudato Si'* Goals for your Congregation.

You are the expert on your needs and priorities, and defining your objectives is entirely up to you. You are invited to deeply reflect on the objectives that are feasible for your congregation, but would also represent meaningful progress as we build a better future together.

Choosing the Actions That Are Right for You

Once you have defined your SMART objectives, you need to decide what actions will enable you to achieve them. The *Laudato Si'* Action Platform **provides a list of suggested actions developed collaboratively**, which you may find fit your plan. This list is available in your dashboard at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org. You are invited to consider such suggestions, whose effectiveness has already been tested.

- = This list of suggested actions is grounded in the wisdom of the co-creators of this guide and in the knowledge of subject-matter experts.

- = Actions are organized by Laudato Si' Goal, so that you can easily explore areas that are of the greatest interest or need. The suggested actions are tailored to the context of your region.
- = Starting in 2022, most actions will be paired with suggested resources from local partner organizations, who are co-creators of this project. This will enable you to access practical, concrete information about how to complete each action.

The decision-making process that you have established will heavily focus on choosing the actions that are most appropriate for you. **You are the expert in your context, and you will know which actions best suit your spiritual, social, and practical needs.**

You may find that another set of actions better suits your needs. Perhaps you are already engaged in a Laudato Si' program, and you have a different list of actions that you plan to pursue. Or, perhaps there is a need for particular action in your region, one that is specific to the context of your Congregation, and which you would like to include in your action plan. Again, perhaps a member of your Congregation has an extraordinary idea to pursue, and you'd like to follow up on it.

As **you are a co-creator in our shared project of building a better future**, you are entirely welcome to undertake any actions that seem appropriate to you. It is hoped that the researched and collaboratively designed list of actions in your dashboard will be helpful; if you find other resources helpful, please feel free to use them.

Completing Your Actions

As your outcomes are defined and your actions planned, you may see a need for practical know-how to bring your plans to fruition.

Starting in 2022, most of the suggested actions in your dashboard will be paired with specific resources from the partner organizations that are the co-creators of the Laudato Si' Action Platform. This will enable you to immediately access practical, concrete information about how to complete each action.

For now, practical, concrete guidance on how to complete actions is available from many sources.

- = The Laudato Si' Action Platform's resource library has a wealth of information. This library contains resources from partner organizations, many of which are leaders and experts in your region. You may access the resource library at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org.

- = Networking with another member of the family of religious or with another Catholic organization can be a wonderful way to share ideas and guidance. If you don't already have one, you are invited to connect with an institution that wishes to develop a sister relationship. Contact information will be available in your dashboard on the Laudato Si' Action Platform website.
- = The co-creators of this guide include Catholic organizations that have deep experience in accompanying the religious in their Laudato Si' journeys. Contact information to reach these organizations is available in your dashboard. Look for the list of working group members.
- = The Laudato Si' Action Platform shares news and stories about people and institutions that are taking action. Reviewing these stories might provide inspiration and ideas.
- = NGO and/or government agencies in your area may provide information and guidance free of charge or at reduced cost. Developing strong relationships with these partners can be very helpful.
- = Completing a simple search for information about how to complete an action in your region is often fruitful. You might find a detailed step-by-step guide, or you might find information about an organization that has done something similar, in which case you may find it useful to simply contact that organization for an informal conversation to learn more.

Conclusion to Suggested Action Phase

It is hoped that this planning guide will provide helpful guidance. Ultimately, however, you are the expert in your own context. **God has given your Congregation unique gifts, which you alone can bring to our shared project of building a better future.** You are invited to create your own Laudato Si' Plan.

Your Laudato Si' Plan will be shared publicly via uploaded documents or videos to the Laudato Si' Action Platform. By sharing your plans, we will inspire each other, creating a mutually supportive community of practice.

You are invited to be authentically open about the process by which you arrived at your plans, what you hope for, and what inspires you. Sharing our plans in this open way helps to create *"the kind of society we want to build,"* a society in which an *"authentic humanity"* is treasured. (LS 107, 112)

Uploading a Laudato Si' Plan is necessary to remain enrolled as a Laudato Si' Congregation. A few practical details may be helpful:

- = You will have already created a reflection, which focuses on your values. In contrast, your Laudato Si' Plan focuses on the practical steps in your journey.
- = You are invited to include both the objectives that you hope to reach and the actions that you hope to take in the coming year.
- = If you feel called to plan for the long term, please do feel entirely welcome to mention actions that you will take in the years beyond this one.
- = There is absolutely no requirement to reach any specific objective or to take any specific action. **You know your needs and priorities, and you are entirely free to shape the content of your Laudato Si' Plan in the way that is best for you.**
- = If your plan takes the form of a document and you feel so called, please do include a photo of your leaders, your building, your logo, or anything else that is meaningful to you. These photos may help develop a sense of connection and community.
- = You may wish to share your completed Laudato Si' Plan with your Congregation or Province and to share it with networks such as Sowing Hope for the Planet.
- = Additionally, you may wish to hold a celebration. Sharing the creation of a new plan in a prayer service, meal, or other event can be the occasion for joyfully embracing this major milestone in your journey towards integral ecology. **Laudato si'!**

Your Laudato Si' Plan may be uploaded to your dashboard, available at LaudatoSiActionPlatform.org.

It's important to recall *why* we act. In the midst of our ecological crisis, we are called to develop new ways of living and working together, striving to achieve an integral ecology that honors our Creator and protects all creation. These deep roots of our faith prevent "*action from becoming empty activism.*" (LS 237)

At the same time, taking action matters. Our actions are the way that we mount a practical response to the signs of the times, as our Christian love "*makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.*" (LS 231)

Suggested Phase III: Evaluate and Celebrate

About Evaluation and Celebration

As we develop greater *“care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment,”* we begin to see *“the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us.”* (LS 208). The Laudato Si’ Action Platform includes tools to assess our impacts on the world around us.

These tools will help you see how far you have come on your own Laudato Si’ journey and see the distance we are all traveling together. It is hoped that using these tools will develop a sense of collective hope and joy for our shared momentum, as we witness the true transformation of our world.

Completing an annual Self-Assessment is a way to see where you stand on the road to integral ecology. **The annual Self-Assessment will follow the same pattern from year to year, allowing you to consistently follow the track of your Laudato Si’ journey.** Engaging in this process enables you to identify easily and celebrate the ways in which ecological conversion is being lived out in your Congregation.

The annual Self-Assessment form will be available in your dashboard. After completing it, you or your Contact Person will receive a report on your progress.

You are encouraged to share your annual progress report with your constituent Communities as you feel called, as well as more widely if appropriate. The practical ways in which your Congregation has embraced the Laudato Si’ Goals are cause for celebration. Sharing them widely offers the light of inspiration to all and makes you accountable for your commitment to integral ecology. For this purpose, you may also take advantage of the tool of the Sustainability Report, which you find among the Resources offered by the Platform.

Additionally, the Laudato Si’ Action Platform will share results about the shared progress that has been made across all Platform participants each year on October 4th, the Feast of St. Francis and the final day in the Season of Creation. This day will be a moment of global celebration with an online ceremony when the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development will recognize the extraordinary efforts made by all as we strive to build a better future together.

Either during the Vatican celebration or after receiving your annual progress report, you are warmly welcomed to hold a local event to celebrate your co-leadership of this global movement. A creative liturgical celebration that incorporates elements of art or dance, a shared meal, a tree-planting, an online event that unites your leadership with your

member Communities—there are many ways to celebrate your progress and our unity on the road together. You are welcome to joyfully embrace the distance you've traveled on this journey each year.

Reflecting Upon Your Results

Completing the annual Self-Assessment can offer an opportunity for continued reflection on the connections between the Laudato Si' Goals and your values. You are invited to engage the stakeholders in your structured process of See, Judge, Act, Evaluate/Celebrate each year.

This reflection can encourage a sense of motivation and commitment. **It can also be an opportunity for concerns, questions, and suggestions to arise, giving space for the Holy Spirit to speak through diverse voices.**

You may already use a process to evaluate the progress you have made. If not, a half-day or full-day conversation in which you discuss the following questions may be useful.

- = How has working towards a Laudato Si' Plan strengthened the life of our Congregation/Local community over the last year?
- = How has working towards a Laudato Si' Plan enabled us to better serve our sisters and brothers, our God, and all creation?
- = How has consideration of the Laudato Si' Goals deepened our sense of purpose and mission?
- = How have we engaged our Religious or local Communities in a communal process?
- = What actions did we take? Which actions were particularly fulfilling? Which actions were less fulfilling?
- = Where have we made progress towards our objectives? Where have we not made as much progress as we had hoped? Should we revise our objectives, either to make them more ambitious or to make them more feasible?
- = What actions should we take in the coming year? In the coming three to five years?

By reflecting on these or similar questions each year, your Congregation/Local community will recall why you began this journey, envisioning where we are traveling together, and deciding which steps you plan to take in the coming year.

Developing an Updated Annual Laudato Si' Plan

As part of reflecting on your annual Self-Assessment, you are invited to create a Laudato Si' Plan for the coming year.

As our relationships with each other, all creation, and our Creator are always evolving, so too you may wish to revisit the decision-making process that you used to develop your initial Laudato Si' Plan. Your group of stakeholders may have changed, you may have obtained new information about your budget, or new events may have shifted your social-economic context. A review of your decision-making process, whether brief or more in-depth, could help ensure that your journey ahead is as richly nourishing as the journey behind you.

Ideally, each year you will have completed the actions that you planned. Of course, our plans are always imperfect, and it's entirely possible that your intentions were not met, despite your best efforts. **The Laudato Si' Action Platform embraces progress, not perfection.**

Your Calendar

Although we take this journey to a better future together, each of us walks in his or her own way. Your Congregation has already established a cycle of activities for each year, and it is hoped that this work can be seamlessly integrated into it.

The pace of life in your Congregation may be tied to many different things: the annual cycle of Community visits, an annual Conference, the calendar year, or other things. You are welcome to take key Laudato Si' Plan decisions in line with any dates that are meaningful to you.

For example, perhaps you'd like to complete an annual Self-Assessment each year one month before your annual conference, and to upload your new Laudato Si' Plan one month after your conference.

You are completely free to plan around any dates that make sense for you. **Please be aware that to remain committed as a Laudato Si' Congregation, your annual Self-Assessment and annual Laudato Si' Plan should be uploaded each year no later than September 1st**, the first day of the Season of Creation. The annual recognition ceremony will take place on October 4th, which is the final day in the Season of Creation.

Conclusion to Suggested Evaluation and Celebration Phase

Wherever we stand today, we know that we are traveling together, and *“our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope.”* (LS 244)

Pope Benedict XVI encouraged us to realize that creation is harmed *“where we ourselves have the final word.”* (LS 6; Address to the Bundestag, Berlin) An honest evaluation of where we stand helps us to take a step back from our actions re-orienting ourselves on the road to integral ecology and re-committing to the next steps in our journey.

Summary

Together, we are walking the road to integral ecology, as is represented by the holistic Laudato Si' Goals. Integral ecology emphasizes the deep connections between our relationships with each other, our Creator, and all creation. These connections have frayed, which has led to global temperature rise and increasing hunger, thirst, sickness, conflict, and migration - risks that the most vulnerable among us bear unjustly.

Laudato Si', Pope Francis's encyclical on our common home, gave voice to these concerns, putting the vital teachings of our faith in the new light of today's ecological crisis. The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in partnership with hundreds of Catholic organizations and subject-matter experts, has developed a common platform to help the universal Catholic Church act upon this teaching.

The Laudato Si' Action Platform is offering tools and resources in the hopes that you will join us on this journey. God has given you unique gifts that you alone can bring to our shared project of building a better future together.

This collaboratively developed guide is one of the tools offered in the spirit of helpfulness. You are the expert on your needs and priorities, and while it is hoped that the suggestions in this guide will be useful to you, you are entirely free to use it in any way you wish.

To remain committed as a Laudato Si' Congregation, only three things are requested.

- = Complete an annual Self-Assessment of your actions in order to discern where you are on the road to integral ecology, so that we might travel together.
- = Upload a reflection document or video so others may learn from and be inspired by your commitment to the values of the Laudato Si' Goals.

- = Upload an annual Laudato Si' Plan that includes your target outcomes and the actions you will take this year, so that others might grow along with you.

"All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." (LS 14) It is the sincere hope of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development that our Laudato Si' journeys will be rich in hope, in joy, and in the authentic relationships that nourish our spirits and all creation. **Laudato Si'!**