



Mary Ward JPIC Office
Freedom - Justice - Sincerity - Felicity



MARY WARD FAMILY LIVING LAUDATO SI'

7-YEAR ACTION PLAN (2021-2028)

ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Rome, June, 2021

*Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth,
do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

Is 43: 19

Objective

Our objective is to embark on a 7-year journey together as Mary Ward Family toward integral ecology. We aim to integrate the campaign into our day to day living and mission.

Preamble

In 2020, during the celebration of the 5th Anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development launched a *Laudato Si'* special Anniversary year. Pope Francis has called for a multi-disciplinary approach in response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, because we are faced not by two crises but one complex crisis! It calls for concerted efforts. In his encyclical, the Holy Father stated that: "If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith" (LS 64). Pope Francis urges that "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). However, this will not be an easy task and will certainly require "honesty, courage and responsibility" (LS 169) and he reassures us that "local individuals and groups can make a real difference" (LS 179).

Introduction

In his *Laudato Si'* encyclical, Pope Francis invites us into urgent action to protect our common home. And he is very clear that we are in a complex crisis that calls us to See, Judge and Act in response to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, not as two crises (social and economic) but as one complex one. Any significant response certainly must include bringing the whole human family together to seek sustainable and integral development because as he says in LS#13: "... for we know that things can change". "Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it." (LS#19) (SEE JUDGE AND ACT).

With this in mind, we welcome, invite and encourage each person within our family to join in the campaign; to network and collaborate as stewards for the care of creation; each according to his/her own culture, experience involvements and talents (LS#14). The campaign is not meant to be uniform; on the contrary, it must reflect our diversity. It is not about uniformity; it is about creativity and the needs around us. Mary Ward Family is a huge network, the contribution of each one and our integration of the campaign into our mission will no doubt produce fruit in due time.

We are delighted to be embarking on this journey today as we launch this 7-year Action Plan where we shall make an effort to live the 7 *Laudato Si'* Goals: Response to the Cry of the Earth, Response to the Cry of the Poor, Ecological Economics, Adoption of Simple Lifestyles, Ecological Education, Ecological Spirituality, Community Involvement and Participatory Action in our ministries. May we find ways of living them creatively within the 7 institutions where we are involved in ministry: families, dioceses (parishes/churches), schools, universities,

hospitals/health centers, business/agricultural farms and religious orders/communities.

We remain deeply aware that this campaign is already happening in most parts of the world where we are. Thank you very much for all that you are doing and will continue to do as agents for integral ecology. We pray that each individual, community, and ministry will find ways to strengthen what is already in place as well as find ways to do MORE. May the cry of the poor and that of the earth move us to greater creativity on how each one of us can respond. We have no other planet.

by **Pauline MACHARIA** IBVM, Rome



A Call for Ecological Conversion

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* is an urgent call to all to intervene in the current ecological crisis by making a paradigm shift that will allow all human beings to live sustainably in dignity. The Holy Father views the problem of ecological crisis as a two-sided one; it is both social and environmental. He explains the connectedness between global inequality and the environmental crisis. The core of the encyclical is the call to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Following St Francis of Assisi, he speaks of the earth as our sister "who cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her". He attributes this crisis to the reckless human behaviour and activities which are motivated by selfishness and indifference to the life and dignity not only of other human beings but also creation. By making reference to the gospel of creation, Pope Francis explains that the present sorry state of the earth is in contravention of the original plan of God.

What we see happening today in our Common Home in the form of pollution, loss of biodiversity, decline in quality of human life, and breakdown of society is a sign of the destruction of the established order of creation presented in the Book of Genesis in which God saw all He had created and it was good, and which is envisioned by St. Francis in his canticle. It is also an expression of our compromise of the Gospel maxim of love for neighbour.

In his description of what is happening to our common home, Pope Francis points to a world at the edge of an ecological crisis, which without the urgent intervention of all humanity, is at risk of annihilation. In his analysis, the Holy Father points to several factors that have necessitated this state of the world among which are: throw away culture characterized by indifference and wastefulness,

conflict, individualism, unchecked consumerism. From the encyclical we are reminded that we are one human family and have a shared responsibility for others and for creation. Therefore, to protect the earth our common home requires that the whole human family comes together to seek a sustainable and integral development by means and actions which promote the harmony, preservation and dignity of nature and creation.

As a way forward, we have to begin by acknowledging our own contribution to the current state of environmental degradation. We have to acknowledge that we are part of the problem and cannot separate ourselves from the ecological crisis our world is experiencing. Our common apostolic action has to be based on this realization, that as part of the problem, just like the rest of humanity, if we are to find a solution we then have to walk together with others.

As our starting point, we need to begin with ecological conversion which calls us to the rejection of every form of self-centeredness, indifference and self-absorption if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the earth our common home. Such a process is to adopt an integrated approach in which a commitment to the principle of the common good, solidarity with the poor, a contemplative spirituality, discernment on the theology of enough, and environmental education are taken into account.

It is also a call for ecological spirituality in which we are reminded that God is mediated not just in the beauty of creation but also amidst the cries of the suffering earth and of those treated unjustly. It is an aspiration towards an eschatological reality in which humanity will appreciate the environment, seeing it as God's gift to us and seeing the fruits of the earth as a way of God's care and providence.

by Marren Awiti IBVM, Eastern Africa Province

7 Laudato Si' Goals

Beyond sharing the content of the Laudato Si' encyclical, we wish to engage our Mary Ward family members, friends of Mary Ward, collaborators and those we meet through our different ministries with opportunities to reflect and act upon on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable. Aware that already there is a lot happening on the ground this invitation calls us to the MAGIS, what more can we do? This action plan is an opportunity for our Mary Ward Family to put Pope Francis' message into practice and to be agents of change in the places where we are. This is a journey we take one day at a time, for the next 7 years. We invite and encourage each one to join in this adventure; there is nothing to be afraid of, we start from somewhere and keep on getting better. For the seven goals proposed for the 7-Year Action Plan we propose the following as possible actions. However, they remain proposals as our reality on the ground is different.



Goal 1

Response to the Cry of the Earth

The principle: greater use of clean renewable energy and reducing fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality, efforts to protect and promote biodiversity, guaranteeing access to clean water for all.

Reflection

“... to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”
(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* #49)

As I reflect on these words of Pope Francis, and delve deeper into *Laudato Si'* Goal 1 – “Response to the Cry of the Earth”, one key question is: Why the link between the cry of the earth and that of the poor? Indeed, there is synchronization between these two cries; just as the poor are pushed to the margins, so is the earth.

Through the burden of exploitation, abuse such as extractive industries, deforestation, water and air pollution, the earth and marginalized populations reach out to us, their brothers and sisters (*Fratelli Tutti*) and custodians of Mother Earth (*Laudato Si'*). The Covid-19 reality has displayed the importance of bridging science and faith and through *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis leads by example. This is an invitation for a paradigm shift in the way we see, judge and act in our daily interactions with each other and our common home.

Reflecting on this goal, I am inspired by our two General Congregation, IBVM calls (2 and 4) “Bring those forced to live in poverty to the centre of our life and ministry” and “Live sustainably, discerning what is

enough". I cite the case of Kenya, on the effects of climate change, the current response and on what more can be done.

Kenya experiences climate variability and change mainly through the rainfall patterns and extreme weather conditions. These have contributed to the reduction of people's livelihoods, livestock morbidity and mortality. The most affected populations/people live in rural areas and urban informal settlements. Among this population, use of biomass energy for cooking, heating and lighting is a common phenomenon. However, due to the fuel emissions there are health implications and also these activities lead to forest destruction. Equally, climate change has an impact on the aquatic environment as the rise of sea levels affects the marine life, which is a source of household livelihoods and revenue for the Tourism industry (10% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product).

Response to the challenges of climate change: Kenya collaborates with other stakeholders (regional, continental and international) in mitigating the risks and effects of climate change. Planting trees is one of the major activities. Each year, the government leaders and the citizens engage in a tree planting day in order to save and protect the environment. Trees are also planted to commemorate significant occasions and people. Equally, there are ongoing projects to provide clean water for the poor in the rural and urban informal settlements.

Also underway are projects to offer affordable renewable energy, especially among poor households, for their security, their sustainability and that of their businesses. In addition, there are policies and frameworks on adaptation and resilience measures to climate change at governance and grassroots levels. What more can Kenya do? Kenya's climate has the potential to create renewable energy such as wind, biofuel, solar, and geothermal.

Together with the collaborators, the government can continue with the ongoing renewable energy projects. Equally it can allocate funding for activities that increase carbon sequestration through afforestation and

reforestation. Additionally, supporting sustainable farming practices will ensure food security, healthy feeding through biodiversity and soil health. Kenya can work closely with the global world to support the zero-emission energy sources through divesting from fossil fuel. It can also support research on effective indigenous practices and innovative technologies to curb climate change especially those utilized by women and youth.

The journey in responding to the cry of the earth and poor begins with me. I pledge to #LiveLaudatoSi’ and care for our Common Home; to support the compassionate, caring and nonviolent ‘Mother Earth’ so that “All may have life and have it more abundantly” (John; 10:10).

by **Wamũyũ Wachira** IBVM, Eastern Africa Province



"God is present, I will do my Best."

Mary Ward



Thanking God for the gift of creation and taking care of the earth we are called to translate our spirituality into action both at the personal level and community level.

In order to make change happen we need to talk about Laudato Si' and mother earth regularly in liturgies, in conversations, meetings, ministries. This calls for sensitivity to see the real cry of the earth, because only when we hear the cry, and feel the sorrow will we know how to respond.

Possible actions:

- Using water, electricity sparingly (recycling of water from the shower, washing machine, in the kitchen);
- Adopting more use of solar energy;
- Encourage zero wasting;
- Ban single-use plastics/recycling plastic bags/objects.
- Repairing instead of throwing away;
- Getting children to plant their own garden;
- Recover our ecological sensitivity;
- Reforestation;
- Advocacy – e.g., join in climate marches.

Goal 2

Response to the Cry of the Poor

The Principle: defence of human life from conception to death and all forms of life on Earth, with special attention to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, migrants, children at risk through slavery.

Reflection

According to the UN, by the end of 2021 there is a risk of reaching 900 million people living in extreme poverty and struggling to meet their most basic needs, such as health, education and access to water and sanitation, to name only a few.

Poverty has many dimensions. It is caused by unemployment, social exclusion and the high vulnerability of certain populations to disasters, diseases and other phenomena that prevent them from being productive.

Our societies are convinced that poverty is part of the “nature of things”. No, it is not natural, it is a product of human action, and therefore, it can be avoided, just like other rights violations. It is a human rights problem that violates the dignity of the person, with a consequent state responsibility to prevent it.

The problem of child slavery, with children performing forced labour or age-inappropriate tasks, endangering their physical or emotional integrity and keeping them out of school, child trafficking, recruitment of child soldiers or forced marriage, should challenge us.

In some cases, legislation can deepen or perpetuate situations of poverty, as in the case of laws that make labour relations precarious, generating a typical, unregulated and unprotected labour relations, or in the case of legislation that facilitates and promotes forestation but affects water resources in such a way that indigenous communities no longer have water.

This affects the livelihoods of the people who live in these communities, the value of the land, and leads to migration to the cities, with the cultural impact that this entails.

Governments need to create an enabling environment to generate productive employment and employment opportunities for the poor and marginalised by formulating strategies and fiscal policies that stimulate economic growth.

The private sector has an important role to play in determining whether or not the growth it generates is inclusive and thus whether or not it contributes to poverty reduction.

The scientific and educational community must raise awareness of the effects of poverty. New and sustainable approaches, solutions and technologies can address the challenges of poverty reduction and sustainable development as it has done in providing access to clean water, reducing deaths and improving hygiene.

We behave in a way that ignores the fact that our well-being is linked to that of other people. How can we grow economically if inequalities increase? Sooner or later it affects social cohesion and tensions of all kinds.

Everyone from their own place can be the voice of the vulnerable who, in the absence of an effective rule of law, corruption, the extractivist capitalist model or climate change, see their development

hindered. Commitment and solidarity with global justice is essential for the cry of the poor, which is our cry, to be heard.

Mrs. Graciela Robledo, Teacher Nuestra Señora de Luján Secondary School, Argentina



*"Be kind and merciful towards the poor and do not call them beggars."
Mary Ward*

We are called to have a continued awareness and sensitivity towards the poor and at the same time develop a sense of gratitude in our hearts for the blessings the Lord has poured on each one of us and our communities, houses, ministries.



Possible actions:

- Combating stereotyping about immigrants by working with them and getting to know them better, rather than enjoying a certain level of wilful ignorance – people happy not to know, not to interfere. Promote the culture of encounter and openness.
- Using media channels to lobby leaders e.g., Members of Parliament – challenge the proposal by government to cut foreign aid.
- Draw on our inner resources for the assurance that we can do something.
- Addressing issues of digital poverty.
- Advocacy – join movements and collaborate with other networks to address root causes of poverty.

Goal 3

Ecological Economics

The Principle: sustainable production, Fair-trade, ethical consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any economic activity harmful to the planet and the people, investment in renewable energy.

Reflection

Laudato Si' is a call by our Church for human change. It is an invitation to a new anthropology, worldview and spirituality based on interconnection, encounter and solidarity. Among its many strands and focus on integral ecology, Laudato Si' calls us "to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress" (LS#16); to adopt an ecological economy with a focus on sustainability and development rather than efficiency and growth. Pope Francis' comments are perfectly consistent with earlier inspiration and teaching on economic issues, stretching back to the Hebrew Bible with its promotion of care for widows and orphans. The 'Economy of Francesco' places integral human development at the heart of our Catholic faith, describing an urgent need for politics, economics, science and faith to enter into a candid dialogue. Pope Francis' words and writings, prayer and pleas leave little doubt that faith does not lead to justice; justice is a manifestation of our living faith.

This understanding is consistent with Mary Ward's call to just relationships before God, with our very selves, our neighbours and all creation. Mary Ward's discernment rejects all that represents power and alludes to the interconnectedness of all forms of power: economic, ecclesiastical, military, intellectual and social. Our spirituality places all created things in the heart of God's plan, not outside of it. The work of nurturing the human ecology of our

communities is deeply linked with our thinking about development, and our relationship with the rest of creation. In Australia, for example the most politically, economically, socially and spiritually disenfranchised group, Indigenous Australians, has the most to teach us about a spirituality that espouses deep life-enhancing connection with all creation and an economics that values stories and songs, suffering and struggle.

The genius of *Laudato Si'* is its call and challenge. It is neither a roadmap nor a manifesto of solutions. Pope Francis goes to great lengths to affirm inclusion and the right of all to participate in society, which necessarily involves economic participation. While cementing the connection between environmental, economic and justice issues, "Pope Francis calls on people to seek new ways to understand the economy, condemns our throwaway culture and dependence on technology, and (invites) people to reassess the dignity of humanity and the integrity of creation in finding solutions to the ecological crisis." (Australian Catholic Bishop Media Release, 18 June 2015).

Laudato Si' calls for action to be taken at personal and system or governmental levels, as both an economic and spiritual imperative. We are encouraged to examine our lifestyles to discern what changes we can make. Within our political context, the encyclical presents a compelling case for change in areas such as sustainable production, renewable energy, protection of ecosystems, fair trade and the right to meaningful work.

The Mary Ward family is challenged to continue to develop "a model of international solidarity capable of acknowledging and respecting interdependence ... and working for the promotion of the most disadvantaged and developing countries" (*Populorum Progressio*, 65). What this commitment looks like in practice is a matter for

personal and collective discernment, with new challenges emerging almost daily, such as the commodification of oxygen and vaccines.

Equipped with the discerning heart and mind of Mary Ward, the impetus of Laudato Si' and our rich global awareness, we commend ourselves to our generous God in a spirit of the just soul, as we journey across boundaries toward communion with all creation.

by Anne Muirhead, Co-ordinator, Loreto Justice Network, Loreto Australia & South East Asia Province



"Cherish God's Vocation in You" Mary Ward

In order to promote ecological economics, we need to convert our dream about the economy into practical actions. All actions are underpinned by the principle "to have enough is to be rich".



Possible actions:

- Promote local economy and accept its limitations, make an effort to cultivate local seeds rather than genetic modified seeds, using kitchen gardens.
- Focus on circular economy, make recycling more present in our communities, and be more aware and attentive to how we use food, how often we travel and cut down our use of resources.
- Using and supporting more fair-trade products.
- Deepen our impulse for re-using things and restrain our desire to buy.
- Do more on renewable energy in all our communities.
- A personal and public commitment not to use brands we know are exploiting people, land, children and environment.

Goal 4

Adoption of Simple Lifestyles

The Principle: sobriety in the use of resources and energy, avoid single-use plastic, adopt a more plant-based diet and reduce meat consumption, greater use of public transport and avoid modes of transportation which pollute the environment.

Reflection

One of the main themes in Laudato Si' encyclical is Adoption of Simple Lifestyles and this touches every person. The Holy Father brilliantly navigates the culture and life style we find ourselves living today: wasteful, consumeristic and self-centered. This lifestyle is unsustainable and it continues to push the poor to the margins.

In Laudato Si' #203 Pope Francis calls for a greater self-awareness "... since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending ... amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction, and this lack of identity is a source of anxiety". In this new paradigm where we live more authentically, we have our best example in St. Francis of Assisi.

In Laudato Si' #10 Pope Francis says: "...I believe that Saint Francis is the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically".

The following are suggestions of how we can adopt simple lifestyles:
Reduce: Manage waste by not producing it! Reducing is making a conscious effort to determine true needs and avoid impulse buying. Purchase only durable products and avoid disposable goods.

Re-use: Re-using is taking old items we consider throwing away and giving them more value through art and creativity.

Recycle: Recycling is turning waste into new things, though some products cannot be recycled. Buying recycled goods, which are no different from standard goods, helps us to make the most out of valuable resources.

Rethink: Rethinking is a state of mind where one challenges his or her entire way of life and prompts one to action. Get real and know the amount of waste you create and make positive strides in areas of concern. Think carefully before buying anything and never impulse buying.

Refuse: Refuse is now considered the first and most important. By refusing e.g., excess packaging, items wrapped in plastics etc. we can make a huge dent on waste the world over.

Renew: Renew is similar to re-use, though it calls for more ingenuity, skill and creativity.

Zero waste: This means that nothing is wasted by reducing use of e.g., plastics and glass. Switching to reusable products is important and recycling should be considered as an absolute imperative.

Total transformation:

- Reduced demand will 'force' manufacturers to produce less, thus tackling the root problem.
- By changing the way we look at consumption and what we do with these items once they are no longer useful, we will be doing more justice to Mother Earth than we realize in reducing waste.

- Be involved and make a change to the way you live and make an impact on the planet and avoid non-recyclable products if possible.
- To prevent use altogether is essential, with disposal being the last step we should consider once all other options have been exhausted.
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and conserve Earth.
- Promote green technology.
- Choose clothing with materials that are long-lasting like cotton.

by **Faith Sithabile Dlamini CJ, Zimbabwe**



"In his will only, I find Quiet Rest"
Mary Ward

We need a change of attitude and to be aware; so that we become the change we want to see; and this commitment needs to become an inner conviction for each one of us. Each country and each community have a different understanding of what simple lifestyle means and we should all decide according to our own circumstances, keeping in mind that wealth really means having enough. We have different levels of understanding and at the personal level we ask ourselves: Am I ready to change? What can I do to change?



Possible actions:

- Support people, ministries for socio-economical turn-around after COVID-19 pandemic.
- More awareness of the fact that having a simple lifestyle is a day-to-day choice.
- Changing our attitude, heart, mind and decide to do things differently, out of freedom and not out of duty.

Goal 5 Ecological Education

The Principle: re-think and re-design educational curricula and educational institutions reform in the spirit of integral ecology, to create ecological awareness and action, promoting the ecological vocation of young people, teachers and leaders of education.

Reflection

Responding to Ecological Education is a huge task, but one that is necessary. It calls for schools to bring together all stakeholders to rally behind activities and programs geared towards integral ecology. Learning institutions are complex groups bringing together learners, staff, parents and the communities around them; this makes them an excellent medium for teaching and living the values of integral ecology espoused in *Laudato Si'*. It would have to involve drawing up long-term programs wherein the whole school community participates and bears responsibility.

The aim of such a program would be to facilitate a whole new ecological conversion that would have an effect on the school's vision, values and mission, bringing about an environmental awareness, responsibility and a sense of connection to the natural world, in the school's educational community on the whole and in the young person in particular. A shift in attitude and action towards integral ecology ought to become a part of the school system and teachers are critical agents. This calls for some formation for staff and support. Of course, this is only possible if the school managements see the need for integral ecology and commit to the same.

Teachers have a special obligation to inform students about environmental issues. Ecology can be introduced as a subject in the

curriculum. Subjects like Biology and Marine Science will add to the knowledge that can be derived from Ecology as an academic subject. Educators will come up with more interesting activities at school, activities that will encourage the learners to be involved in this protection of our planet. If possible, the activities carried out by the learners can be assessed and these marks can be added in their report books. Learning is more fun when practical stuff is done. On top of that, if it involves group work, the entertainment quotient rises.

Parents can be invited to participate in science contests along with their wards. Parents, as educators in the home, can help encourage and facilitate the bringing about of a mind-set that will adopt a sustainable life: no use now of plastic bags, composting will be carried out, self-sufficiency will be encouraged by growing their own vegetables and fruits in as much as they can and of course, using energy effectively (use of green energy will be a priority).

In *Laudato Si'* #215, Pope Francis says, “If we want to bring about deep change we need to realize that certain mind-sets really do influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, society and our relationship with nature”. For lasting effect in ecological education, in some places it might involve lobbying education leaders to prioritize ecological issues, for instance, is it possible to make integral ecology a subject to be taught in schools? And since the primary educators are at home, the school programs must involve parents because this creates a network for support and continuation.

by Josée Pontré IBVM, Mauritius

*"God is rich enough for us all."
Mary Ward*

Promoting Ecological Education invites us to inculcating and/or strengthening of a deep culture of gratitude for life, the environment around us, food, freedom, families, friends, schools, homes etc. It means growing into loving and caring relationship for self, others and the environment in appreciation. Learning to take care and reaching out to the poor and vulnerable then becomes part of the educational values. May our education systems be truly attuned to the needs of the world as the learners develop deeper global awareness and embrace global citizenship.



Possible actions:

- Having a functional child safeguarding policy in our schools as well as in all the ministries.
- Specific formation in provinces and communities for JPIC coordinators on how to go in line with Laudato Si' Encyclical and its goals as well as formal training on Ecology to the JPIC Coordinators.
- Training and practical living of Laudato Si' Goals introduced as part of Mary Ward Spirituality towards creation throughout the formation process of candidates, novices and sisters in 3rd probation, as well as in ongoing formation.
- Teach pupils and students the need for gratitude for the environment around them.

Goal 6

Ecological Spirituality

The Principle: recover a religious vision of God’s creation, encourage greater contact with the natural world in a spirit of wonder, praise, joy and gratitude, promote creation-centered liturgical celebrations, develop ecological catechesis, prayer, retreats, formation.

Reflection

The world today is in need of healing and restoration. We know that our mother earth is frail and our fellow beings are ailing due to the pandemic. Who is responsible for this present distressing situation and the other entire environmental crisis? Am I the one who is responsible? You? The Government? The people in power? Underprivileged people? If we go deeper to look for the answer, then we can surely say that the whole of humankind is responsible for this plight. For instance: “Humans are the only creatures in this world, who cut the trees, make paper from them and then write, ‘Save Trees’ on it.

We made a blunder; now it’s time to rectify the mistakes and restore Nature to its original glory and splendour. Each of us has to take the responsibility to fix the environmental hazards we create every moment.

It has to start from ME – interior conversion is needed to bring about community conversion which will undoubtedly lead to Ecological Conversion. Introspection of our own mind-sets and attitudes is needed in order to bring change in the world.

Finding God in all things is fundamental in Ignatian Spirituality which gives us the awareness that God can be found in everyone, in every place and in everything. This realization helps us not only to love God

the creator but all his creations – fellow beings, animals, plants, non-living things and the whole universe.

This understanding compels us to question ourselves – How do I relate with God present in myself, fellow human beings and all the creatures living and non-living? We tend to forget that we are just the stewards of all the created things and our duty is to take care, protect, manage and make worthwhile use of the relationship that we share with them.

We live in a consumerist and “use and throw” cultured society. The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. We like collecting materials. I have caught myself many times buying things and stuffing them in the closet and not using them. This is just an example. We are busy satisfying our wants more than our needs. Our day-to-day life and lifestyle add to the depletion of natural resources, pollution of the earth and the suffering of people. Let us examine our lifestyle.

But God has instilled in us the capability of going out of our self-centeredness, self-absorption and individualism and extending our hands towards others to build good neighbourly relationships. Let us take a personal decision and start a new habit and life style to bring the community to an Ecological conversion.

by **Mable Rudum** IBVM, South Asia



"Yet it shall be so ordered, that it may not appear as if you sought thereby to instruct others." Mary Ward

Our spirituality must of necessity adopt a very ecological dimension. And, we are grateful that there has been a lot of awareness and action in this area; we have a lot to show for the effort. However, MORE can still be done in order to bring ecology more and more into the spirituality we hold so dear. May we find creative ways to be grateful for mother nature, our common home. May our ecological conversion continue to inspire action for ongoing formation to promote ecological spirituality.



Possible actions:

- Encourage and lead in making small gardens based on composting. Use videos to illustrate possible approaches using examples.
- Encourage the planting of trees and try to discourage the custom of cutting down trees.
- Creative liturgies highlighting passages from Laudato Si'.
- Include in catechesis an ongoing theme of planting seeds and see them grow to show the wonder of water and earth. 1.5liter bottles can be used to plant hanging wall gardens.
- Promote the development of reserved natural grounds/forests in our communities for prayers and meditations.
- Prints and drawings on our chapels of images related to ecology.
- Involving artists and musicians who can compose songs and prayer booklets in various languages that can speak to local communities where we work; providing everything in languages accessible to the people.

Goal 7 Emphasis on Community Involvement and Participatory Action

The Principle: to care for creation at the local, regional, national and international levels (promote advocacy and people’s campaigns, encourage rootedness in local territory and neighbourhood ecosystems).

Reflection

In his encyclical *Spe Salvi*, Pope Benedict XVI says:

‘The Christian message was not only “informative” but “performative”. That means: The Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently’. [*Spe Salvi*, 2]

Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* offers us a clear road map for learning how to live this Gospel hope in a way that makes things happen and changes lives. We can look at the climate crisis as a dreaded apocalypse which robs us of hope for our future, or we can look at it as an invitation to live differently.

Throughout the Mary Ward family, we are taking part in community involvement and participatory action towards more just living and the care of God’s creation. Some of us may worry that our efforts will not make a sufficient impact to being about effective change, but ‘our way of proceeding’ in the Mary Ward family is marked by her vision of a Just Soul redeemed by Christ and returned through his grace to God’s original creative purpose.

The fourteenth-century English mystic Julian of Norwich wrote:

‘He wills that we know that he takes heed not only of noble things and great, but also of little and small, low and simple [...] for he wills that we know that the least thing shall not be forgotten’.

The least gesture by which we choose to act in favour of the common good, whether it concerns how we use non-renewable resources, what we consume, how we vote, how we care for plants or animals or how we pray and use all our human skills and capacities – all of this is treasured by God.

This is the hope with which we are invited to consider our involvement in the global movement for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The invitation of *Laudato Si’* and of the Just Soul vision is to be creative and imaginative in how we live this divine purpose and Gospel call to live differently. The door of the future has indeed been thrown open and what we see through it may look very dark. But by God’s grace our choices can ‘make things happen’.

If our community involvement and participatory action 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’ [LS, 246] then our struggle for justice, love and peace, however simple, will bear fruit in God’s good time because, as Mary Ward reminds us, ‘God has a time for all’.

by **Gemma Simmonds** CJ, England



"Women in time to come will do much!"

Mary Ward

We are all part of a larger community – other than our families, communities, direct ministries. We are members of the society and no doubt the African Proverb ‘if you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together’ makes a lot of sense here. We desire to go together and therefore, we shall educate, encourage, and animate members of the community as citizens who have a duty and responsibility making our Common Home more humane.



Possible actions:

- Work with groups of our collaborators and associates, youth groups and schools to bring the message to a wider public. Everything from posters, social media to street protests, letters to municipalities and local government. Checking the programs of candidates for election as to their intentions to work for the environment and the poorer people.
- Putting pressure as consumers on companies that do not meet standards of human and social rights or on environmental protection.
- Conduct clean-up exercises in local areas.

Closing Remarks and Way Forward

At the end of this ambitious plan drawn together with IBVM/CJ members and our collaborators we are aware there are many things happening already but the same as in the spiritual life, there is always room to improve, develop or start. We have inherited from Mary Ward a strong desire not to give up until we are sure we are fulfilling God's will, and this gives us a certain freedom to act and see how things unfold and then confirm our decisions in prayer and discernment while journeying.

The Srimad Bhagavatam, a revered text in Hinduism's Vaishnavite tradition, states, "Ether, air, fire, water, earth, planets, all creatures, directions, trees and plants, rivers and seas, they are all organs of God's body. Remembering this a devotee respects all species". On the same note, Hildegard of Bingen says "Every creature is a glittering, glistening mirror of divinity." To her, nature was a mirror for the soul and a mirror for God. This mirroring involves a total change in consciousness in how most of us see and sense reality. Reflecting on this matter Meister Eckhart said: "If humankind could have known God without the world, God would never have created the world."

Pope Francis invites us to see that God cannot be praised in truth unless we hear the cry of the Earth and respond to it, by proposing to us the *7 Laudato Si' Goals*. This is a journey that none of us can start without a deep prayer and clear discernment. None of us has yet found the universal answer to each of the goals; still, scientific proofs speak to us without a doubt and we cannot continue supporting the progress the world has made over the last decades by oppressing the poor and destroying the earth. For instance, we still don't know the real environmental impact of many products, such as a pair of earrings made of gold that comes from an illegal mine in South Africa where locals dig for gold where their health is at risk because they inhale dust and chemicals while digging and processing. At the

same time, very few of us think the bar of soap we use is made with palm oil from an Indonesian island where the forest was wiped out for a plantation. These realities remain invisible to us, the buyers, from far away countries.

In the 7-year Mary Ward Family Action Plan asks us to:

- meet, look around, listen, talk and pray.
- make assessments of where we are; what needs to be done and how can we achieve our goals.
- take action depending on the needs around us.

It requires sharing, evaluating and celebrating the small or the big milestones and to keep close to our hearts Mary Ward's call to have just relationships before God with our very selves, our neighbour and all creation.

May God bless this commitment and give us the grace to achieve, not for us but for the Kingdom, the fruits of this work.

by **Adina Bălan** CJ, Rome



At the invitation of Pope Francis we shall live and animate the living of Laudato Si' considering the following:

1. Laudato Si' Families: (Families embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
2. Laudato Si' Dioceses: (Dioceses/Parishes embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
3. Laudato Si' Schools: (Schools embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
4. Laudato Si' Universities: (Universities/Colleges embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
5. Laudato Si' Hospitals / Health Care Centres: (Hospitals/Health Care Centres embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
6. Laudato Si' Businesses/Agricultural Farms, etc.: (Businesses/Farms embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)
7. Laudato Si' Religious Orders: (Religious Orders / Provinces embarking on a 7-year journey towards integral ecology)

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this document we have received a great deal of support and assistance from Mary Ward Family Network.

We would first like to thank our JPIC coordinators, whose expertise was invaluable in formulating the possible actions we can take as we embark on this 7-year journey. In a special way we thank those who were part of the core team and worked very closely to us: Fionnuala Lynch IBVM, Mary Elizabeth Kirke IBVM, Seraphina Kim CJ, Nancy Mugo IBVM, Kathryn Keigher IBVM and Smitha Muthu CJ. We also thank our UN NGO representatives Janet Palafox IBVM and Cynthia Mathew CJ.

We acknowledge our members and friends who kindly and promptly gave us insightful reflections, offering us the inspiration and the theological foundation we need before taking any action. We thank Marren Awiti IBVM, Wamũyũ Wachira IBVM, Graciela Robledo, Anne Muirhead, Faith Sithabile Dlamini CJ, Josée Pontré IBVM, Mable Rudum IBVM and Gemma Simmonds CJ.

Our sincere thanks to Susan Daily IBVM for the images accompanying each goal, to the proofreaders and translators who make this document available in so many languages.

Finally we would like to thank our IBVM/CJ Leadership teams, especially Noelle Corscadden IBVM and Jane Livesey CJ for their wise counsel and ongoing support.

Pauline Macharia IBVM and Adina Bălan CJ
Mary Ward JPIC Office

Mary Ward JPIC Office

Via Nomentana 250

I-00162 ROMA, Italia

www.marywardjpic.org

[FB: mwjpic](#)