



Conference of the Franciscan Family

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Saint Francis: the Key to Reading Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Environment

The Ministers General of the Franciscan Family offer their Joy and Thanks

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The Ministers General of the Franciscan Family offer their joy and thanks for publication of Pope Francis' Encyclical "*Laudato si, on care for our common home.*" In the letter Saint Francis is cited twelve times, making him the key to reading the entire text: "*I do not want to write this Encyclical without turning to that attractive and compelling figure, whose name I took as my guide and inspiration when I was elected Bishop of Rome. 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. He is the patron saint of all who study and work in the area of ecology, and he is also much loved by non-Christians.*"

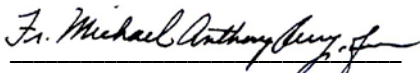
Published officially on June 18, 2015, at the Vatican, the text makes current our charism at this historic moment in regard to respect for all forms of life. As Franciscans we have always and everywhere sought to offer witness and defend the environment and the human beings who populate it, aware that one who loves God cannot not love that which God has created: living beings and nature. The Canticle of the Creatures, expression of the lifestyle of Saint Francis, is a hymn to life in all its forms, both natural and human. Francis promoted a finely tuned relationship with all of creation, especially with the apex of God's creative activity, humankind.

It is this special relationship that inspires the Pope in his work for the poor and marginalized, for peace and reconciliation, and for care of the planet. He thus demonstrates prophetic

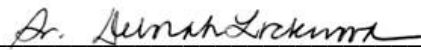
qualities which arise from being in communion with God, with others, with himself, and with the created universe. Because of this Pope Francis has dared to embrace and advance the demand of Christian discipleship modeled on the example of Saint Francis of Assisi. His Encyclical challenges all of us to simplify our lifestyle, to divest ourselves and leave aside all that is not necessary, so as to rediscover the beauty that God has placed in us, in every human being, and in every created thing. Our vocation is to live in boundless solidarity with everything that God has created.

We thank the Pope for this encyclical and pledge our prayers for him. Aware that a new approach to promote the life of the planet and humankind is emerging, we are energized by the words of Pope Francis and invite all people of good will and those responsible for the nations to take up their responsibilities to safeguard peace, justice and creation. On our part, in the name of the entire Franciscan Family, we commit ourselves to review profoundly our lifestyle, so that we might be consistent witnesses of that which we profess. We challenge all members of the Franciscan Family and those with whom we work to a more careful use of energy and water, to reduce our use of plastics and harmful detergents, to care for waste in a responsible manner, and to take other concrete daily steps to safeguard creation.

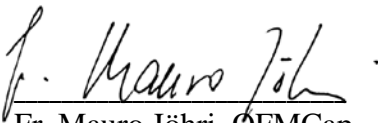
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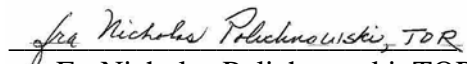
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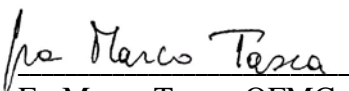
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Rome, 16th July 2015