

Enfleshing Laudato Si'

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A year ago, as a member of the Saskatoon Diocesan Justice and Peace Committee, I received this information: ***On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the encyclical, Pope Francis announced a Special Laudato Si' Anniversary Year from 24th May 2020 – 24th May 2021.***

"I invite all persons of goodwill to adhere to it, to take care of our common home and our more fragile brothers and sisters", said the Pope.

We invite everyone to join us. The urgency of the situation calls for immediate, holistic and unified responses at all levels – local, regional, national and international. We need, above all, "a peoples' movement" from below, an alliance of all people of good will. As Pope Francis reminds us, "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)

As we come to the end of this anniversary year, I realize that my "ecological conversion" has taken place slowly. Over the years various spiritual and educational experiences have helped to create a more passionate concern within me for the care of our common home. Action has flowed from this concern, usually in small ways in the ordinary circumstances of my life, voluntary activities and organizations. Here are some examples.

Within our neighborhood, we have a cooperative community garden. Because of the pandemic during this past year, extra regulations and work were required. Eventually seeds were planted by our refugee, immigrant and senior gardeners, and an abundant harvest resulted! If ever there was a year when we needed to experience the life, beauty and hope that a garden brings, it was during this year! In this neighborhood, the garden brings much joy and of course, food. I remember asking a person who was walking by the garden if he would like some carrots. His response - "Thank you, God bless you" and the biggest smile ever! As you can see from the photos, it definitely looks like we are 'going green'!

About a block from the garden, a heavy industrial steel recycling plant is located. Recycling scrap metal is a worthwhile endeavour but the 'noise pollution' and other issues created by crushing metal in an increasingly residential area does not foster a healthy environment. The Pleasant Hill Civic Association is working with the City of Saskatoon in order to rezone and relocate the industry. This change would be welcomed by the neighbors, especially the residents of a new Indigenous Elder lodge being built across from the industry!

"Development and Peace, Caritas Canada", our national movement for global justice, chose "For our Common Home" as the campaign theme for the 2019-2020 year. Our education and fundraising efforts focused on the Amazon and its peoples who are under threat. "Protecting the Amazon is a matter of survival not only for the Indigenous, riverside and forest dwellers, but for all of us, because we and the Earth are all connected" (D&P Fall pamphlet).

This 'peoples' movement' begins especially within our homes where there are a myriad of ways to care for our common home. Prayer is primary. So within this beautiful 'divine milieu' in which we live and move and have our being, we hopefully will continue to grow in love and relationship with all creation, and then act as God's instruments in our care for creation.