

Laudato Si' Movement Canada and Star of the North Retreat Center

1 st September 2022 Celebrating Season of Creation

Earth, water, air, fire, are the four elements recognized as the foundations of life, both in ancient Greece and for Indigenous peoples since time immemorial.

Laudato Si' n°2: *"We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her water."*

Earth, mother earth. We recognize the land that welcome us

- Land Acknowledgement -

The earth welcomes us all, nourishes us, and is home to a great diversity of creatures. May we honor Mother Earth by being welcoming to one another and living our existence in an attitude of building a better world for all.

We place soil in the center of beauty

Water, God's gift of love, which he gives unconditionally and freely to all of us. Water is the first and fundamental basic human right, a condition for the enjoyment of other rights. Its central role in life deserves to be honored, and the first way to do so is to fight for access to clean water for all human beings.

We water the soil of the center of beauty

Fire, energy present in the center of life. The center of the planet is extremely hot. We can say that the core of the planet is fire.

The fire that is the sun, activates life every day. With fire, with heat, we cook, that human act that makes us co-creators with God.

Fire is not possible without oxygen.

We light the center of beauty candle

Air, ally of fire, the element that envelops everything on the surface of the earth, connects us and gives us life.

We fill our lungs with the same shared breath that circulates through all living beings and connects us to the cosmos. Through it we are physically and chemically connected to all life and the lives of fellow brother and sister humans. Sound is also carried through it, by which we communicate.

As a sign of gratitude to the air that gives us life, we invite everyone to gently blow into their hands as a gesture of wanting to offer the same life we receive to the rest of the creatures.

This year's theme for the Season of Creation is **"Listen to the Voice of Creation"**.



We need to listen to the voices of those suffering the impacts of climate change, the people who hold ancient wisdom on how to live with gratitude within the limits of the earth, the voices of a diminishing diversity of species. These are the voices of the earth.

What voices do we need to hear?

We will name these voices, writing them on red paper before placing them around the center of beauty. Zoom participants can write a short comment in the chat box.

To introduce the symbol of the burning bush, we will carefully place sticks around the candle, making it look as much like a burning bush as possible.

Ex 3: 1-12: *"I have heard your cry... I know your sufferings... Come, now! I will send you... I will be with you."*

The burning bush is the symbol of the Season of Creation 2022. Today, the prevalence of unusually intense fires is a sign of the devastating effects of climate change on the most vulnerable. Creation screams as forests crackle, animals flee and people are forced to migrate due to the fire of injustice.

In contrast, the fire that called to Moses as he tended the flock on Mount Horeb, did not consume or destroy the bush. This flame of the Spirit revealed the presence of God. This sacred fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffer, and promised to be with us as we followed in faith our deliverance from injustice.

In this Season of Creation, this symbol of the Spirit of God calls us to listen to the voice of creation.

Creation speaks to us eloquently of God's glory, but we do not contemplate it, we do not listen to it. Perhaps it is our attitudes that need conversion.

The perspective we need to recover is to see creation as a temple, as a sacred place, as holy ground.

The bush contrasts the fire of so many unnatural fires that aggravate the climate crisis, with the sign of fire as the light of the Holy Spirit that unites Christians.

[Burning Bush, by Luca Terrana and Matteo Manicardi](#)

At a time when climate change is revealing its devastating effects, there are people and collectives that nourish hope with their prophetic commitment. The fire of love for creation as sacred burns within them.

We now pause to write the names of people and groups committed to the care of creation on green paper before placing them around the center of beauty. Zoom participants can write names in the chat box.

To observe nature, to study how to harmonize our actions with hers in order to grow food, is in itself an act of prayer, because it is to harmonize our being with that of God.

In times of consumerism—and we also consume nature—and of acceleration, to cultivate a garden is to revalue our sacred ties with nature, which gives us everything generously.

Our celebration of the Season of Creation will take place around the organic garden of Star of the North, an old dream of its director, Lucie Leduc, made possible thanks to the knowledge and hard work of Clint Porrit, and with the unconditional support and effective help of Bishop Sylvain Lavoie.



We will go out to the garden later, but throughout this ritual we will recreate it in this room in order to let ourselves be guided by it.

Clint Porrit: We will explore seven phases in the development of an organic garden—based on a no-till, deep mulching method. The seven phases are: honouring the soil, watering, layering cardboard and organic mulching materials, planting, tending, and harvesting.



1. Everything begins with honouring and preparing the soil.

Clint Porrit: We start with a patch of ground. The condition of this ground doesn't matter: it can be a bare patch of soil, a weedy area, or a strip of lawn. For most plants to grow, this patch will need access to sunlight and decent drainage. We honour this area by recognizing its deep history, its complicated structure, and the vast microbial networks that help capture carbon from the atmosphere and help plants gather water and nutrients from the soil. We honour this area by not tilling, turning or cutting into it and disturbing the good work of these important underground communities. Throughout this process we will make peace with the earth, feeding it without violence and watching it thrive with new life.

Having a good base, a good foundation, is the key to a fulfilling life.

You cannot love what you do not contemplate. Contemplation is the basis of a spirituality of integral ecology.

Integral ecology includes the need to promote personal, social and ecological harmony. Similar to how we maintain the existing soil when planning a no-till garden, we consider our place in the world from a holistic perspective that builds on what is already present.

Only when we are aware of how our lifestyle damages our common home can we initiate a change of life. In other words, only when we recognize how our way of producing, trading, consuming and disposing affects the life of the planet, are we then in a position to modify such practices and lifestyles. An integral conversion requires both a profound change of heart, expressed in personal habits, and a profound structural change, expressed in social habits, laws, and economic programs.

For this conversion, both personal and collective, we need to find deep motivations. The proposal of *Laudato Si'* is to turn to the cultural riches of peoples, to spirituality.

LS n° 63: *“Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality.”*

We ought to notice how, in healthy, organic soil, as in humans, we have the combination of the four elements: earth, water, air, sun (fire).

2. **Water.**

Clint Porrit: At the beginning of this process, and throughout, we soak the earth. The excess of water helps rot the grass and weeds beneath the layers, slowly composting them along with the many organic layers above into nutrient rich food for the garden that will be planted above.

LS n° 30: *“Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”*

In the world, 2.1 billion people survive without access to drinking water at home.

There are Indigenous reserves throughout Canada without drinking water. This is totally unjust.

Agnes Richard: not clean water in reserves.

In Canada, a country with the world's largest quantity of fresh water, it is a shame that many Indigenous communities do not have clean water for their own use because of colonial constructs and systemic environmental racism that has allowed the poisoning of clean water by industrial activities.

One such area is the Grassy Narrows First Nation in north-west Ontario. In the 1960s and 70s a large pulp and paper mill in Dryden, just north of Grassy Narrows, dumped 9,000 kg of mercury into the English-Wabigoon River, and now not only is the river highly contaminated, but so are the bodies of the Indigenous families who live along that waterway. They suffer multiple physical and mental health problems, and the lives and culture of the community of about 1,500 have been severely impacted.

Another area seriously affected by water contamination due to industry is the Athabasca River system in Alberta, threatened by leaking toxins from tar sands extraction tailings ponds. The impacts directly affect the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, and Fort McKay and McMurray Métis Communities. "In 2006, Dr. John O'Connor raised concerns about disproportionately high rates of cancer in Fort Chipewyan, Alta., believing that nearby oilsands sites may have played a role." Vindicated by scientific research after being professionally reprimanded, Dr. O'Connor said in 2009 "Put the brakes on. Slow down. Enforce environmental laws. Get rid of the tailings ponds. Do things in a clean fashion and just do the right thing by Fort Chip." After receiving the Peter Bryce Prize for Whistleblowing from the Ryerson University Centre for Free Expression last year, O'Connor again called for governments to act. "Every day that passes and there's no action taken is more and more an indictment on the federal and provincial governments."

Similarly, on Canada's east coast, the Pictou Landing First Nation, alongside Boat Harbour in Nova Scotia, is considered to be one of Nova Scotia's worst cases of environmental racism. Boat Harbour has become polluted with dioxins, furans, chloride, mercury and other toxic heavy metals from the effluent of a pulp and paper mill opened in the 1960s. Boat Harbour is now undergoing a federal environmental assessment and cleanup was expected to begin in 2021.

There is much that families and individuals can do to examine their own relationship with water. A very easy first step is to reflect on your use of bottled water. Be mindful of the water you consume. Avoid the waste of single use bottles of water, that are not proven to be better for your health, but only play into our desire for convenient consumption. Respect the water that comes from your tap, and as you use it, be thankful for the systems in play that deliver clean, healthy water to your home for your personal use. Carry tap water with you for drinking, consider saving water for multiple uses like washing vegetables and then watering houseplants, water from boiled foods can be frozen and eventually become soup broth. Extend these ideas to another liquid many of us enjoy, coffee. In your thankfulness, be mindful that others struggle for the basics we take for granted, and join your voice to those advocating for safe clean water for everyone.

Resources for continued learning:

[Canada's Water Crisis: Indigenous Families at Risk](#) (4:25 min YouTube video)

[Grassy Narrows to get \\$68.9M more from Ottawa for centre to care for people with mercury poisoning](#) CBC news article, July 2021 and the struggle continues.

[Keepers of the Water](#) is an Indigenous organization whose mandate is to elevate decolonized traditional Indigenous water governance. This is done by emphasizing Indigenous land-based knowledge, language and culture.

[Banned for decades, releasing oilsands tailings water is now on the horizon](#) CBC news article, Dec. 2021

[We Interviewed Dr. John O'Connor, One of the First Tar Sands Whistleblowers](#) Vice news article, Mar. 2014

[Doctor who raised concerns about cancer rates downstream from oilsands wins whistleblower award](#) CBC Edmonton news article, Mar 2021

[Ponds of toxic waste in Alberta's oilsands are bigger than Vancouver — and growing](#) *The Narwhal Explainer*, June 2022

[For 50+ years, pulp mill waste has contaminated Pictou Landing First Nation's land in Nova Scotia](#) CBC *The Nature of Things* Documentary and news article 2019

[There's Something in the Water](#) 2019 Canadian documentary film on YouTube. It is an examination of environmental racism; the film explores the disproportionate effect of environmental damage on Black Canadian and First Nations communities in Nova Scotia.

[Map of long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserves](#) Government of Canada official website, updated regularly

[Animated Infographic - The Facts about Bottled Water](#) (1:39 min YouTube video)

Participation: we invite in-house participants to water the soil we have in the center of beauty with droplets of water, as a sign of gratitude for having water, and at the same time as a sign of commitment to advocate for drinkable water for everyone. Participants at home are invited to water a houseplant at this moment.

3. Cardboard. Putting Waste to Good Use.

Clint Porrit: At stage three in this process, we cover over our area of soil with standard, non-glossy cardboard, trapping the water in and the sunlight out. Weeds and grass beneath this layer will rot in the dark. Weed seeds will slip into dormancy. As the root systems of these plants also rot, they leave behind small tunnels where their root systems used to travel. This process begins to soften the soil, and water is able to seep into these small spaces helping to retain moisture for the garden above. In a month or two, all traces of this cardboard will be gone. Recycled back into the natural cycle.

How much we can do with recyclable material.

Laudato Si' advises us about the throwaway culture. The six Rs, Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, Repair, Refuse waste to begin with, Repurpose ought to be part of our daily habits.

LS n°22: "These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish. To cite one example, most of the paper we produce is thrown away and not recycled. It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants. But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them."

Fratelli Tutti n°169: "In some closed and monochrome economic approaches, for example, there seems to be no place for popular movements that unite the unemployed, temporary and informal workers and many others who do not easily find a place in existing structures. Yet those movements manage various forms of popular economy and of community production. What is needed is a model of social, political and economic participation "that can include popular movements and invigorate local, national and international governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny."

Pope Francis, in his meetings with popular movements, praises the creativity and effort of so many groups that find in recycling, in what others throw away, a way to earn a decent income. Laudato Si' puts a lot of emphasis on this economic dimensión.

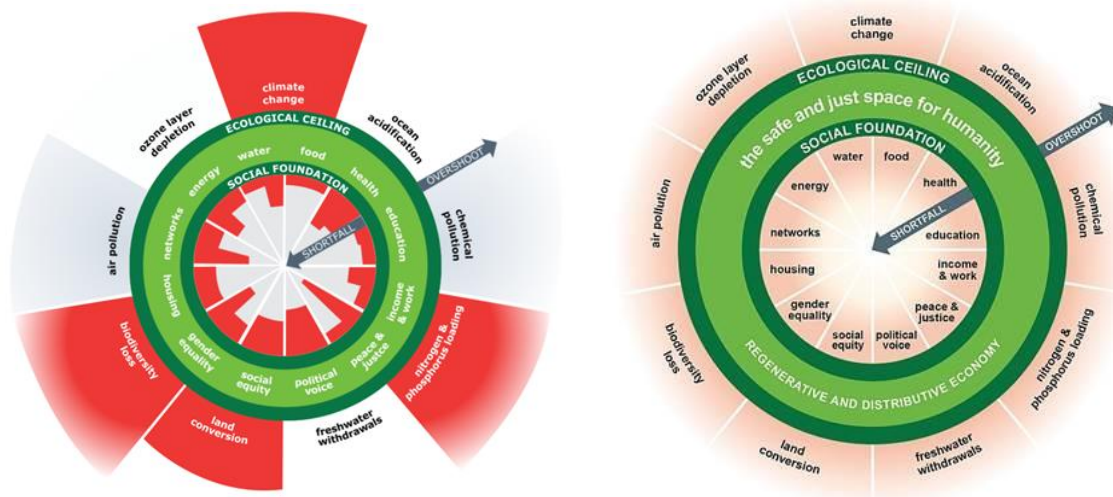
Agnes Richard: Economy of Francis

Our use of cardboard in the garden has very practical applications, as Clint explained. It's also an excellent use for what is often considered waste. By repurposing the cardboard, especially in a manner that captures its inherent carbon content for use in the soil, it is a perfect metaphor for a reciprocal or circular economy.

In the Vatican document [Journeying Towards Care for Our Common](#), a circular economy is described as an alternative to the traditional linear economy (where producing, using, throwing away is prevalent). In a circular economy, resources are not excessively exploited for production, but are kept in use for as long as possible, obtaining maximum value and recovering products and materials at the end of each life cycle.

The transition to a circular economy would involve a new way of looking at the relationships between markets, consumers and natural resources, making obsolete the very concept of “refuse”, since everything is of value. In economic terms, it would mean ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the way we manage input and output, and in the way we strengthen the connections between producers and consumers, between growth and sustainability, between people and the planet.

The underling principle of the “doughnut” economy echoes Pope Francis and Indigenous knowledge in recognizing everything is interconnected. The economy does not stand alone, or outside of the natural sustainable boundaries of ecological systems. Neither can it operate successfully beyond what is needed for optimal human needs and rights so that *everyone* can thrive. The sought after “sweet spot” in this economic model is the centre green circle that respects both planetary and human boundaries.



These images of the Doughnut economy illustrate where humanity is currently overshooting healthy planetary boundaries. And, the hole at the Doughnut's center reveals the proportion of people worldwide falling short on life's essentials, such as food, water, healthcare and political freedom of expression – and a big part of humanity's challenge is to get everyone out of that hole. At the same time, however, we cannot afford to be overshooting the Doughnut's outer crust if we are to safeguard Earth's life-giving systems, such as a stable climate, healthy oceans and a protective ozone layer, on which all our well being fundamentally depends.

From 22nd – 24th September, over a thousand young people from all over the world will meet the Holy Father and sign a pact for a new economy. The Holy Father is keen to be present and meet young economists, entrepreneurs, and change-makers, from around the world, who have been working towards Economy of Francesco for the last three years. Economy of Francesco is a process, called for by the Pope himself, to lay foundations for a new economy, one that is more just, equitable and fraternal. There is a Canadian group of youth meeting October 2nd in Montreal. MLSM Canada will do our best to help interested persons connect with these young people.

Again, we can see that positive action is happening in Canada. The Development & Peace 2021-2022 campaign called for Canadian policy makers to put People and Planet First when making decisions here at home, and about how Canadian companies operate around the world. Their education materials outline global economic realities and how people are impacted by corporate power. They also ask for our participation in highlighting these concerns with our political leaders.

In November 2018, through the [Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment](#), the federal, provincial and territorial governments adopted the [Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste](#) and an Action Plan to implement that strategy. The Plan, developed in two phases, sets out tangible actions and clear timelines to better prevent, reduce, reuse, recover, capture and clean up plastic waste and pollution in Canada.

Environmental Defense, an environmental advocacy NGO, invites us to encourage our political leaders to increase their efforts in making zero plastic waste by 2030 an attainable goal.

The Canada Plastics Pact is an industry-based organization that unites diverse leaders and experts in the national plastics value chains to collaborate and rethink the way we design, use, and reuse plastic packaging and to realize a circular economy for plastic in Canada.

Resources for further learning:

[Journeying Towards Care for Our Common](#), the Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development practical guide for living *Laudato Si'*.

Kate Raworth describes her hypothesis for a circular or “doughnut” economy in this BBC sponsored YouTube video, [How the Dutch are reshaping their post-pandemic economy](#)

[Meet the doughnut: the new economic model that could help end inequality](#), a blog post from the World Economic Forum, uses the doughnut model to examine inequality, April 2017.

[Economy of Francis website](#) with information on upcoming events and news about what the neighbourhood hubs have been working on, including on in Canada.

Development & Peace, [People & Planet First](#) 2022 campaign materials.

Government of Canada [Zero Plastic Waste Agenda](#), published 2018.

Environmental Defense invitation to use our people power to enhance the goals of the Canadian Zero Plastic Waste Agenda, with their [Ending Plastic Waste](#) campaign, Feb 2022.

[Canada Plastics Pact](#) website.

Participation: we invite one in-house participant to place a piece of cardboard on the wet soil we have in the center of beauty, as a sign of commitment to produce less waste.

4. **Layers of organic materials: leaves, wood chips, compost and grass.**

Clint Porrit: At this stage we begin to layer organic materials such as leaves, wood chips, compost, and grass clippings on top of our cardboard. Instead of trapping them in a pile of plastic garbage bags slated for the landfill, we are now repurposing these organics to feed the soil and grow food. Another name for deep-mulch gardening could be forest-floor gardening. Think of how nature rebuilds its soil from the top down, never the bottom up. Branches fall to the forest floor and begin to break down. Plants and animals die and become part of the earth. Trees cover everything in a blanket of autumn leaves. If you dig with your hand into a typical forest floor in the fall, you will find 6-8 inches of soft organic materials in various stages of decomposition. This is what we are recreating. A bed of composting materials.



Nature regenerates itself, takes advantage of its cycles.

LS nº 22: *“It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants.”*

For example, the compost from Star of the North’s kitchen feeds the garden.

We must also reacquaint ourselves with the abundance of life offered in the natural world, and that in its wholeness, it is already complete and functioning well without extreme human intervention and interference, such as chemical pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers and monocrop farming.

Agnes Richard: on biodiversity and COP15 in Montreal

Layering the Goodness

The soil, leaves, grass and compost, with all their partnering organisms, contribute valuable services to our healthy garden, just as the miraculous diversity of insects, plants, birds, fish and animals contribute to a healthy planet for us to thrive. The integrity of living soil and the composting material we add, needs to be protected, kept whole and as richly biodiverse as possible.

All too often biodiversity is erased to make way for large scale monocrops, land is torn up and polluted to mine minerals, precious arable farmland is given over to many square kilometers of single-family dwellings.

In December this year, Montreal will host the next UN Conference of the Parties for Biodiversity, COP15. In advance of that event Pope Francis pleads for these policies to be adopted by governments around the world to protect biodiversity. He says:

In order to halt the further collapse of biodiversity, our God-given "network, of life", let us pray and urge nations to reach agreement on four key principles:

1. to construct a clear ethical basis for the changes needed to save biodiversity;
2. to combat the loss of biodiversity, to support conservation and cooperation, and to satisfy people's needs in a sustainable way;
3. to promote global solidarity in light of the fact that biodiversity is a global common good demanding a shared commitment; and

4. to give priority to people in situations of vulnerability, including those most affected by the loss of biodiversity, such as Indigenous peoples, the elderly and the young.

According to the organization Global Safety Net, “Across the globe, Indigenous communities are quite literally our last line of defense to save the biosphere upon which we all depend. Their land stewardship, moral principles around leadership and relationship with the surrounding ecosystems is what we need to learn from and act upon. Supporting Indigenous-led organizations is especially important, as they could help drive rapid conservation of both land and sea.”
<https://www.globalsafetynet.app/>

Scientist Eric Dinerstein, with Global Safety Net said in a Guardian article “We found that addressing Indigenous land claims, upholding existing land tenure rights and resourcing programs on Indigenous-managed lands will help achieve biodiversity objectives...”
<https://www.theguardian.com/climate-academy/2020/oct/12/indigenous-communities-protect-biodiversity-curb-climate-crisis>

In Canada positive change is happening.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada has multiple programs to conserve and restore natural spaces through which “Ecosystem restoration is making a difference for species at risk, the fight against biodiversity loss and safeguarding the benefits that nature provides people.”
<https://natureconservancy.ca/en/>

In Guelph, Ontario the Ignatius Jesuit Centre is committed to growing, over the next 500 years, an old growth forest using the concept of Wholistic Restoration.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8Kq67eJGM0>

An exciting new initiative, through the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas project, invites participation in a KNOWLEDGE BASKET. It is “a digital space created to honour, celebrate, and catalyze Indigenous-led conservation pathways in Canada, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs). Registration is encouraged through the website listed here.

And organizations like the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, (CPAWs) “a Canadian charity dedicated to the protection of **public** land, freshwater and oceans, has a strong national and regional presence across the country. Working in a way that respects the sovereignty and leadership of Indigenous nations, they are focused on conserving nature to respond to the dual crises of accelerated biodiversity loss and climate change.”

We can support the shift to protect wilderness areas and the partnerships that combine Indigenous knowledge and skill with federal government programs.

Resources for continued learning:

Pope Francis’ [Season of Creation 2022 message](#), prepared July 21, 2022

[Global Safety Net](#) is a teaching website and mapping tool to track conservation efforts globally

[Why protecting Indigenous communities can also help save the Earth](#) is an excellent article by [The Guardian](#), October 2020

[Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) website and [blog posts](#)

Ignatius Jesuit Centre Old Growth Forest restoration blog posts and videos
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8Kq67eJGM0> , Wholistic Restoration videos,
<https://ignatiusguelph.ca/category/old-growth-forest/>

[Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society](#), their video on [protecting Canada's Boreal Forest](#), and invitation to [act and join](#) them.

[Youth Climate Corps](#). in BC is intentionally creating jobs for Canadian youth wanting to be involved in conservation efforts, as reported in the [National Observer](#) article, Aug 2022

Participation: One tablespoon of healthy soil contains over 8 billion organisms, fungi and bacteria.

We invite in-house participants to place one spoon of organic soil on top of the sod in our mini-garden, as a sign of awe at the richness of the soil that is under our feet.

5. Planting Seeds.

Clint Porrit: If we leave our gardens wild, they will replant themselves. If we are careful we can harvest seeds in the fall to plant in the spring. Most seeds can sit on top of the mulch or be poked with a finger just below the surface with little to no cover if we're continuing to think like a forest.



From the fruits of this year, we can gather seeds for next year.

Before moving further into this phase, we invite everyone to go out into the garden and pick some seeds.

Video of Clint presenting the Star of the North garden: <https://vimeo.com/745172161>

When returning to the room, each participant should have some seed in hand. Those who are at home are also invited to look for some seeds in their kitchen and bring them with them to participate in the dynamic. For Zoom participants eg. the seeds from inside a green pepper, in the pith of a tomato, the center of a cherry or peach, open up an over-ripe bean and take out the plump seeds, find and dry some of the squash or pumpkin seeds.

Pope Francis, during his recent visit to Canada, in his homily at Commonwealth Stadium, clearly questioned us on what kind of world we want to leave to the next generations.

“In the fog of forgetfulness that overshadows our turbulent times, it is essential, brothers and sisters, to take care of our roots, to pray for and with our forebears, to dedicate time to remember and guard their legacy. This is how a family tree grows; this is how the future is built... what do we want to do with ourselves? The grandparents who went before, the elderly who had dreams and hopes for us, and made great sacrifices for us, ask us an essential question: what kind of a society do we want to build? We received so much from the hands of those who preceded us. What do we, in turn, want to bequeath to those who come after us? ...

Brothers and sisters, this also applies to us. Those who preceded us have passed on to us a passion, a strength and a yearning, a flame that it is up to us to reignite. It is not a matter of preserving ashes, but of rekindling the fire that they lit. Our grandparents and our elders wanted to see a more just, fraternal and solidary world, and they fought to give us a future. Now, it is up to us not to let them down. It is up to us to take on the tradition received, because that tradition is the living faith of our dead.”

Agnes Richard: Faith in the Future

Let’s reflect on the wealth we have accumulated, how we protect it and expect that wealth to grow and satisfy our needs as we grow older. Do the methods we use to save and grow that wealth also contribute to a healthy and sustainable future?

It is said, those living now are the first generations to truly understand our impacts on all of creation, and the last generations with the ability to meaningfully change our ways to provide a livable future for those who follow us.

In the Vatican document, [Journeying Towards Care for Our Common Home](#), it is noted that “Investors can encourage positive changes in various sectors of the economy. This is the case when they decide not to invest in companies that fail to meet certain standards (human rights, child labour, environmental and so forth). ... [B]anks are proposing to individual citizens investment options that meet the same standards, and listed companies are attempting to adapt their activities and reporting accordingly... [Three major conferences](#), organized by Catholic Relief Services and the Holy See, have focused on these themes.

Many of us have savings to carry us through our senior years, or plans to leave a legacy of funds for family and friends. Pension plans, mutual fund firms and even banks are undergoing intense criticism and scrutiny to ensure that the investment products they offer support a just economic transition away from dependence on fossil fuel energy sources and towards sustainable business models that promote healthy environments, practice respect for the rights of free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples, and support equitable opportunities for workers leaving sectors dependant on fossil fuels. You can be part of these conversations by raising questions where you invest.

Mouvement Laudato Si’ Movement Canada has prepared a helpful Toolkit to walk you through the steps of examining your personal financial assets, or that of your parish, diocese or faith-based institution. It is full of resources to assist with an understanding of Pope Francis’s vision of an Ecological Economy, and how individuals and groups can work towards it.

Not only should we be thinking about what we pass on to future generations, we should also support the youth of today, listen to their concerns, help them realize their dreams for their own futures.

We know that many Fridays throughout the year young people take to the streets and bring their voices to public officials demanding policies that ensure they will thrive in years to come. September is often a month when these rally’s and strikes take on additional impetus. What better way to demonstrate our solidarity with young people than to stand by their side during the Season of Creation?

September 23rd is planned to be a day of pivotal day of action. Find a Fridays for Future strike near you and bless the youth with your presence. In Toronto Catholics from Development & Peace, and MLSM Canada will join an interfaith contingent. Any group can register their own event if there is not one nearby to join. Its easy to register and post pictures back to the main page afterwards.

Resources for continued learning:

[Third Vatican Conference on Impact Investing](#) Vatican website

[SHIFT Action Network](#) website for guidance on pension plan discussions

[Climate Action Page of SHARE](#), a page of the Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE)

[Catholic Eco-Investment Accelerator Toolkit](#) website from MLSM Canada

[Fridays for Future Canada](#) website, event map and event registration pages

We return to the question: what kind of world do we want to leave for future generations?

We are invited to think about what seeds we want to plant with our lives, what legacy we would like to leave.

We are invited to place the seed on the soil, in silence, as a personal offering.

6. Tending the garden.

Clint Porrit: We have planted our garden in a thick sponge of materials that hold moisture. Only during the first few weeks of planting and during prolonged heat waves is watering necessary. To test moisture levels, stick your hand into the sponge.

During the tending phase, you will pay attention to seedlings as they appear, carefully surrounding them with leaves and grass to protect them, keep their roots moist, fertilize them, and keep weeds at bay. There is less pulling of weeds (which disturbs the networks in the soil) and more “smothering” of weeds with layers of mulch.

By making a habit of visiting your garden once or twice a day, you will learn to listen to the earth, to understand what your soil and plants might need.

The dignity of work is included in *Laudato Si'* in several areas.

LS n° 124: *“Any approach to an integral ecology, which by definition does not exclude human beings, needs to take account of the value of labour.”*

LS n°125: *“If we reflect on the proper relationship between human beings and the world around us, we see the need for a correct understanding of work; if we talk about the relationship between human beings and things, the question arises as to the meaning and purpose of all human activity. ... Together with the awe-filled contemplation of creation which we find in Saint Francis of Assisi, the Christian spiritual tradition has also developed a rich and balanced understanding of the meaning of work.”*

LS n° 129: *“In order to continue providing employment, it is imperative to promote an economy which favours productive diversity and business creativity. For example, there is a great variety of*

small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing... Civil authorities have the right and duty to adopt clear and firm measures in support of small producers and differentiated production."

This past August, Pope Francis' prayer of the month was for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs: *"Let us pray that small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, hard hit by the economic and social crisis, may find the necessary means to continue their activity at the service of the communities in which they live." The Pope praises those who "with courage, effort and sacrifice, invest in life by generating well-being, opportunities and work. They do not appear on the lists of the richest and most powerful and, despite the difficulties, they create jobs while maintaining their social responsibility."*

Participation: We are invited to open our hands, and look at them with gratitude for the ability to work with them, for them being instruments of creativity and love. We take a few seconds to look at them with love.



7. Harvest.

Clint Porrit: The harvest from Star Garden will be shared with communities and families in need. This is the abundance of creation, not to be hoarded or kept to ourselves, but shared in rich community.

In life, we are not always granted to reap what we plant.

As a Chinese proverb says: "One generation plants the trees, another gets the shade".

To find the reward in the happiness of love given, is already in itself harvest.

When planting in an organic garden, the harvest comes with the cycle of the seasons, and allows us to enjoy the fruits and share them.

It is time to share the table, to feast. But first we will conclude this time of celebration together.

LS n° 112: *“Yet we can once more broaden our vision. We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral.”*

LS n°160: *“What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? This question not only concerns the environment in isolation; the issue cannot be approached piecemeal... We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn.”*

Agnes Richard: Gathering the Gifts

Finally, at the end of the growing season, we can rejoice in the gifts our garden has provided for us.

In [Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants](#), Robin Wall Kimmerer speaks often of gifts from Mother Earth, given freely but with a spirit and expectation of reciprocity. She writes:

“The fundamental nature of gifts: they move, and their value increases with their passage. The more something is shared, the greater its value becomes. This is hard to grasp for societies steeped in notions of private property, where others are, by definition, excluded from sharing. Practices such as posting land against trespass, for example, are expected and accepted in a property economy but are unacceptable in an economy where land is seen as a gift to all.”

Let us acknowledge and honour the gifts of our earthly garden, and live as Pope Francis invites us, to renew together a commitment to our common home.

Resources for continued learning and networking:

[Mouvement Laudato Si' Movement – Canada](#) the official website and network for the Canadian chapter of the international Laudato Si' Movement

Laudato Si' Movement next Laudato Si' Animator's training [information and registration](#).

Let me conclude by showing a video that encapsulates the Holy Father's Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2022, and encourages all Christians to live the [#SeasonOfCreation](#), from 1 September to 4 October, as a special time to respond to the cry of the earth and the poor. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwjKAOQ0> is

Lucie Leduc: Final words of thanks to all and farewells

We finish celebrating sharing snacks and fruits

Original script by Mariángel Marco Teja, UJ
Garden pieces Clint Porrit
Social pieces Agnes Richard

An event hosting by Star of the North Retreat Center in St. Albert, Alberta
And Mouvement Laudato Si' Movement Canada

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