



“Human life is grounded
 in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships:
 with God, with our neighbor and with the Earth itself.”
 ~Laudato Si’

On May 24, 2020, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the encyclical, Pope Francis announced a *Special Laudato Si’ Anniversary Year* from May 24, 2020 to May 24, 2021. So although it may not have made the headlines, we are not only in the midst of a pandemic, political turmoil, and protests calling for racial, environmental and economic justice, we are also in the midst of this special year, celebrating *Laudato Si’* and the hope it offers as a “moral and spiritual compass for the journey to create a more caring, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable world” (<https://laudatosiyear.org/>).

And the beautiful thing is, we, as a Passionist family, are already in motion, already responding to Pope Francis’s call to “hear the cry of the Earth” and the “cry of the poor.” From the rain garden at St. Paul of the Cross in Detroit to the food ministry at Mater Dolorosa in California to the *Waking Up* Conversations on Race on Zoom, we have been engaged in reading the “signs of the times” and actively birthing together what the *Laudato Si’* Anniversary website describes as “a new way of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity, and a more harmonious relationship with the natural world” and each other.

Indeed, this call and endeavor are not new to our charism. The Passionist Rule and Constitutions exhorts us to “share in the distress of all, especially those who are poor and neglected;” to “seek to offer them comfort and to relieve the burden of their sorrow,” each of us taking part

“according to our gifts, resources, and ministries” (Ch. 1, 3). It affirms “in a world where the unjust distribution of goods is a major source of division, hatred, and suffering” that we “use our possessions for the relief of suffering and for the increase of justice and peace in the world” (Ch. 1, 13). The Rule calls us to “co-responsibility and mutual dependence.” And, Passionist Thomas Berry reminds all of us that “the natural world is the larger sacred community to which we belong. To be alienated from this community is to become destitute in all that makes us human.” The spirit of *Laudato Si’* has always been alive for us as Passionists.

Our challenge is to continue making it concretely present in the world today, to build on what is already in motion, to continue:

- *Responding to the cry of the Earth*, for example, by increasing use of renewable energy and reducing fossil fuels; by working to protect the water and land of which we are stewards; by advocating for the protection of the Earth and her resources; by responsible investing which promotes justice and the relief of suffering; by monitoring supply chains and engaging in ethical consumption; by living simply.
- *Responding to the cry of the poor*, for example, by continuing to stand with the crucified today, with the hungry, the displaced, all those who suffer from injustice; by continuing to move toward becoming an anti-racist institution; by continuing to engage with the pressing justice issues of our time through the Passionist Solidarity Network, Passionist preaching, and retreat and individual ministry.
- And, most importantly, to continue bringing to life in the world the *memoria passionis*. The seeds of any Passionist response to the *cry of the Earth* and the *cry of the poor* must be planted in this life-giving soil, from which springs the love necessary to meet the challenge of the integral ecology of *Laudato Si’*.

Pope Francis, in his letter to the Superior General, Most Rev. Fr. Joachim Rego, CP on the occasion of the Jubilee, wrote: “Only those crucified by love, as Jesus was on the cross, are able to help the crucified of history with effective words and actions. In fact, it is not possible to convince others of God’s love only through a verbal and informative proclamation. Concrete gestures are needed to make us experience this love in our own love that is offered by sharing the situations of the crucified, even totally spending one’s life.” And we, as a Passionist family, do indeed have concrete work to do and always will. But, perhaps, even more fundamentally, our charge is heard in another sentence in that letter, in a prayer: “May the *memoria passionis* make you prophets of the love of the Crucified One in a world that is losing its sense of love.”

This ultimately is the charge of *Laudato Si’*—from the Pope, from the General, and from our Provincial. To remain rooted in the love of Christ crucified. To be prophets of this love. From this, all action flows.

And we, on the Laudato Si' Vision Fulfillment Team, offer ourselves as yeast and a resource for the Passionist family, individually and collectively, to meet this charge—and are grateful for the opportunity.

Following are windows into Laudato Si' alive in our Province. We hope they provide encouragement and food for thought as we move into the second half of Pope Francis' *Special Laudato Si' Anniversary Year*, and deeper into our own vision fulfillment.

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