



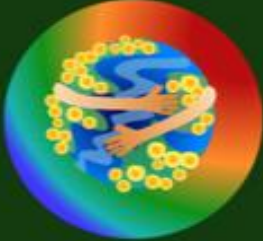







Mary Ward JPIC Office
Freedom - Justice - Sincerity - Felicity



Reflections for Laudato Si Week May 2023



 <p>Community Involvement</p>	 <p>Mary Ward Family Laudato Si'</p>	 <p>Cry of the Earth</p>
 <p>Ecological Spirituality</p>		 <p>Cry of the Poor</p>
 <p>Ecological Education</p>	 <p>Simple Lifestyle</p>	 <p>Ecological Economics</p>

INTRODUCTION

We are happy to share with you the 2023 resource booklet for the Laudato Si' week.

As we do every year we asked members and friends from different countries to reflect with us how hope is the driving force underpinning our actions to help heal the Earth and Humanity.

But hope alone might not be enough. It requires actions and processes who are not always easy to live. It requires courage, that kind of courage who knows that hope is not the easy confidence that everything is going to be fine and also doesn't let itself fall into the despair there is nothing more we can do.

The result is an invitation to listen again to God's voice, to contemplate creation, to let ourselves be touched by different experiences and realities, discern our small or big contribution and be prophets and apostles for the world today.

The Church encourages us to celebrate Laudato Si' Week 2023 with the film "The Letter". This global celebration will unite us to rejoice in the progress we have made along with other in bringing Laudato Si' to life.

You are all invited to host a screening event in your communities, parishes, missions.

<https://www.theletterfilm.org/watch/>

Happy Laudato Si' week!

Thank you for your daily JPIC commitment!

Adina Bălan CJ, JPIC Roma

Photo: kids.frontiersin.org





MAY 21ST, DAY 1

OUR JOURNEY INTO “ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS”

★ “You are called to become artisans and builders of our Common Home, a Common Home that ‘is falling into ruin’. Today, a new economy inspired by Francis of Assisi can and must become an economy of friendship with the earth and an economy of peace. It is a question of transforming an economy that kills into an economy of life¹.”

We, Mary Ward women, are called to become artisans and builders of the Kingdom of God and help create an economy of life. In Canada, we are becoming artisans of impact investing.

Envision the journey into “ethical investing” like a flow chart:

- Traditional investments
 - Screen out some kinds of companies
 - Apply environmental, social and governance criteria; engage in shareholder advocacy
 - Impact Investing: invest where positive socio-environmental impact is considered (and measured) alongside financial return
 - Philanthropy.

In 2022, we explored the field of impact investing to identify areas of focus in keeping with our mission, values and charitable purposes and to include it in a revised Investment Policy. The policy now states that the impact investment portfolio shall focus on any of six areas: poverty alleviation; empowering women and women’s education; immigrants and refugees; climate change and the environment; affordable housing; and Indigenous issues.

We designate an amount of money for impact investments in the form of Public Market Funds, Direct Private Debt or Private Market Funds. To date:

- 50% has been invested in Public Market Funds (these are low risk and should generate a return similar to other public funds);
- 3% in a social impact bond “Reduction in Youth Justice Involvement” that predominantly serves Indigenous Youth in custody by providing culturally appropriate programming;
- 24% serves immigrants and refugees seeking accreditation and/or training; and
- 23% undeployed. Inclusive housing proposals are currently being considered.

As artisans of impact investing, we align a portion of our investment portfolio *directly with the mission, charism, and values of the Sisters to help steward these resources for the greater service of God and the more universal good*. With these investments, we help build an economy of life.

Questions for reflection:

How are you called to be an artisan of the Kingdom of God, creating an economy of life?

What steps can your province or region take to review your investments and align them with our mission, charism, and values in service of people and planet?

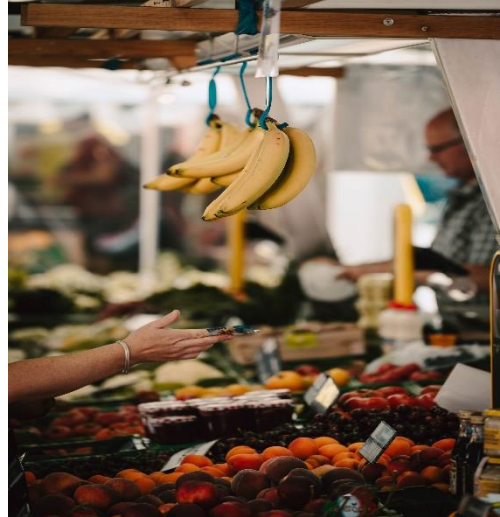
Prepared by Carmen Diston, IBVM and Sarah Rudolph, IBVM Canada

¹ Pope Francis, Economy of Francesco Address, September 2022

MAY 22ND, DAY 2.

INVEST IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Way back in 1988, three members of the Patna Province of the Congregation of Jesus ventured out to live the religious life in a radical way by “Live in experience” in the village Bagahi in the Buxar District of Bihar state. Sr. Sudha, Sr. Kiran and myself (Sr. Poonam; thus, began the Social action ministry in the Province and this new initiative was given the name “CHIRAG” which means “undying light” for this new initiative. We started living among the most vulnerable groups – Dalits and Maha Dalits, who opened their homes for us to stay, thus we were completely immersed in the culture and life style of the people. This in turn not only transformed the life of the common people, but the major change happened in us – making our religious life more meaningful and challenging.



Now having lived very close to the people for the last 35 years, we now share the life and challenges of the marginalized and accompany them along the path of their integral human development. The members of the Self-Help-Group (SHG) which we formed among the women right from the beginning, help to protect family savings and facilitate access to credit. Each group makes small investments that would otherwise not be possible for them. We have now two strong Women’s Banks. In Shahpur Social Centre, where I am now, the group members are mostly mothers of the 150 school children, whom we are supporting in their education. They are also asked to provide a share of support for their children’s education. We see that through the process of this saving habit of the SHG, these mothers who normally remain excluded from the normal economic circuit are able to respond to the needs of their children and we have seen the social impact of these activities and it testifies to the effectiveness of our initiative. “This habit of savings”, through which we started this initiative, is now income generating and job creation projects and it is a fully pledged social ministry.

Now speaking of Ecological Economics, the Income Generating Programme (IGP) of the SHS members are involved in activities like grocery shop, vegetable vending, goat, cow, buffalo rearing, piggery, poultry, farming, cultivation, purchase of auto, tailoring machines, tent and sound system to rent for functions, decorative items, dry fruit shop, photo (Snack) shop are indeed actions which lead to sustainable production and consumption, ethical investment, supporting circular economics and prioritizing care labour and protecting the dignity of workers. Kitchen garden, group cultivation etc. provide vegetable, fruits and so on free of heavy and harmful pesticides leading to healthy living. A few of our communities use bio-gas as the kitchen fuel and solar panels for generating electricity and heating water.

Question for reflection: Our experience with those on the periphery can never leave us the same. What is my own story of transformation by the experience(s)?

Prepared by Sr. Poonam CJ, Patna Province – India Photo by [Alain Gehri](#) on [Unsplash](#)

MAY 23RD, DAY 3

ETHICAL PROCUREMENT AND CONSUMPTION

I live in an inner-city suburb of Australia's largest city, Melbourne. Filled with bars and restaurants that have replaced factories, it is home to university students mingling study with play, families enjoying parks, people living alone but sharing communal lives, homeowners and renters juggling the escalating cost of living, young and old people who despair of the state of the world, as well as young and old people filled with hope for the future. It is home to a diverse community that sees the financially 'comfortable' and 'struggling' all look forward to a special time of year – hard rubbish collection.

The annual hard rubbish collection sees people place, next to the street, household items they no longer want or need, such as couches, shelving, gates or ladders. For years, uni students looking to save money have seen this time of year as an opportunity to obtain furniture for their houses; resourceful members of communities have seen it as a chance to gain materials to build something new. These days, in my suburb, people of all walks of life see hard rubbish collection as an opportunity to swap wares, to update without contributing to unnecessary waste.

While I'm not sure that many in my suburb would describe their commitment to hard rubbish collection as supporting a Laudato Si' goal, a Christian response to this 'kairos moment' for our world (Bro. Alberto Parise MCCJ), the joy neighbours derive from a great hard rubbish find does contribute to relationships built with one another and our relationship with our common home.

Questions for reflection:

Does hard rubbish collection reflect ecological conversion? It reduces necessary consumption and leads to the repair of items that often just need a little bit of attention... so maybe a little. Maybe it's a start. What start could you make?

Prepared by Carolyn Young

Director of Mission & Identity, Loreto Ministries Australia & South East Asia

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MAY 24TH, DAY 4. CIRCULAR ECONOMY

At the heart of the circular economy is the issue of a production and consumption that supports care for mother earth. We live in a world where the economy is driven by over exploitation of resources that is destroying the environment and is not sustainable! The results are there for all to see with the impact it has on the earth, climate, people's wellbeing etc. The carbon emissions are suffocating life on the planet. The high demand for raw materials like coal drive the need for increased production; circular economy offers an opportunity to reverse this trend, and the state of the environment is ripe for bolstering circular economy. Some of the key pillars in circular economy include reducing waste (with the promotion of zero waste or reducing it to a minimum); repairing; reusing; recycling; refurbishing/remanufacturing.

The opposite of circular economy is linear economy which means we procure or buy, use and throw away! Pope Francis talks of this as 'throw away culture in *Laudato Si'*. *"These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish... 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..."* LS#22.

Since everything is interconnected, the decisions we make to promote either circular or linear economy has an impact on each one of us today and on the generations to come. We must choose wisely. It is at this point that we as Mary Ward Family, while we recognize that a lot is being done already, need to continue to ask ourselves tough questions at an individual level, as communities and in our missions.



Questions for reflection:

- What do I/we do with left-over food or with clothes and other items we no longer use or need?
- How do I/we deal with items that are damaged? Do I/we repair to prolong its life where possible?
- In what ways can I/we reduce consumption? How does it feel for me when I ask the tough question: do I need this item or can it wait?

I wonder what Mary Ward would do in the face of the crisis that faces our world... May her spirit inspire us to walk this path with courage and conviction.

Prepared by Pauline Macharia ibvm, Mary Ward JPIC Office Rome.

MAY 25TH, DAY 5.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE PROTECTION OF WORKERS' DIGNITY

I was born in a semi-rural sector (countryside - city) of Chile. The mountain chain can be seen with the bare eye and the river in the area is close by. I have memories of a river with plenty of water, a snowy mountain chain in winter and spring. It is not like that anymore. Worst of all, the new generations think it was always like that. What happened? Where did those waters and that snow that painted the winter go?

The dramatic changes that the earth, the climate and the quality of life have undergone are due to human greed. It makes perfect sense what Pope Francis said in *Laudato Si'*: "to think of the planet as a common home and of humanity as a people living in a common house".

If we analyse this approach, differences are blurred and the only thing that matters is community and communion with the earth.

Human rights are violated by the greed of the few, and who loses? The same old people.

To live in a clean environment and for all to have access to the blessings of the earth should be a human right affirmed in all official documents.

Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan poet, refers to this era as: "We are in the midst of a culture of contract. The marriage contract matters more than love, the funeral more than the dead, the clothes more than the body and the mass more than God".

Culture of the disposable, however, Pope Francis' Encyclical strikes me as a necessary, urgent and hopeful proposal. Beyond any religious vision, it is a proposal that humanises us, that invites us to live in harmony with natural cycles.

At some point we lost or were deprived of the link with our common home, and from being part of the landscape we became predators.

It is time for change, we must raise our voices and speak out. From education, from the classrooms, from the pulpits, a clear and systematic message must go out: "Many small people, in small places, doing small things, can change the world".

Question for reflection: How am I caring for our Common Home from the perspective of Human Rights?

**Prepared by Germán Norambuena,
JPIC – CHILE**

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MAY 26TH, DAY 6.

ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AND FAIR TRADE

Laudato Si' Goal 3 encourages us to support and invest in Fair Trade products as a step towards ecological economics.

For many years here in the United Kingdom, the Fairtrade Logo has been familiar especially on foodstuffs, notably tea and coffee but also chocolate and other related foodstuffs. Fairtrade has become a registered trade-mark for organisations, especially for companies which are trying to produce good quality products at prices which are accessible to everyone. My own early memories of this have been quite negative: Fair trade coffee and chocolate, for example, have been much more expensive than other brands and therefore largely inaccessible except to those who have money. It seemed to defeat the object of its original intention.

In his Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites each one of us to a new anthropology, worldview and spirituality based on Interconnection, encounter and solidarity... to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress. Fair Trade is an integral part of Ecological economics. What I have learned from the Encyclical and the Fairtrade platform is that there is a desire and there are practical initiatives to save our planet and reduce poverty, in which all of us can engage. Fairtrade products are produced in a just and humane setting from the beginning. Ignominious practices such as child labour and unfair wages have no part in a fair system in the work-place. But, above all, I think that fair trade (small letters) is becoming the basis for so much commercial activity in the UK that is very positive. Our schools promote fair trade. The Sixth Form College in Manchester is a Registered Fairtrade College. But it is not necessarily by selling expensive commodities. It is about recycling and upcycling... a new word to me which suggests re-using old clothes instead of throwing them out. There are so many positive and practical ways of avoiding waste and salvaging whatever can be salvaged. Young people are leading by example and Fairtrade companies are taking the lead but also learning from their ingenuity and creativity.

We all have a responsibility to care for our earth but for many of us even simple things become difficult because our world is full of ordinary human beings and, sometimes, we are out of our depth. Given the state of our nations and this period of time between Easter and Pentecost this is my answer:

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God, it will flame out, like shinning from shook foil: It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil. Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod; And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil; And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod and for all this, nature is never spent; There lives the dearest freshness deep down things; And though the last lights off the black West went. Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward springs. Because the Holy Ghost over the bent. World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings."

GM Hopkins Jesuit Priest and Poet.

Question for reflection: To what extent am I aware of the relationship between the products and services I procure? What can I do to promote fair trade – that there is no child labour, forced labour, gender inequality etc in supply chain?

Prepared by Kathryn Keigher ibvm England



MAY 27TH, DAY 7.

PARTICIPATE IN THE GIFT ECONOMY

In Laudato Si, Pope Francis clearly states that we are facing one complex crisis which includes the environmental and the social crisis. Protecting nature also requires that we look at our societies, our economic systems and especially focus on those who are excluded (see for example LS 139).

Our economic markets exclude those who don't have much money. At the same time there is an overproduction of goods. People buy more than they actually need and some things are thrown away without having been used at all. In every place I lived in the past years, I discovered alternative "markets" where the currency isn't money but generosity and solidarity. Goods are given freely without expecting anything in return. Everybody is able and welcome to participate. For example, I discovered "Free your stuff"-groups on social media where you can post a "give" or a "need". So, from time to time, I check what I am not using anymore and offer it there (clothes, books, household items...) and also before I buy something I check whether someone offers it. I also volunteer in an initiative called "food sharing" where we collect non-sold food in stores and share it with others.

Through participating in these alternative markets – which are part of a "gift economy" – I get to know many wonderful people. Often, not only goods are exchanged but also stories – of happiness and sorrow. Some things I am using are precious to me because they remind me of the giver. Sometimes, when I give something, I return gifted myself by the encounter with the receiver.



Question for reflection

Is there something you haven't used for a long time? Will you really use it again? Maybe someone would be very happy to receive it. Check out where you could look for this person. Happy encounter!

Prepared by Nathalie Korf CJ MEP

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COMMON PRAYER

for the 8th anniversary of

Laudato Si'

Loving God,

Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,
You created us in your own image and made us
stewards of all your creation.

You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land
so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we may attend to your gift of creation.

Help us to be conscious that our common home
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures and to
all future generations, and that it is our responsibility to
preserve it.

May we help each person secure the food and
resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,
especially the poorest and those most at risk of being
left behind.

Transform our fear and feelings of isolation into hope
and fraternity so that we may experience a true
conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the
consequences of this global pandemic,

Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are
needed in search of the common good,

Now more than ever may we feel that we are all
interconnected and interdependent,

Enable us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth
and the cry of the poor.

May the present sufferings be the birth pangs of a more
fraternal and sustainable world.

Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians, we
make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

Amen



LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2023

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