

Whakawhanaungatanga – Making Right Relationship

Prayer as “we set out on the long path of renewal” (Laudato Si, 202)



<http://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/vatican/homepage/image/laudato-si-it.jpg>

Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.

(*Laudato Si*,

202)

We are welcomed into this circle of prayer by the words with which Pope Francis begins chapter six, “Ecological Education and Spirituality,” the last chapter of *Laudato Si*. This reflection draws on Part IV, “Joy and Peace” which is one of the pointers he offers for this long path of renewal.

Play: Kathleen Deignan — Pax Amor Christi itunes

... no one can cultivate a sober and satisfying life without being at peace with him or herself.

(Pause) **Response:** Be Still and Know that I am God (said or sung)

Or refrain from Kathleen Deignan: Pax amor Christi (4x)

Or refrain from Kathleen Deignan: The peace of the love of

Christ

An adequate understanding of spirituality consists in filling out what we mean by peace, which is much more than the absence of war. (*Laudato Si*, 225) (Pause)

Response

Inner peace is closely related to care for ecology and for the common good because, lived out authentically, it is reflected in a balanced lifestyle together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. (*Laudato Si*, 225) (Pause)

Response

Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances? (*Laudato Si*, 225) (Pause) **Response**

Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment. (*Laudato Si*, 225) (Pause) **Response**

An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence “must not be contrived but found, uncovered.” (*Laudato Si*, 225) (Pause)

Response

Select from the following quotations and read your selection pausing between each.

Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. (Pause)

We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that “less is more”. (Pause)

A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. (Pause)

To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. (Pause)

Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. (Pause)

It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. (Pause)

This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures. (Pause) *(Laudato Si, 222)*

They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. So they are able to shed unsatisfied needs, reducing their obsessiveness and weariness. Even living on little, they can live a lot, above all when they cultivate other pleasures and find satisfaction in ... encounters, in service, in developing their gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer. *(Laudato Si, 223)* (Pause)

Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer. *(Laudato Si, 223)* (Pause)

... it is no longer enough to speak only of the integrity of ecosystems. We have to dare to speak of the integrity of human life, of the need to promote and unify all the great values. Once we lose our humility, and become enthralled with the possibility of limitless mastery over everything, we inevitably end up harming society and the environment. *(Laudato Si, 224)* (Pause)

We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. (Pause)

Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love” (Mk 10:21). (Pause)

[Jesus] was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers ... (*Laudato Si*, 226) (Pause)

One expression of this attitude is when we stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. I ask all believers to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom. That moment of blessing, however brief, reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it strengthens our feeling of gratitude for the gifts of creation; it acknowledges those who by their labours provide us with these goods; and it reaffirms our solidarity with those in greatest need. (*Laudato Si*, 227) (Pause)

Invite the group to contribute reflectively a word or a phrase which touched them.

Francis ends *Laudato Si* by offering two prayers, the first of which is a prayer for our earth.

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.