



**MERCY
GLOBAL
PRESENCE**

Facilitators Guide: Earth and Integral Ecology

Guiding Group

The role of the Facilitator will necessarily include organising the group's access at the session to the resources on screen or in print.

A suggested structure for each Session is:

1. Preparation of the Focus Space
2. Prayer
3. Introduction
4. Content Explored
5. Reflection and Discussion
6. Closing

As this is the second theme in this Segment, groups will have already met for one or more sessions and so will have been introduced to the Focus (Global) and [the microsite](#).

Whichever presentation you, the Facilitator, or group first choose to engage with, commence your work with the theme using [the introduction](#) by Elizabeth Davis rsm which reminds us of the rich resources of the first month, invites each participant to reflect on his/her personal, unique and intimate relationship with Earth, and introduces the expression 'Integral Ecology'.

The concept of Integral Ecology is central to Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Si'* for the renewal of our common home. Facilitators needing a deeper understanding of the concept than that given in the Introduction could consult the articles by Jessica Ludescher Imanaka and Thomas Reese in the [Good Reading](#) section.

In her Introduction, Elizabeth Davis rsm provides us with an exercise 'Walking on Holy Ground' to engage us in reflection on our relationship with Earth, offering the following questions as a means to do so:

Where did my feet walk when I was young? Where do my feet touch Earth in these days? Where did my feet walk when I studied or when I made retreat or pilgrimage? Where have my feet walked in my ministry? Where have my feet touched Earth in my own country and outside my own country? Which bodies of water mean something special to me? What smells of earth or water still touch my spirit?

Use this exercise in your first Session to enable participants to 'become more engaged in what that covenant between God and Earth means for each one of us and for all of us' (Elizabeth Davis rsm).

Facilitators may find it helpful for a deeper understanding of the concepts in the Artistic Response presentation to have read *Whakawhanaungatanga-Making Right Relationship* by Kathleen Rushton rsm in [Good Reading](#).

The Distinct Voice presentation introduces us to the wisdom of Indigenous Elder Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison. The Synod on the Amazon has emphasised the importance of listening to and recognition of indigenous voices, new for the church's expression and with application well beyond the Amazon. A summary of the Synod is included in the [Good Reading](#) list. You might also like to [consult this page](#) on the Synod on our Mercyworld.org website.

In addition, a story that made global headlines recently which many participants would be familiar with, is the closing to climbers on 28 October of Uluru (Ayers Rock), 'heart of country', sacred to Anangu, the local Indigenous people. The significance of this event — one explanation can be read [here](#) — could be an entry point into a Session on the Distinct Voice presentation.

Once again we offer three of many possible approaches to using resources from the theme Earth and Integral Ecology implementing the suggested structure (nos. 1-6). The approach used will depend on the needs, interests and abilities of the group members. Facilitators may, of course, use their own approach with the resources, or choose elements from these three suggested approaches to create a different approach. At the conclusion of the Session the Facilitator or another group member is encouraged to send on 'what is too good for the group to keep to themselves' to mgpfeedback@mercyinternational.ie

Example Approach One: Theological Presentation

Prepare the Focus space with symbols and elements that evoke the theme 'Earth and Integral Ecology'.

If possible, gather in a room where there is a view of a garden or other natural environment. Weather permitting, consider gathering outside for the prayer.

Begin the Session with the first part of the Reflective Prayer: 'Pray to prepare and open yourself' and, as invited in the Reflective Prayer, 'Spend time with creation'.

Screen the Introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm on a smart television or using a data projector and laptop and then engage in the exercise 'Walking on Holy Ground'. Use the Theological Presentation as the resource material for the Session. Ensure each participant has access to a copy of the article.

Invite the participants to read the article (or a member of the group reads the article aloud) and then to reflect silently on the four questions posed in paragraphs three and four. Ask participants to each share with another member of the group their response to any of the four questions.

Following the sharing, one person (or two alternating voices) could read aloud the seven listed actions 'We will have to [do]', pausing briefly between each statement. Invite participants to reflect on the list and to silently consider the following:

- What is one action from this list I could choose to do to live in greater harmony with God, myself, other people, all creation?

Invite responses in the large group.

Ask a member of the group to read aloud the second part of the article which focusses on Catherine and a Mercy-full response to the devastation of Earth.

Invite responses in the large group to the three 'What about' questions.

Conclude the Session with the Reading and 'Closing prayer for earth and those who are vulnerable'. Include in the words of the prayer 'the ragged image of our half-dead Sister Earth lying wounded and robbed on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho'

Example Approach Two: Artistic Response

The Facilitator organises a smart television, or a data projector and laptop for the meeting place in order to screen (on a blank wall or screen) the Artistic Response: 'Global Heartbeat'.

The Focus space would reflect the Segment (Global) and theme (Earth and Integral Ecology). Begin the Session with screens 10 and 11 of the Artistic Response: 'The Universe unfolds in God' and 'This is why we are here' as the prayer.

Pause for reflection.

Screen the Introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm and engage in the exercise 'Walking on Holy Ground'.

Now screen the entire presentation. Invite two readers to alternate reading 2 or 3 words or 1 or 2 phrases from the texts as they are screened. Consider playing the heartbeat soundtrack for ambience.

Having viewed the entire presentation, decide what content to focus on in the Session. The material in the Artistic Response is drawn from a rich variety of written and visual sources – Maori proverbs, quotes from Mercy documents and Pope Francis, images from nature and the built environment... among others.

The presenters encourage us to 'Be aware of what your heart yearns for as you reflect' and in their presentation pose the question:

- *What is your Mercy heart beating for?*

Invite participants to reflect on that question and to jot down a response. If appropriate, invite participants to share their response with another member of the group.

Conclude the Session with the Prayer in this presentation (Screen 18). Alternatively, conclude the Session with the Reading and 'Closing prayer for earth and those who are vulnerable' from the Reflective Prayer.

Example Approach Three: Distinct Voice

Prepare the Focus space with symbols and elements that evoke the theme 'Earth and Integral Ecology'.

If possible, gather in a room where there is a view of a garden or other natural environment. Begin the Session with the first part of the Reflective Prayer: 'Pray to prepare and open yourself' and, as invited in the Reflective Prayer, 'Spend time with creation'. Screen the Introduction by Elizabeth Davis rsm on a smart television or using a data projector and laptop and then engage in the exercise 'Walking on Holy Ground'.

Before screening the video of Aboriginal Elder Uncle Max, ask a member of the group to read aloud 'About the video' to provide the context of what they will see on screen. Note the links between the prayer, the exercise 'Walking on Holy Ground' and the preparations made by students and staff entering Bindarray.ga

Following the screening, invite discussion about developing respect and responsibility for the land on which we live and walk. Invite any non-Indigenous members of the group to share the significance of land in their culture.

In 'Words of Wisdom' there are a number of quotes from Aboriginal Elder Uncle Max. Invite participants to reflect on these in groups of two or three then share insights in the large group.

Conclude the Session with the Reading and Closing Prayer from the Reflective Prayer prepared by Anne Curtis rsm.