ST. JOSEPH
ADVENT RETREAT

LAUDATO SI’
“BIRTHING THE HOLY”
IN THE CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME AND OUR DOMESTIC CHURCH
SESSION 2 – “LUX AETERNA”

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“In the beginning…” (Laudato si, n. 66: Genesis 1-2)
God sees each “day” as good
Adam created first … “Adam” and adamah (“earth”)
God breathes into Adam the spirit of life

Human being created to be in relationship:
- God
- Earth and Animals
- Humans
- Thus, Pope Francis says that the earth is “the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (LS, n. 2)
“Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it” (Gen, 1: 28).

The call to “subdue” indicates the objective demands of the human person, 

*Laborem Exercens* (St. John Paul II, 1981)

Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth.

Thus work bears a particular mark of a person and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a *community of persons.*
“Address to Clergy of BOLZANO-BRESSANONE” (2008), Benedict XVI

“Subduing” the earth is

- being guardians of creation and developing its gifts
- actively collaborating in God’s work, in the evolution that he ordered
**GOODNESS IN THE BEGINNING**

*Laudato Si*, n. 125

- **correct understanding of work**
  - not only with manual or agricultural labor
  - but any activity involving a modification of existing reality
  - a correct understanding of the relationship with what is *other than ourselves*
The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa.

The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere.

...when “human ecology” is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.

The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development.
An Integral Ecology

LS, Chapter 4

“I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions.”

- understands human labor
- flows from environmental and social ecology
- understands relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop
- presumes everything is interconnected
- “environment” is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it.

Labor
Charles Sprague Pierce, 1896
Qualities for an Integral Ecology

- Goods of the earth come from God, whose will must be respected
- Humanity has “a certain affinity” with all creatures
- Humans are “guardians” and “active collaborators”
AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

I – Environmental, Economic and Social Ecology (n. 143)

II – Cultural Ecology (n. 143)
  ➤ peoples are active from within their proper culture
  ➤ harm done by disappearance of culture

III – Ecology of Daily Life (n. 147)
  ➤ environment and beauty
  ➤ environment and public spaces
  ➤ environment and solitude and leisure

IV – Principle of the Common Good
  ➤ certain human rights are both basic and inalienable
    (“the immense dignity of the poor,” n. 158)
  ➤ injustice becomes a call to global solidarity

V – Justice Between Generations (n. 159)
The Throwaway Culture

This is the so-called civilization of "consumption" or "consumerism," which involves so much "throwing-away" and "waste"

St. John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n. 28.

The brutal consumption of Creation ....

And the wasting of creation begins when we no longer recognize any need superior to our own, ...

Soil is NOT Dirt

It is a dynamic relationship between

- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Nematodes and protozoa
- Organic matter (living and decaying)

There are between 100 million and 1 billion living organisms in a teaspoon of healthy soil

These organisms transform “dirt” into “soil”

Plants secrete chemicals which organisms need

Organisms secrete chemicals which plants need
FARMING INPUTS TYPE 1: CHEMICAL ADDITIVES

- **FERTILIZERS** – plant growth requires only three inorganic compounds: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.
- **PESTICIDES** – destroy disease-causing organisms

Fertilizers and pesticides enter soil and destroy biodynamic relationships, leading to “bioaccumulation in the organisms of the local population, even when levels of toxins in those places are low, LS, n. 21.
MANIFESTATIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SIN
BIOPIRACY

Farming Inputs Type 2: Seed and plant modifications

- Case 1: BIOPROSPECTING AND BIOPIRACY of indigenous plants
  - Exploiting cultural knowledge of plants/properties for commercial use
  - Examples in India:
    - Tumeric (**Curcuma longa**, wound healing); Basmati rice;
    - **Neem** (**Azadirachta indica**, natural pesticide)
FARMERS BECOME DEPENDENT UPON BIOTECH FARMING INPUTS

- shift crops from diversified to monotype
- lose royalties as an indigenous community estimated that provider nations (Tibet, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Samoa, Madagascar, Ecuador, Mexico and the Philippines) would earn 5.4 billion USD per year in royalties
- are prevented from collecting seeds
- must incur significant financial debt through burdensome loans
- physical, emotional, and psychological impacts (controversy over suicide rates)
POWER for CHANGE

Local communities throughout the world respond with:
• Boycott of key companies, e.g. Monsanto, Dow
• Buy Local: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
• Education about food nutrition and industrialized food production
• Be a “seasonal eater”
• Care of soil – [CA Healthy Soils Week](#), Dec. 4-7, 2017
• Heirloom seeds and plants
Personal Appropriation of an Integral Theology

- CAN’T DO IT ALL!
- Moral and spiritual development – the life of virtue
  “virtue ethics” demands good habits, which implies regular/ongoing choices and behaviors
- Whom do I support? Why?
- What one aspect of the environmental issues draws my attention and affection?
- What are the concerns of and problems within my local community, i.e. Diocese, city/town, parish?
- What are local resources, e.g. colleges/universities?
- How do we engage one another in the dialogs needed?
E = mc²

Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs” (n.1)