



September 1, 2025

Dear Sisters and Associates of the Atlantic-Midwest Province,

We greet you warmly in this Season of Creation as we honor the 800th anniversary of the *Canticle of Creation* by Saint Francis and the tenth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*. We celebrate Jubilee Year 2025 with this invitation to make a Pilgrimage of Hope.

What is a Pilgrimage of Hope? Our beloved Pope Francis invited all peoples to make a Pilgrimage of Hope during this Jubilee Year, to encounter Christ in creation and restore our relationships with God, creation, and one another. Rooted in *Laudato Si'*, it underscores the moral responsibility of caring for the earth, a principle of Catholic Social Teaching.

This letter offers you creative ways for making your Pilgrimage of Hope in community or alone during the Season of Creation, September 1 – October 4, or by December 31, 2025, the end of the Jubilee Year.

The elements of the pilgrimage include:

- Cultivating a renewed commitment to care for creation
- Choosing opportunities for personal transformation and community building through prayer, reflection, and action, e.g., taking a short intentional walk or a longer trek to water or forest; volunteering with a social service organization; changing purchasing habits, etc.
- Connecting with places of ecological significance and impacted communities in your local area.

Spiritual Disposition for your pilgrimage: Our pilgrimage will help us grow and transform individually and communally. During this time of pilgrimage, we pray together for our transformation.

- With mind and heart, be completely open to God's love in all creation.
- Be attentive to God's presence in the myriad voices of creation. Notice the sights and sounds, the smells and feelings.
- Be open to other pilgrims - in conversation and sharing, in group prayer and song, and in silence.

- After the pilgrimage, reflect on your experience, how you are coming to know God more intimately.

What are some sample pilgrimages and schedules? Your pilgrimage will be unique to you and to your community. We encourage your creativity and offer ideas with a few samples.

A half hour: A Rosary walk in the garden, or seated in nature, or in front of creation images on TV, praying the joyful, luminous, or glorious mysteries of creation's colors, fragrances, beauties. Think of how we can care for creation, for example, ways to monitor our use of water, electricity, etc. Or a Rosary walk near a site of ecological destruction or in front of images of destruction on the TV, praying the sorrowful mysteries of Earth's cries.

A Litter Pilgrimage in which contemplation and prayer are integrated into a walk around the community to remove trash.

A Eucharistic Liturgy, including décor and intercessions that reflect our desire for increased commitment to care of creation.

As opportunities are being developed in local areas, we hope you'll include other SSND pilgrims as appropriate. Attached to this email are sample prayers that you might pray during your pilgrimage. Adapt them to the needs of your gathering.

We hope that you enjoy your pilgrimage in creation; we pray with Pope Francis that we receive jubilee blessings of "Ecological conversion, whereby the effects of your encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in your relationship with the world around you." (*Laudato Si*, 217).

Pope Leo XIV is clear that love and care of all creation are how we *know the Risen Christ*; these ground our hope, prayer and ministry:

The Encyclical *Laudato Si'* has now guided the Catholic Church and many people of good will for ten years. May it continue to inspire us and may integral ecology be increasingly accepted as the right path to follow. In this way, seeds of hope will multiply, to be 'tilled and kept' by the grace of our great and unfailing Hope, who is the Risen Christ.

Peace,

The Pilgrimage Committee

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