

Becoming a Laudato Si Congregation
The Call to Ecological Conversion
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In May, 2021, the SSND Congregation publicly stated its resolve to become a [Laudato Si Congregation](#). This decision marked the beginning of a seven seven-year journey in which SSND, inspired by the encyclical [Laudato Si'](#), has committed to participate in the healing of Earth, and to living in right-relationship with all in our planet's community of life. While the [seven goals](#) at the heart of this global Catholic Church initiative provide critical guidance for engaging this mission, it is essential that we remember that at the heart of initiative is a call to each of us. The call is to undergo the process of *ecological conversion*. While adopting eco-friendly policies and practices will always be essential, without the deeper work of ecological conversion these efforts will be limited and short-lived. Unless our species undergoes a change of mind and heart with respect to our place and responsibilities within the community of life, we along with other lifeforms will perish.

Please take a moment to view this brief video on [Ecological conversion](#).

For your reflection and conversation:

- What do the words *ecological conversion* mean to you?
- What practices or resources have you found helpful as you grow in awareness of Earth as a living system with dignity and fragility?
- What of God, does Earth reveal to you?

Ecological conversion is best nurtured through personal encounter with the beauty and sacredness of nature. Forgoing the view of creation as an *object* and allowing ourselves to embrace creation as a *living being* invites us into relationship. As we know, it is in, and through personal encounter and relationship, that we change our perceptions, our behaviors and are enabled to embrace the invitation to love and care.

Through the revelatory text that is the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis, helps us to understand that humankind is not separate from, but a part, a member of Earth's community of life. What happens to Earth, the planet's systems and myriad species happens to us. We live in an interdependent relationship with creation. Along with other members of Earth's living community, humans, particularly those who are made poor by social and economic forces, are particularly vulnerable to the consequences unleashed by earth's disequilibrium. We are now seeing these consequences more often in the planet's warming, massive fires, droughts, and increasingly destructive climate events. Francis underscores in *Laudato Si'* that *The Cry of the Earth is also heard in the Cry of Persons who are Poor*. He asserts that the cause of these common suffering is interrelated, and in order for us to transform this complex crisis we need to address the common sources of this suffering.

Please take a moment and view this brief video on the [Integral Ecology Vision of Laudato Si'](#)

- What do the words integral ecology mean to you?
- How can you adopt or refine an integral ecology vision?

The seven-year journey of becoming a *Laudato Si'* congregation has begun. As you reflect on what you have read in this brief essay, what has enhanced your understanding of this commitment? What is inviting your attention and commitment?