

On Care for Our Common Home is the subtitle of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The choice of the word home is simple yet profound. It is a lovely and familiar word that resonates deeply with our human experience. The word home is often extended to include one's country: motherland, fatherland, homeland etc. In his encyclical the pope has extended its meaning further to embrace the whole planet. He is not introducing a new concept but rather reminding us of a reality too often ignored. Every child, woman and man shares this planet. It is our common home. This simple yet profound reality transcends national borders, religious belief, language and customs.

We know that a home is not only a place of shelter but a place where relationships are meant to grow and flourish. Unfortunately, we know from the sad reality of domestic violence that the peace of the household can be shattered and the safety and dignity of its members violated. The same is true when we trash the planet: where rich nations plunder the poor of their natural resources; when countless species are eradicated.

There is an assumption that members of the household assume responsibilities so that each member contributes to the order, beauty and comfort of the shared abode. In this encyclical the Holy Father is reminding all of us of our common responsibility to protect our common home and to ensure that it will be a place where future generations may enjoy the blessings of God's creation.

As Archbishop Christopher Prowse has suggested, "Let us begin now a period of reception of this important teaching through quietly reading the text and then engage with discussion that leads to appropriate action." We will be organizing discussion groups in our parish beginning in August. More information will be forthcoming.

***Peace & blessings,
Gerard***