

Laudato Si'

Taking Root in Loreto EAP

June 2022



Communal & Individual
sharing of the Laudato Si'
lived experiences

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the JPIC desk.

In this report, some JPIC representatives have shared their personal life encounters and lived experiences to mark the Laudato Si Week that started on the 22nd May 2022. In addition, to mark the Bicentenary of IBVM, some communities have come up with various practical experiences on Laudato Si, and have also suggested some projects they are about to embark on.

Let us come together to “care for our common home.”

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43: 19)

Maria Macha

JPIC Coordinator - Loreto Eastern Africa Province.

We encounter God through our interaction with nature. Reflecting on Laudato Si Week, I was drawn back to my childhood. As a young girl growing up in the village it helped me get in touch with nature and so appreciate its beauty. I loved gardening and planting flowers. This habit perpetuated as I continued growing up. I enjoyed watching things flourish, and so whenever I picked any kind of seed, I would put it in the soil to wait for what comes out of it. Now as I consciously live out the message of Pope Francis inviting us to “Take care of our common home,” I am becoming more and more aware of the existence of creation and learned to appreciate the peace and tranquility I find in nature. My interaction with the natural environment brings me to the mindfulness of the presence of God and it also helps me to be attentive to God’s invitations.

In one of my recent experiences, while I was taking an evening walk around the neighbour’s field, I came across a tree with a big scar. Something made me stop and have a look at the trunk of that tree. As I glanced at it, a small voice whispered into my ears saying, “Pray for the babies being aborted.” I took this whisper as God’s voice in communication through creation. Since then I have made a deliberate effort to be praying for pregnant women and especially those who are meditating on getting rid of their pregnancies. I envisage that all of us are being invited to be attentive to the voice of God, in His continued communication through creation.

The Laudato Si week encouraged me to do something tangible. Hence, I deliberately planted twelve seedlings of papaws to mark its beginning. I hope that after a couple of years the community will enjoy their fruits. This is possible with the trust that when we pay attention to the natural environment, it will in turn take care of our needs.

(*Maria Macha*)



Laudato Si, when it was launched in 2015, was a challenge for me to further increase my personal care for creation.

I was brought up to love and appreciate the earth where I live, and care for it. My father loved gardening and he produced a variety of vegetables and fruits in our garden for our food which I appreciated greatly.

I was trained to keep the environment around our home clean, put waste in the appropriate place.

When I began ministry in our schools, I gave special care to caring for the environment. The girls in Loreto Limuru remember to this day that I would not allow them to walk across the different lawns! and how I kept reminding them how to deal with waste. I do the same in Nyumbani. In addition, we grow different vegetables for food.

My love and care for creation continues to be further inspired by Pope Francis’ continuing beautiful appeal to care for the earth, the latest Invitation, and to challenge ourselves not only to do this ourselves, but to advocate that, as a world, we take responsibility to challenge those who deny there is a problem or are indifferent, and to become involved in dialogue and action to create a new and universal solidarity.

(*Mary Owens*)



Novices attending a workshop on Active Nonviolence and Peace building

My lived experience of the Laudato Si Living the Laudato Si has made me to relate and interact with the environment and all that surrounds it. By this, I have engaged in different activities such as training and creating awareness especially to our girls in the school. This is through the Environment and charity events that we hold in our school. We have also empowered the Environmental/JPIC Club in the school.

I have also engaged with Paxi Cristi in training of the Active Nonviolence and Peace building by reaching out to the Youth in different parishes, to our Candidates and Novices.

This experience has sparked me to have an open mind and heart to reach out in my daily activities to live the Laudato Si goals/activities in my day to day life.

(Maureen Ann Wanyora)

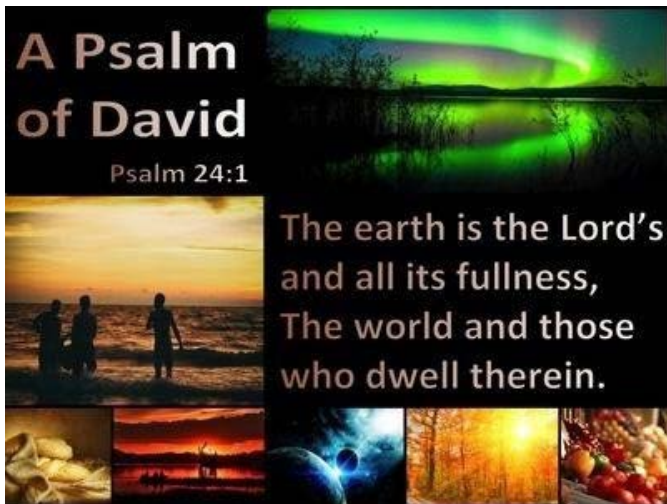
My first encounter with the Laudato Si movement was through an invitation to a circle meeting, I am talking about St. Jude circle to learn more about the Laudato Si movement and what they do. This particular day, they were discussing on the November encounter in preparation for Christmas. I was moved by the discussions that took place and one member of the circle gave me the Laudato Si book to go and read. This is how I developed my passion for care for our common home and I joined the movement's activities immediately.

I enrolled for the animator's course in the year 2021 in order to gain knowledge and experience After I had finished my capstone project, which was creation of a Laudato Si garden, I graduated and got my certificate. After my graduation as a Laudato Si animator, I felt I was fully empowered and so I started my own Circle. It is called St. Francis Circle, I am the circle Leader, assisted by Sr. Angeline Wanzagi IBVM. I named it so because I got the passion of the Movement after the celebration of the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. In April 2022, I enrolled for animators of Animators course, I finished successfully and now I am carrying out activities in caring for our common home. I sensitize people to live responsibly, I plant trees in order to reduce carbon footprint and currently I am doing a campaign to sensitize people on the 'Throw away' culture and advising them to consider the three R's; Reduce, Re-use, and Re-cycle.

Rainer Boniface IBVM



A lived Experience of Laudato Si' Week 2022



*“Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue.”
(Pope Francis Laudato Si 217)*

This year, the world came together once more to mark the seventh anniversary of Pope Francis’ Encyclical Laudato Si’ on Care for Our Common Home. The theme for this year is “Listening and Journeying Together”.

Laudato Si’ inspires me in my vocation and mission as a follower of Jesus Christ. It invites me to cultivate a culture of care for others and all living things. It is through this practice that I am able to appreciate the gifts of others and accept their limitations and together we celebrate our relationship as God’s creation.

This year, I feel privileged to have marked the celebration in a special way. I enrolled for a one month Laudato Si’ animators training that began in April 2022. We had reflections on climate change crisis and the journey towards ecological conversion.

I was moved by the insights on ecological conversion that invites me to discover God’s calling in me, encounter him in the world from the point of my vocation. What inspired me is the emphasis on the fact that we are all interconnected and we all need each other in order to make the world habitable. It was also exciting to participate in discussions with animators from different parts of the world.

As a conclusion towards this training, each animator had a chance to do a capstone project.

I participated in organizing for a talk on Care for our common home at St. Teresa’s Girl’s Secondary School reaching to about 500 students. We shared on the 7 goals of Laudato Si (LS). The session was an eye opener to the girls and many expressed their interest in LS circles and promised to be animators after school.

I also organized home visit to 2 vulnerable women in Huruma. It was an enriching visit, listening to their narration of the struggles they continue to experience due to their health condition and being a source of hope and encouragement to them. We shared some foodstuff with them courtesy of a well-wisher. I also encountered a lady who collects bottles and sells for recycling. I was struck by the efforts she makes to provide for her family. I requested for bottles from my community which have been in the store and not recycled. We packaged them and are planning to help her take them to the collection point for recycling.

It was indeed an enriching week and it has given me the opportunity to pose and reflect on what is happening to our common home and my role in it. Sometimes the challenges seem overwhelming but there is still hope and as human beings, we have the capacity to work together and make our common home more habitable for ourselves and the future generation.

(By Pauline W Waithaka)



A visit to a vulnerable woman



Laudato Si to me is the beauty of God's creation and His creativity which brings joy every moment I take a walk, appreciating the manifestation of God in His Creation i.e. creatures, plants just to mention but a few.

The arrangement of the clouds in the sky gives me joy as I appreciate God's creativity



Ministering and sharing the Love of Christ with the youth



We thank God for the inspiration of Laudato Si document written by our Holy Father Pope Francis; the challenges and insights of how to make our home; community a better place on The Seventh Anniversary of the Encyclical.

As a community and as individuals we participated in the week through the Laudato Si prayer and reflections, taking a walk appreciating nature, preparing a Laudato Si corner, promoting the week via social media and by being there for each other as forms of thanksgiving to God.

Together with our staff under the guidance of our sisters; Ephigenia and Lucy, planting of different things in the farm took place, harvesting the fruits and caring for animals through feeding and availing veterinary services. In a meeting held with the staff we urged them to adhere to simple

lifestyles and to always nurture all God-given gifts such as money, talents, time and ourselves.

We continue to journey together in many other ways in our responsibilities and giving ourselves to each other at our Isinya community, in our outreaches and in our apostolates. We continue to enlighten members about the Laudato Si week and its seven goals with the current economic crises resulting from the war in Ukraine and also covid-19 pandemic. In our own different ways, we minister to those who come to our lives each day by enriching them in all aspects of their lives especially faith matters as well as social, psychological and economic aspects.

Blessings from Isinya Community, (Ephigenia, Lucy, Justa & Julia)





Loreto Matunda students taking care of the environment

In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. Some forms of pollution can be part of my experience. The Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a lot of harm to people and they get sick, for example, from breathing high levels of smoke from fuels used in cooking or heating. There is also pollution that affects everyone, caused by transport, industrial fumes, substances which contribute to the acidification of soil and water, fertilizers. Therefore through this message we were encouraged to give our care for our common home. This also has challenged us to plant trees around our school com-

pound. Recently we planted over 3000 trees in our school compound we thank God it was very successful.

To protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable development and healthy environment. This is everyone's responsibility to care for our common home. I believe things will change. We have the ability to work together in building our common home.

I would like to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. *(Matunda Community)*

Laudato Si - Nyakato Community

I have experienced the care of the environment as something we have been doing as Loreto Sisters despite the name Laudato Si. This is a call to all to take responsibility for our environment and humanity. As a community, we use biogas as a substitute to reduce the cost of cooking gas.



BIOGAS is affordable, clean and environmental friendly





As a school and the convent we use solar energy for lighting and we are planning to start using biogas in the entire school.

Based on one of the seven goals of Laudato Si: “Community involvement and participatory action;” Loreto Community Nyakato - Mwanza participated in the donation of blood on the 4th of June, 2022, when the Lake Zone Blood Bank visited the school seeking for blood to save life.



We also launched the project of clean water for the whole school to mark the lunch of the Bicentenary book. For further implementation and as a way forward, the school has come up with the idea of starting a competition in the school that will be done each year on World Environment Day. This practice will in turn help to save our Mother Earth which is already in ruins. A new call to all of us is that we re-think our environment and act in a positive way to save it and to be able to sustain ourselves and others.

To mark the Bicentenary of IBVM we decided to re-launch Environment Club and merge it with Justice and Peace which also deals with the integrity of creation. We also chose to take three of the seven goals of Laudato Si; care for the environment, care for the poor, and the youth. We have now made them more active, and on the 5th of June, we cleaned the environment. This will be an ongoing activity. Likewise, we planted trees on that same day and this was performed by different classes. On the Friday of Laudato Si week, we held a reflection on the environment and one student shared a short insight on the environment and how to take care of it.



Additionally, the school management has invited the Environment Club to come up with three ways that will help in the care for our environment, at an individual level and as a school.

Finally, the diocese of Mwanza is celebrating the anniversary of Laudato Si and we are happy to be part of the same and ready to participate fully in the event.



Mother Earth, the only place I call home.



This statement made more sense when I enrolled in the Laudato Si courses during the corona pandemic to learn more about Pope Francis' Encyclical. Since then, my mind has been more cautious of what I do or see around me and my response to things. I shared some of my insights with my community, friends, and pupils in school. Although the damage is quite calling, seeing how people respond to Laudato Si makes me feel safe again in my home. This is not because everyone everywhere is already doing something great about it, but because our minds have accepted that there is an urgent call and need from mother earth.

I believe the little I have shared with people around especially my community, has created awareness and we already try to do what we can in our own small ways to make a little impact on our planet. It includes reduction of what we don't necessarily need in our lives, reuse of things that can be useful after their original usage, using the resources around us more efficiently, and moderating and preserving them.

Some of the activities which we have undertaken are: Minimizing the use of serviettes so as to reduce the cost incurred; collecting both rabbit and kitchen waste for shamba manure; taking care of the garden for spices and food at home; and planting herbal trees for medicine since we are part of creation.

Apart from that, we have had prayers and reflections on creation as well as planned and unplanned discussions on the creation and why it is necessary we do something about it immediately. We have collected signatures for Pope Francis' for the UN to give attention to the matter. Climate change and other problems we experience are just symptoms of social and economic injustices we human beings do to creation. Laudato Si reminds me that every single creation is as valuable as the other and not forgotten in the sight of God. Planet earth needs attention, affection, and respect with Laudato Si it is possible to overcome grave issues confronting us.

(Kangemi Community)





The two pictures (1 & 2) speak to me about the beauty of co-existence and love; the rams under the shade of a flower and another flower blooming under an acacia tree. This is the Mary Ward spirituality of finding God in all things. I have been challenged and encouraged on this generous love having experienced it freely from God through my sisters and all people in my life not only in this week but in my daily living for His Greater Glory.

Julia Munene

We the members of Loreto Mombasa community are glad to be part of the Laudato Si week and we participate in different activities:

1. Care for animals.

We have a small project of rearing chicken. The community members ensure that the birds are well fed and vaccinated especially over the weekend. The community finds this apostolate enjoyable. We have a cat with two kittens that we take care of, especially by feeding them since they are part of God's creatures.

2. Care for plants.

Earlier on as a school we planted 100 trees to mark the centenary celebration and during the Laudato Si week we have been watering them and it is a joy to see them growing healthy.

We have our kitchen garden that has continually supplied us with vegetables, fruits such as oranges and papaws.



3. Awareness on the importance of recycling,

We give talks to the support staff and create awareness on the importance of recycling what we have and using locally available materials. We advise them to reduce the use of plastic bags and bottles.

We have agreed that we would be cleaning around our school walls for most people have made it a dumping site. We have also talked to the person responsible for the cleanliness of that area to be vigilant and hard on the people dumping their wastes around the place. We encourage the staff to plant more trees at their homes and they have taken it positively. We have also agreed on spreading the same gospel to everyone.

Loreto Mombasa Community



Living Laudato Si in the Novitiate community

The Canticle of Daniel 3:57 - 88 Echoes the essence of all creation. Let all creatures praise the Lord. In the week of Laudato-Si, as a community, we journeyed with the materials given, whereby we took each day's reflection and related to with our personal experiences. This was so enriching hearing from different people and getting an idea of how people related with God's creation in the context of their personal lives. We went further to interact with mother earth by cleaning up the trench that was clogged with trash

we also endeavoured to beautify the environment. We realised it is a gift to have great sense of care for the mother earth, and letting its beauty talk to us and energize us.

We did flower planting and reminded ourselves that it is important to preserve the resources around us since we totally depend on each other. Thus we watered our freshly planted cuttings we mulched our garden to conserve and retain more water in the soil and avoid soil erosion.

One thing that made me realise

how sensitive we have become in treating every creation as God given gift is when we got a very tiny fish while fetching water and every one was so quick to save it by putting it back into the river.

Our week was not only limited to tending the plants. We also reached out to the old and sickly and shared the gospel with them. We also did creative work where we shared our giftedness as part of creation by making paper flowers from the used up papers. This reminded us that we are co-creators of God.

In all these we see God reflected in all that exist and our hearts were filled with praise for all his Creatures. We worship Him in union with all creation knowing perfectly well that we have to care for our common home, that is the source of all that is good.

From Sr. Peris Ibvm.

Novitiate community





Some of the Laudato Si activities in the novitiate community

LORETO KIAMBU COMMUNITY LIVING “LAUDATO SI” JANUARY - MAY 2022

Since January as we began our Candidacy Program, we have realized that every aspect of our Formation Program is for teaching us a certain value which is necessary in our lives as well as caring and protecting God’s creation. There are those that we did out of obedience or because our formator valued it; not knowing that by actively participating in doing it, we are acquiring an aspect that is very important and actually impacting positively on our lives, neighbors and things around us.

This has been in line with some sayings of Mary Ward i.e. “Do good and do it well” and “Under-take each work of charity which seems proper to further the glory of God and the common good”

**PORTABLE PLANTS,
FARMING,
THE MARGINALISED &
DOMESTIC ANIMALS**

PLANTS

Each one of us was asked to take a container and make holes at its base.

This was then followed by putting soil mixed with synthetic manure. Each then identified the plant of interest among those we found in our compound whereby some were from ‘Cutting’ while others were by ‘Thinning’. We were then made to nurture it on our own without a reminder or supervision.

After some months we were asked to assemble our containers for inspection where we then had the following lessons drawn:

- Importance of mulching
- Watering – moderately through sprinkling or underneath
- Uprooting weeds as soon as they come up
- Constant checking to avoid other creatures feeding on the plant, speaking to it and also heaping the soil.

Failure to do the above, we learnt that:

- Some plants died
- Others were choked and instead gave room to other plants whose seeds were hidden in the soil and so thrived
- Overcrowding hence the beauty lost
- Watering from the top hence all the nutrients washed away and also over watering

FARMING

Each person was again given a portion of land and chose on what food crop to plant. Again each employed her farming skills

seriously.

Learning:

Ability to ask from those with knowledge pertaining the type of crop one has planted

Importance of weeding at the right time

Irrigation when there is no rain

Mulching

Spraying at the right time and

Thinning

By being faithful to our portions we realized that the community had fed from our effort hence eating organic and having some savings. Some of us have learnt how to grow some types of crops which are not grown where we come from hence eating it for the first time and appreciating varied types of food from other cultures. We have also learnt to irrigate crops though this is done prudently.

CHICKEN

We ventured into rearing chicken and we began with one hen which was given to the community as a gift. Since then we have two hens and two cocks. One hen has already started feeding us with eggs which is really encouraging. We have learnt to care for them by feeding, cleaning the poultry house and also seeing that they keep to their surrounding since we are within the school premises.

ANIMALS

We found one cat in the community and through the care we give, it has produced four lovely kittens. Due to feeding it two dogs have found a home in our compound and we have opted to feed them as well. As a result we are assured of security throughout because these dogs have identified with us to an extent of them escorting us to church each morning and walking back to the compound.



Lessons:

We have learnt to take care of the creatures around us not only by feeding but by being friendly to them. We also found that by talking to them, they benefit us and enable us learn some virtues from them which enhance our community living.

THE MARGINALISED

During Lenten Season, we managed to reduce some items from our usual menu hence saving some amount of money amounting to Kshs 8,000/-.

We were able to identify seven homes out of those we visit for apostolate every Thursday.

Items bought:

Box of bar soap, 12 kg of sugar, 6kg of tea leaves, 12 pkt of match box, 6 kg of salt and a bundle of maize flour.

Lesson learnt:

Practicing the virtue of generosity by living according to the gospel

Deep reflection on the aspect of 'others'

Following the footsteps of Christ, Pope Francis and Mary Ward

CONCLUSION

It is our endeavor to take care of all things around us appreciating God's creation.

We have realized that there is more blessing in giving than receiving and the gesture puts a smile on others' face. We also lived the GC 2014 Calls. Finally we are proud to be living in line with Pope Francis' invitation to being protectors of Mother Earth.

