Reflection

*This sister (Mother Earth, our common home) now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). Laudato Si 2*

I am heartbroken for the ways we have abused Mother Earth and selfishly taken advantage of her resources. I am heartbroken when I watch the evening news filled with reports of floods, droughts, pollution, and forest fires causing great suffering, especially to the poorest and most vulnerable peoples. I am heartbroken when I read of the thousands of species becoming extinct each year. I am heartbroken when I hear young people express deep anxiety about their future in the face of the climate emergency.

*Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that “less is more.” Laudato Si 222*

As I look back on my 67 years here on earth, I reflect on the moments I have felt God’s presence most strongly and have had a deep sense of joy and peace. They are moments when I am in awe and wonder at creation, enjoying the beauty of the mountains, sea, trees, birds, and flowers. They are moments when I am in my vegetable garden growing the same things that my grandmothers grew. They are moments when I have had the blessing to see the face of Christ in the poor, homeless, and dying. They are moments of quiet prayer and stillness. Pope Francis tells us that there is an inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. Truly, I see that it is in living simply and following a prophetic and contemplative path that leads to a deep sense of connection to God, myself, and others.

*The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us. Laudato Si 13*

I hear the urgency of Pope Francis’ appeal to change my life and to take action to care for the earth and to care for the poor. I am deeply grateful for Laudato Si and the opportunity to participate in the platform goals which challenge me and offer me guidance. I am grateful for the support of the Laudato Si community. I am called to deepen my faith in Christ who intimately knows the depths of suffering and offers the grace of transformation. We will not be abandoned!