**Laudato Si’ Reflection**

I am completing this reflection as an individual. One major area of growth for me would be becoming comfortable discussing Laudato Si’ and ecological issues with members of my family (brothers, sister, parents) and friends in my local Church.

At this moment, however, I will reflect on my values as an individual member of the Marchetti family, St. Mary’s Catholic Student Center (College Station), the Dioceses of Austin and Tyler, the Water-Energy-Food Nexus Research Group, and the Department of Biological & Agricultural Engineering at Texas A&M University.

**My values:**

I value family, community, solidarity, caring for the poor and forgotten, prayer, the Sacraments (especially of Holy Communion), obedience to the Pope and bishops, my parents, and other authorities, nature, science and technology, recreation, honest work, music and art (beauty), TAMU values – respect, excellence, leadership, loyalty, integrity, selfless-service, adventure and discovery, physical and mental challenges, fidelity in routine or monotonous tasks, craftsmanship, fixing broken things, problem solving, well-prepared food, order and good hygiene, simplicity, inclusion, diversity (in Creation and human communities), learning new things, patience, kindness, perseverance, peace, joy, charity, hope, faith, prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude, merciful love, forgiveness and reconciliation, the Communion of Saints, Our Blessed Mother, Mary Ever-Virgin, feasts and celebration, anniversaries and commemorations, respect of the elderly, tender care for children and little ones, giving praise and thanks to God, and above all union with God.

***How do these, my values, connect with the Laudato Si’ Goals?***

**Response to the Cry of the Earth:**

I see the earth as God’s Creation which He calls “good” (Genesis 1) and which was created in, for and through Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15-20). Incorporated into the Body of Christ through Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion, I feel responsible as one of God’s beloved sons to take care of the Father’s Creation and not destroy it. I lament the damage that humankind has done to nature, intentionally or inadvertently, which may take decades, centuries, millennia, or even longer to heal. This is beauty lost that may never be completely restored until we enter eternal life. Yet, I cherish my ability to do what I can to participate in this restoration even if I do not personally reap the benefits and later generations do.

**Response to the Cry of the Poor:**

I also am very sorry for the sufferings of others whether caused by ecological crises or not, intentionally or inadvertently. As I myself have suffered, I am somewhat sensitive and compassionate towards others in their sufferings, and I would like to do my best to help alleviate the sufferings of others. I see true devotion to Jesus in the Eucharist as true devotion to the poor and vice versa. Many times, I do not have to go much further than my family members and co-workers to give attention to someone who is poor. Even though I have studied these matters, I feel ignorant about the unseen, though real, effects of my daily actions to ecological crises and, therefore, human misery.

**Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles:**

“Sustainable” can be a difficult concept because how do I know if my lifestyle, my standard of living, could be continued in perpetuity? Perhaps, it never will since this world is passing away, and my hope is set on eternal life. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the entropy (disorder) of the universe is always increasing (unless, perhaps there is an outside force pushing the universe to greater order). From a more down-to-earth perspective, I do believe in doing my part so that earth’s resources are not depleted or degraded so much that future generations will not be able to survive.

**Ecological Economics:**

I see all goods of the earth as ultimately coming from God, as a pure gift. Any exchange of goods and services between human beings occurs within the broader economy of God’s Creation. For example, the carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorous cycles; the water cycle; the daily rotation of the earth to receive sunlight; the yearly changing of the seasons; the geological processes which created fossil fuels and geothermal energy – all are gifts of the Creator to humankind to both utilize and to steward (Genesis 1:28-29, Genesis 2:15). Certainly, I should be aware of the volume and type of goods that I utilize their origin and impact on the earth to make sure that I am neither destroying the earth nor causing harm to others.

**Ecological Education:**

I love nature and exploring the natural environment – God’s Creation. From childhood, I greatly enjoyed family camping trips and spending time in parks and even in our family garden. I relished books about animals and plants (the pictures more than the dry facts though I would often read the text, too). When my family moved from the town to the country, I loved (and still do) exploring our 32-acre plot of land with all of its trees, fields, creeks and pond. St. Thomas Aquinas once related that we tend to learn about what we love and grow in love for what we learn about (speaking about the human heart and mind tending towards God). Even now, I enjoy experiencing God through nature walks, backpacking trips, bird watching, and just sitting outside. My education as a biological & agricultural engineering student continues to give me more knowledge about how humankind uses the goods of the earth and some of the environmental considerations that we need to have when using these goods.

**Ecological Spirituality:**

“The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness; the world and all its peoples. It is He who set it on the seas. On the waters, He made it firm” (Psalm 24:1-2). So much as prayer and a loving relationship with God and neighbor is integral to my life, I will seek to know and love Him with in His Creation. I truly value how God speaks to us through all of His works, and wish to continue to grow in knowledge and love of Him. May my prayers reflect a gratitude and praise of Him for the blessings He constantly pours out on all of His children, and may I be united with God in God’s desire to bless all peoples.

**Community Resilience and Empowerment:**

Community resilience and empowerment comes when each person in the community knows that one is loved and respected, that one belongs, and that one is able to contribute through one’s personal gifts and talents. Then, no problem or disaster will be too great to overcome because each person in the community will be there for each other, united in the effort for the common good, preferential option for the poor, and the universal destination of goods. I also value empowering others and building communion with those around me.