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To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to share the fruits of our school's participation in the Laudato Si' Action Platform.

Verbum Dei Jesuit High School provides a career focused, college preparatory Catholic education to underserved students in South Los Angeles. The principal way our school advances the goals of *Laudato si'* is through our integral ecology initiative. This initiative works to preserve and protect God's Earth while strengthening community ties.

In the past year, we have sponsored several events. We partnered with CicLAvia —“a non-profit that catalyzes vibrant public spaces, active transportation, and good health through car-free streets”— by adopting intersections in South Los Angeles. Our students keep intersections safe for CicLAvia participants and provide activities that create an enjoyable, supportive environment for all involved. We have also completed local cleanups and participated in a service immersion to the Diné (Navaho) Nation with our Campus Ministry office. In September we attended the “If Not Now” environmental summit at St Monica's Catholic Church in Santa Monica, CA with students from several other local Catholic schools. I gave two presentations on integral ecology at the summit, and our students engaged in environmental workshops and wrote letters to Archbishop José Gomez encouraging further actions on *Laudato si'*. In the classroom, students have studied environmental topics such as wildfires, rising global temperatures, economic externalities, and air pollution in my statistics, calculus, and precalculus courses.

What makes the integral ecology initiative unique from traditional service programs is the focus on the anthropological dimension of environmental degradation. We envision a world where young people find joy and community while engaging in healthy, sustainable lifestyles. We believe that, to enact change, students must first be moved by a desire to do so. That is why we look for opportunities where students are empowered to make positive environmental contributions while encountering God's grandeur in the natural world. By making a positive impact while serving alongside their peers, our students have come to know the joy and satisfaction that flows from simple, sustainable lifestyles rooted in love of God, neighbor, and care for our Common Home.

God bless,

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