

Looking Back, Moving Forward: Our Shared Journey and Future Goals for Integral Ecology

St. Brigid Catholic Church
Laudato Si' Action Platform

The journey toward integral ecology took root at St. Brigid in October 2023. Sister Dorothy Ann Mary Moczygemba was balancing a tower of recycling that she had just removed from the parish trash bins. A simple comment led to a conversation that sparked a movement—one that continues to grow through curiosity, collaboration, and care for our common home.

The Laudato Si' Goals are beautifully interconnected, but one that often speaks most deeply is the Cry of the Earth. This goal calls us to respond to the urgent ecological crisis—climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution—by protecting creation as a sacred gift.

The Cry of the Poor also resonates strongly, since ecological degradation disproportionately harms vulnerable communities.

These goals inspire a shift from isolated acts of "green living" to a holistic spirituality of integral ecology, where caring for the earth and caring for people are inseparable.

Each member of our ministry offers unique gifts and distinct focus, weaving together a rich network of service and care. Together, these contributions embody the interconnectedness of creation, showing that when many gifts are joined, they become one powerful witness to faith and stewardship.

The socio-ecological crisis is drawing our community in ways both subtle and profound, awakening a deeper awareness that "everything is connected." In response, St. Brigid formed the Laudato Si' Ministry, inspired by Pope Francis' call to unite ecological spirituality with practical action. What began as a simple desire to care for creation has grown into a hopeful effort to invite the wider parish into learning, advocacy, and sustainable living. We are gradually weaving ecological themes into faith formation—

introducing conversations about environmental justice, climate change, and the moral dimensions of our daily choices—so that ecological awareness may one day become a natural expression of discipleship for our community.

This ministry is also working to strengthen the fabric of our parish. Through early recycling efforts, small steps toward waste reduction, and gentle encouragement toward simpler lifestyles, we are planting seeds of ecological economics with intention and hope. We continue building relationships across parish groups and seeking partnerships throughout San Antonio, trusting that deeper resilience and solidarity will grow as more parishioners join us in responding to both the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor. In all of this, ecological care remains an aspiration rooted in faith—a journey we are still learning to walk together, guided by love for God, one another, and our common home.

The socio-ecological crisis has challenged the parish's sense of mission, revealing how care for creation is inseparable from care for our most vulnerable neighbors. This awareness is prompting St. Brigid to examine its ministry priorities—calling us to move beyond isolated efforts toward a more holistic vision of integral ecology and social justice that shapes how we pray, learn, and act as a community.

By joining the global Laudato Si' Action Platform, the parish is intentionally aligning its local efforts with the universal Church's call to ecological and social justice. This commitment places St. Brigid within a worldwide movement seeking to heal the relationships—human, ecological, and spiritual—that have been strained by environmental and social crises.

For St. Brigid, the socio-ecological crisis is not merely an environmental concern but a profound spiritual invitation. It challenges the parish to embrace ecological conversion, strengthen bonds within the community, and bear witness to God's love through concrete acts of stewardship, solidarity, and justice.

St. Brigid desires to embrace the mission statement of the Laudato Si' Movement, seeking ***to inspire and mobilize our community toward ecological justice and a deeper care for the world's most vulnerable***. This vision echoes the heart of the Gospel, reminding us that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). In this unity, we recognize that the well-being of each person and the well-being of creation are inseparably linked.

Christianity calls us to respond to the cry of the poor with uncompromising stewardship and compassionate action. God's creation of the world—and our redemption through Jesus Christ—opens the way for us to participate in renewing the face of the Earth. St. Paul teaches that creation longs for renewal, awaiting the healing that comes when we live our faith authentically.

As a ministry, we feel called to join the Laudato Si' Action Platform because we believe our parish is invited to see creation as sacred, to help heal the divisions that wound both people and planet, and to nurture a spirituality of care that embraces all of God's children. We recognize that the world has been entrusted to us as a gift, and we want to do our part to ensure that future generations inherit a home that is healthy, whole, and loved. This journey also challenges us to grow spiritually, especially in a time when many feel a lack of fire or direction in their faith. We hope to rekindle that flame by spreading the message of stewardship, reminding our community that consumerism cannot fill the longing of the human heart—only God can.

Responding to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor opens our eyes to God's presence in every corner of creation. It invites us to imagine, and to help build, a world that reflects the harmony, justice, and beauty God intended from the beginning. As a ministry, we step into this work with humility and hope, trusting that each small act of love contributes to the renewal of the Earth and the flourishing of all God's people.

As we reflect on our journey with *Laudato Si'*, we recognize that every community begins this work from a different place—some with years of experience, others just taking their first steps. At St. Brigid, we are learning to honor both our early efforts and our growing hopes for the future. By looking honestly at what we have already begun and discerning where the Spirit is calling us next, we can better understand our existing initiatives and the new commitments we aspire to make. The following sections offer a snapshot of where we stand today—our beginnings, our partnerships, and our dreams—as we continue moving toward a fuller vision of integral ecology.

Response to the Cry of the Earth

Looking Back — What We've Begun

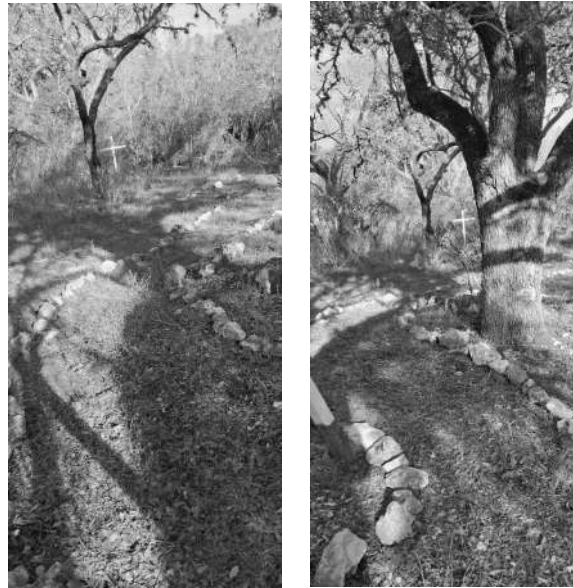
- Promoting responsible waste practices, including recycling and composting
- Raising parish awareness about how daily habits affect the environment through weekly bulletin blurbs
- Contributing occasional weeding and upkeep at the Rudder Middle School Garden despite limited volunteer access



Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Inviting high school students to participate in the Rudder Community Garden
- Begin a community garden at St. Brigid with participation from all parish ministries—especially youth ministries—to provide fresh produce and support for the St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Organizing a parish pilgrimage to St. George Maronite Catholic Church that connects faith with creation

- Celebrating an outdoor mass to encounter God in the natural world
- Restoring the outdoor Stations of the Cross (with possible leadership from Deacon Enrique)



Work began on January 10, 2026!

- Strengthening advocacy efforts, including raising awareness about environmental concerns such as the proposed sewage dumping affecting Helotes Creek and the Guajolote Ranch area

Response to the Cry of the Poor

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Supporting vulnerable families through the St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Sharing resources such as **Surviving ICE** to help immigrant families understand their rights and stay safe www.survivingice.com

Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Partnering with St. Luke's to support individuals and families experiencing homelessness

- Sponsoring a conference at The University of the Incarnate Word for immigrants to provide education, resources, and accompaniment
- Hosting a health-care-focused conference, potentially in collaboration with UIW's nursing school and their Westside ministry
- Expanding parish advocacy and outreach to defend human dignity in communities most affected by environmental and social harm

Ecological Economics

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Working with the parish office to shift purchasing habits toward more sustainable options, such as green trash bags and compostable coffee cups
- Advocating for support of global climate justice efforts, including advocacy for debt relief for small, climate-vulnerable countries
- Encouraging participation in local farmers' markets
- Promoting reduced or responsible meat consumption

Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Organizing a letter-writing campaign to major corporations to advocate for reducing Styrofoam use, plastic bags, and other single-use materials.
- Eliminating the purchase of plastic water bottles

Adoption of Simple Lifestyles

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Encouraging sustainable choices through bulletin blurbs and parish communications, including weekly tips on simple, eco-friendly habits
- Setting up clearly labeled recycling and composting stations to support responsible waste practices

Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Including simple living themes in homilies, retreats, and adult formation to root ecological simplicity in spiritual practice

Ecological Education

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Introducing the ministry by inviting all parishioners to a viewing of Pope Francis' *The Letter* to spark awareness and engagement
- Engaging in ecological education through JustFaith Ministries, including Sacred Land, Sacred Water, and Sacred Air
- Creating a blog to raise awareness about the challenges facing immigrants and to support informed, compassionate action
- Encouraging parishioners to view *Tapped* and *Kiss the Ground* to deepen awareness of water justice and sustainable food systems.

Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Continue the Laudato Si' Book Study begun in 2025, allowing its insights to keep shaping our understanding of ecological spirituality.

Ecological Spirituality

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Encouraging a spiritual connection to creation through bulletin blurbs

Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Host seasonal outdoor Masses that celebrate God's presence in creation
- Organize annual creation-themed pilgrimages for prayerful reflection and community

- Integrate ecological themes into homilies throughout the liturgical year
- Celebrate Ecological Sundays around Earth Day (4/22) and the Annunciation (3/25) with prayer and action
- Create and maintain an outdoor prayer garden for reflection and shared stewardship
- Build interfaith friendship with Aum Ashram through shared ecological and cultural initiatives

Community Involvement and Participation

Looking Back — What We've Begun

- Building bridges with other parish ministries for shared ecological action (Coffee Fellowship, Young Adults, Flower Ministry, Faith Formation)



- Hosting a guest speaker from Waste Management to educate the parish on proper recycling practices, innovations in the waste industry, and why sorting materials correctly truly matters
- Connecting with St. Luke's JustFaith Ministries to explore shared advocacy and formation
- Encouraging parishioners to participate in watershed cleanups throughout the city to care for local ecosystems and waterways

- Learning about the water crisis in Corpus Christi to understand how environmental issues affect vulnerable communities



- Touring local **landfills** to gain firsthand insight into waste systems and the impact of consumer habits



Moving Forward — What We Hope to Build

- Strengthening communication between the parish office and all ministries by ensuring consistent, timely sharing of information through social media, bulletin announcements, and other parish communication channels
- Encouraging regular meetings between the pastor and ministry leaders to stay aligned on goals, needs, and concerns, fostering a more connected and collaborative parish community

- Strengthening our presence through Facebook, the parish bulletin, and the parish website to share updates, resources, and invitations
- Expanding collaboration with local schools, parishes, and community groups for joint ecological projects
- Creating more opportunities for parishioners to participate in advocacy and collective action at the local and regional level

As we look back on all we have begun, we recognize that each small step—each act of learning, advocacy, and care—has helped our parish grow in deeper relationship with creation and with one another. These efforts are not endpoints but seeds, planted in hope, that will continue to shape our community's commitment to ecological conversion. With gratitude for the journey so far and trust in the Spirit who leads us, we move forward together, ready to build a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

**Together in faith and stewardship,
The Laudato Si' Ministry Team**

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