



Reflecting on the Laudato Si' Goals

The goal to Respond to the Cry of the Earth speaks to me most right now because I can clearly see the changes in the Earth as I reflect on my observations and experiences over my lifetime.

When I was a kid...

- There were no days when a smoky haze from Canadian wildfires filtered the midday sun, and the air even smelled of smoke, and air quality alerts were unheard of.
- The beaches and lakes were not closed because they were unsafe to swim in due to pollution.

In more recent years in my adult life...

- More frequent intense storms with damaging winds and rain have caused extensive flood and storm damage.
- Drinking water sources are contaminated with high levels of nitrates.

These are just a small sample of the changes that I've noticed in the corner of the state that I call home. It is important to me that we not ignore these cries from the Earth so that we can take action to address these issues not simply because it is the right thing to do, but to protect what we've been given so it can be handed down to generations to come.

I feel called to the work of Caring for Creation in the Archdiocese of the Dubuque for a variety of reasons. I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, and I now live in the second largest metro area in Iowa, so I have a good appreciation for the various perspectives of what caring for creation means to people across the Archdiocese. The components of a sustainable lifestyle may look different for an urban apartment dweller to the family farmer, but each plays an integral role in how we collectively care for our common home.

My wife and I are also acutely aware of the impacts and obligations of caring for creation in rural communities as we work with our son as he transitions to a more active role on her family's farm. We see how years of thoughtful care for the land and animals have provided the next generation the opportunity to continue that legacy and learn new ways to expand upon that mission in the face of an ever-changing climate.

I feel called to this work because I feel I can be a bridge to the youth who are learning about the beauty and interconnectedness of creation as they begin to identify how they will play a role in caring for our common home, all the way to generations who have come before me, hearing the cry of the Earth and witnessing so much more change than I have. This call is important to me because I want to see the Catholic Church be a steady leader and beacon of hope in caring for creation.

In this very early stage of creating the Laudato Si' Action Plan for the Archdiocese of Dubuque, I have met or become acquainted with so many individuals and organizations that are very passionate about the mission to care for creation. These people and organizations are inspiring to me, and I want the Church to be a force to enable our mutual goals. I look forward to building on these relationships to create a grassroots effort that is rooted in our scriptural call to love and care for creation. I believe that it is vitally important to create this baseline devotion and commitment to caring for our common home so that it will take root in all the faithful in their personal lives and that it might manifest in an even greater way through our collective community efforts. Much like the life of a Christian can be a challenge to live in the public area today, how we go about caring for creation can sometimes be a challenge and uncomfortable. But we know that when we invite God into our plans and the issues that we face, all things are possible. I trust in that approach, especially when it comes to caring for our common home.