



OFS Canada JPIC Communiqué JPIC October 2021

Where to Begin?

The book, *Climate Generation, Awakening to Our Children's Future* by Lorna Gold, 2019 focuses on the climate crisis we are currently facing. This article takes several passages from the chapter titled *Embracing the Earth*. We pass on these thoughts, now in the light of the **Laudato Si' Action Platform**. Over the next several months *Franciscan Voice Canada* will endeavor to highlight the **Laudato Si' Action Platform** and help Secular Franciscans focus on “**Calling for a new way of thinking, feeling, understanding and living.**” This has been the message of Pope Francis that was particularly poignant in *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* encyclicals.

We begin with the reporting that if we continue to live the way we are living, we would require up to five planet earths to give everyone a standard of living like ours. As an environmentalist, member of Trócaire, and vice-chair of the Laudato Si' Movement, Lorna Gold names Pope Francis as her hero. The Earth is our common home and like a sister with whom we share our life, a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. It is with this image that could hold the power to heal the deep fracture we feel between ourselves and the beautiful earth we live on. We have forgotten the utter dependence we all have on the earth often living with the myth that we are its masters. But we remain dependent on our one small planet made of the same elements we are made of. If we continue to destroy its life support system in our quest to master our fate, then in the end we also lose.

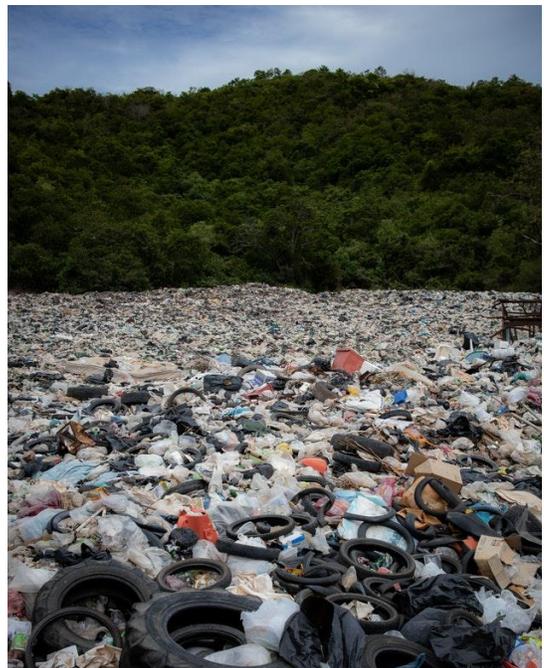


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We need to allow ourselves the time and space to rediscover ourselves as part of this earth and to be deeply grateful for it. We are less likely to destroy something we love deeply, something we see as part of ourselves. We can look to St Francis of Assisi who had a deep bond with all of creation. We need only look at his *Canticle of the Creatures* to see the right relationship we should have with creation. The parts of creation are our sisters and brothers! There is far greater happiness in *being* than in *having*, to free ourselves from excess and to realize what is 'enough'. It is in cultivating that deep gratitude for all life especially the natural world, a precious gift in itself. As Pope Francis tells us, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise, *Laudato Si'*.

Where to Begin? We begin where Laudato Si' tells us that *we must repent of the ways we have harmed the planet*, to acknowledge our contribution to the disfigurement and destruction of



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creation. Only then can we begin our *ecological conversion* to ask the earth, my mother for forgiveness where we neglected to protect her and forgotten to notice and appreciate her beauty.



Spend time in nature, which could be as simple as your back yard and notice the magic that is everywhere, whether the tiniest bug, a weed's flower, a bird and begin to notice the web of life, the cycles of birth, death and rebirth in an endless resurrection, the mystery of God's creation. Use all your senses to allow your attention to settle on one creature or plant. Despite all that is

happening in the world, the bee

Photo by [İbrahim Özdemir](#) on [Unsplash](#)

continues its work only concerned with the moment and its purpose. For Lorna Gold the bee was telling her 'don't fret so much that you can't live ... **you need to do your work, but do it serenely, without seeking to control the future.**' Spending such time is healing and restorative. We come to realize that buying stuff is not. Sharing this joy and welcoming others into this precious space has become even more special particularly for our children. Developing such an appreciation is something they will carry for life.

The awesomeness of creation is found in stargazing or seeing the majesty of a mountain whether from its top or the bottom. It is seeing the beauty of a little stream, a river or the endless sea fills one with the utter sense of littleness, that we are stardust, fragile yet part of the magic of life and aware of the miracle of being alive. From this perspective, a place of love, God's love we want to protect our mother earth, but we must act quickly.



Let us pray for COP26 and speak up whenever we can.

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This article was originally prepared by George Guimond, ofs and posted in [Franciscan Voice Canada](#) October 2021.

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