

DISCUSSION ON LAUDATO SI', ST. JOHN XXIII PARISH, GENEVA

Group B (Care for Environment)

Aimee Gonzales- Facilitator

Participants

Mary Bapst , St. John XXIII parishioner

Maribel Mapanao- St John XXIII parish staff

Lito Benitez- St John XXIII parishioner, Procter and Gamble, Couples for Christ

Dinesh Suma – World Council of Churches, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva

Guillermo Kerber - Grand Saconnex Parish

Alexandro Grandjean: Student University of Lausanne- researching on eco-spirituality

Purpose: The group will discuss and share what inspire, move and sustain them to heed the call for action to care for the environment and 'live the Laudato Si'

Question: What images come to mind when I read about 'throwaway culture? How have I participated in or reacted to throwaway culture? How can I contribute to a sustainable future for the earth in my personal life? What restraints do I need to make in my own life? What restraints do we need to make as a community?

Discussions:

Laudato Si appeals to everyone- even to the secular community

Reflections on the 'throwaway' culture

- People are taking the concept of having 'dominion' over other inhabitants and resources of the earth too literally and exploiting nature with impunity.
- No regard for ecological footprint
- Shows lack of respect for other creatures
- Trump's actions are deplorable (ex. denying climate change). They contradict what the Laudato Si encyclical is saying
- There is a Trump in all of us, and we need to restrain ourselves... the desire to insatiably consume.... We are tempted to go with the trends of consumerism and market economy.
- We need to discern: do we need it or do we want it? Very important educational tool.
- There is a temptation to concede that we cannot do anything. We should not give up. Small local actions can help
- Globalisation is the way of life, which promotes a 'throwaway culture', consumerism, desire to look and feel good.... Difficult challenge

How do we restrain ourselves?

- **Education and awareness raising** to promote lifestyle change is important: e.g. World Council of Churches is promoting a blue initiative- 'drink tap water' campaign (context: while tap water is safe to drink in Switzerland, we still buy bottled water, as our minds are conditioned through the marketing tactics to buy them. Due to excessive use of bottled water, about 70% of the used bottled are dumped into landfills or the ocean. 46000 plastics are floating in every square mile in the ocean. Besides, bottled water is an impediment to human right to water. More information can be found here: <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/water.should.the.church.ban.the.bottle/61789.htm>)

- Avoid littering. Ex. throw cigarette butts in the trash and not on the ground
- Practice reduce, recycle and reuse... Repair is still a challenge as it is cheaper to buy a new things than repair old broken things esp electronics. Corporate market encourages consumerism
- Practice waste segregation (home, parish). Many communes are encouraging this
- Teach children to exchange toys ex. Ludotheque, Already doing this in kermesse (sale of second hand goods), exchange instead of buying new toys is part of Advent/Christmas message in John XXIII parish

Will it be enough to get parishioners to practice these small gestures? How can we encourage more to adopt lifestyle change (conserve water, use solar panels, etc). What incentives can we provide? Do we need tangible incentives? Is it enough to 'feel good' about doing something for nature and others? How do we sustain parish level activities?

- **Parish leaders and priests should be leading and encouraging these lifestyle change amongst its congregations**

- **Networking and learning from other parishes and faith based/secular organisations can help inspire and magnify the ' living LS movement' or adopting eco-spirituality or promoting 'green churches/parishes'** amongst likeminded parish (ex. Chene Bougeries parish, parish in Grand Saconnex, explore joint actions with the Evangelical Lutheran church of Geneva)

- **Engaging in topical global actions-** supporting the pilgrimage for climate justice around the Climate talks in Paris

Three key recommendations:

- 1) Awareness raising and education on personal lifestyle change and promote responsible living within the family
 - a. Drink tap water, stop buying bottled water in Switzerland
 - b. Ask yourself before you buy' do I need it or do I want it?
 - c. Teach care for creation and need for lifestyle change in catechism classes
- 2) Networking with other likeminded people / organisations / parishes

(1 September - 4 October St. Francis time for creation) to exchange actions, lessons learned, empower and support each other

3) Start with small concerted actions to green the parish (anti littering, waste segregation, campaign to drink tap water, care for creation linked to lifestyle change actions in catechism classes) and/or support a 'green community project in a developing country. Get the parish priest to be visible in leading/inspiring and 100% supporting the action