



For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies.

—Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*

We end this year with a different content format for our newsletter. *Laudate Deum*, the sequel to *Laudato Si'*, is reviewed along with coverage of the Synod which ended this October. Testimonials from our Grange Community highlight how the climate crisis is affecting our lives. In light of these topics, we are including a section on climate anxiety and eco-therapists.

LAUDATE DEUM RESOURCES

Laudate Deum is a short, strongly worded document. You can read it [here](#).

Here's a [visual representation](#) of *Laudate Deum's* message.

Like the climate activist Greta Thunberg, [Pope Francis affirms](#) in *Laudate Deum* that our earth is on fire!

Since *Laudato Si'*, [PEW poll](#) shows no significant change in US Catholics' view of climate change.

Laudate Deum – Do we [choose life or death](#)? Catholic ecological advocates say it is our choice.

Pope Francis calls [climate deniers irresponsible](#).

CLIMATE ANXIETY AND ECO-THERAPISTS

Feeling anxiety about the climate crisis? Watch this [brief video](#) about what you can do.

Climate psychologist [Leslie Davenport talks](#) about climate anxiety and emotional resiliency.

[Eco-therapists](#) are in high demand.

RESOURCES ON THE SYNOD

Listen to [Pope Francis' homily](#) on October 4, 2023 at Mass for the opening of the General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod. The homily starts at 35:30 minutes.

Synod General Assembly releases [Letter to the People of God](#). "Church must listen to everyone."

Vatican releases "[Synod-on-Synodality Report](#)", which includes proposing greater role of laity.

[Cardinal Cupich](#) from Chicago on the Synod regarding women deacons, job reviews for bishops and why the LGBTQ was left out of the final document.

Read why [Cardinals Cupich and McElroy](#) think it is impossible to forget the laity in future Synods.

[Father James Martin shares](#) what happened at the Synod on Synodality.

HOW THE CLIMATE CRISIS HAS AFFECTED MY LIFE

Sr. Kathleen Noone Deignan, CND

For the many decades of my deepening awareness of the catastrophe eroding the integrity and vitality of our Living Earth, I have struggled with a growing despair that I wear like a veil of sadness over my mind/heart, though not my spirit.

I try to wear it lightly, and mostly I do. But it is like a widow's veil, a gauze of great regret that during the years of my lengthening life, I am witnessing the end of the glorious Cenozoic Era of the most glorious planet in the universe.

There is nothing more wondrous, more gorgeous than this Living Earth, our Mother, the Incarnation of Divinity's ineffable genius and generosity. And so to my mind, to my senses and imagination, every assault on this glorious Mother is an assault on Divinity itself. Like my spiritual master, Thomas Merton, I am utterly bewildered at humanity's program of decide in the service of making this world fit our fantasy.

This despair pulls at me like a black hole threatening to devour the energy of my faith that I daily labor to generate back into the universe in my morning prayer and practice: sitting beneath the wondrous sky, the fulsome trees in their seasons, and alongside the many creatures and elements I know to be kin.

Every day as the years unfold, the more I learn, the more I come to know, the more effort it takes to keep that black hole from swallowing me.

That it has not yet done so is a testament to the greater Life Force that courses through this cosmos, this Earth, and that courses through me, even so. Through some gift of grace, I really do see the face of the Living One in everything, everyone, everywhere.

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HOW THE CLIMATE CRISIS HAS AFFECTED MY LIFE

Steve Tanneberger

My climate change experience came to me during a Zoom course this spring. I was taking a certification course to become a Laudato Si' Animator which involved small international breakout rooms. We were given a starting point: to explain what drew us to take the course. No one was speaking. So, I began, running on and on about how much nature has always been part of my life, roaming the woods as a boy, the Ecology Club at school, my grandfather, Earth Day, and gardening. Then a man, about my age from Great Britain, chimed in about how he and his wife loved to drive in the English countryside on weekends. It meant so much to them - "Wonderful times." His comments paralleled my experiences. None of the others in the breakout room wanted to speak.

A woman's voice came from a dark box in the "room." It had no image. I heard wind blowing harshly. She must be outdoors. The voice told us she was joining us from Ghana. I cannot recall her exact words, but I remember the essence: "We **hate** nature here. It's too hot - our crops can't grow. The seeds come up and the plants die. We don't have enough water for them." It was hard to hear everything due to the stiff winds. "I am not here because of nature; nature is not good here. It's not nature, I AM HERE FOR **THE JUSTICE**. I am here for..." SNAP! The screen went blank. Our breakout session was over. That moment was a punch in the gut. Still is.

Sandy Bernabei

Learning from our clients.

I am working with a woman who graduated from Duke University with a B.S. in Earth and Climate Sciences. In therapy, she shares her despair. No matter what the work she is doing, she understands full well that a larger more macro-level intervention is required among uncooperative nations. She and her partner are not certain that they can justify bringing a child into a climate crisis world and decided NOT to have children. How sad.

This concern is growing and has created a demand for a new therapeutic specialty. [Climate-Aware Therapist Directory](#) has been established.

She gifted me with an incredible book entitled [All We Can Save](#) which is a 2020 collection of essays and poetry edited by [Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson](#) and [Dr. Katharine Wilkinson](#) and published by One World. The book represents a wide range of essays, and creative works by over 50 [women involved in climate change](#) activism, science, and policy.

I am grateful for the mutuality, the humanity that I share with my clients.

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Now I experience the vestiges of the once burgeoning planet to be like a ravaged sanctuary where it is my destiny to make ceaseless prayer, to sing an unending song of praise and wonder and gratitude, to preach and teach the way forward to the New Earth we shall cultivate in the ruins of the old.

I experience it all as paradox and puzzlement - the conundrum I/we are here to work with as our karmic task until we awaken from this nightmare into the "Dream of the Earth."

Though Earth's Dark Night is a force that confronts me throughout my days, there is some other Force that empowers and upholds me. And the more deeply I look and pray, the more mysteriously I see the ravishing beauty of the Crucified in all of this human and ecological violation Who is working resurrection - somehow, someway - through it all.

I have come to live in that Cloud of Unknowing that Merton led me to and that saves me from falling into that black hole of despair, and I have come to dance with Julian and her Suffering Savior as she sings her song: "All Shall Be Well..."

I have no idea how it shall be so. But I sing that anthem anyway. How I wish I could compose a different story.

Christopher Rogalin

Clearly, we are blessed by where we live in comparison to so many less fortunate. Other than signing proposals to eliminate fossil fuels and encouraging green power generation, most of us are limited by what we can do individually. I have managed to accomplish a few things over the past few years.

I have stopped the use of all two-cycle engines (lawn mower, leaf blower, weed whacker, etc.) and I am in the process of naturalizing lawn and gardens. It will take another year to restore the property to its original natural beauty. I no longer have a gasoline-powered automobile. I traded in my Nissan Altima for a new Ariya with a home charger. The quarterly financial savings should be quite noticeable.

As I live in a wooded area, solar panels are not in my future. However, choosing the appropriate energy provider can make a difference in our footprints. A few years ago I connected with [Constellation Energy](#) and the savings are noticeable. To search options, merely follow this [link](#).

Anyway, small steps perhaps...but every step matters.