



Laudato Si'

Head, Hands, Heart Newsletter

The Benedictine Grange



Church, Climate, and Hope

First Quarter 2025

“I used to think that the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy, and to deal with those we need a cultural and spiritual transformation.” —James Gustav “Gus” Speth (environmental lawyer and advocate; cofounder of Natural Resources Defense Council)

SPOTLIGHT ON CARDINAL ROBERT MCELROY

Archbishop Robert L. McElroy of the San Diego archdiocese has recently been appointed by Pope Francis to the position of Cardinal Archbishop of Washington, DC. He has been an ally of the Pope for a very long time and an advocate for church reform, as well as social and environmental justice. But [who is he?](#) If interested in a more detailed biography, click [here](#).

To understand the importance of this appointment for the struggle for justice and mercy, read about his views on [radical inclusion](#), [climate change](#), [immigration](#), and his [commitment to Laudato Si'](#). Also check out this [video](#) on what others are saying about him.

Like Pope Francis, we trust that Cardinal McElroy will be that beacon of light and hope we so desperately need in our divided church and country. Let's pray for and support him as he faces so many challenges in the US and globally.

Interested in congratulating Cardinal McElroy? Send him a personal letter (sample follows) to tell him he has your support.



Photo: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, DC.

His Eminence Cardinal Robert McElroy
5001 Eastern Avenue
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Your Eminence,

Congratulations on your appointment as Cardinal Archbishop of Washington. Thank you for accepting this assignment. I am grateful to Pope Francis for choosing you for this position in this politically troubled time. You have spoken out for the needs of the poor and for the environmental suffering of our planet. May the same leadership that you exercised for the San Diego Church continue to flourish in this new position and in this challenging time.

I keep you in my prayers and hope the local and national Church and clergy will be of support to you in this uphill struggle. May the family of God receive the benefit of your leadership. I look forward to your installation on March 11.

Peace to you,

[Your Signature]

POPE FRANCIS DECLARES 2025 A JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE



The Jubilee Year of Hope is a Catholic tradition that takes place every 25 years to celebrate prayer, renewal, and growing closer to God. This Jubilee Year will take place from December 24, 2024 to January 6, 2026.

The theme for the year is “Pilgrims of Hope”.

Read the [Jubilee Prayer](#) and listen to the [official hymn](#).

For further review, consider the following. Explore in delight!

[Catholic News Agency](#)

[The Divine Mercy](#)

[Archdiocese of Cincinnati](#)

[St. Patrick's Cathedral](#)

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Life isn't static. Change is inevitable. Let's not talk about politics. Let's discuss climate and social behavior. Okay, let's trim our sails to focus on climate. Not sure where to start? Search (Google if you must) [NOAA](#), [Copernicus](#), or the [IPCC](#). After you drift down from the atmosphere, you will eventually land in your own backyard. While the national and international activities unfold, prepare your own checklist. For example:

Transportation - Not all of us are prepared to transition to an electric vehicle (EV). So, can you minimize your daily/weekly mileage by carpooling, or utilizing public transportation for some of your travels?

Electricity - Have you considered using only high usage devices (i.e., clothes dryers, ovens, etc.) only on weekends, or, if needed, during the week after 8 PM?

Gasoline - Can you convert your leaf blower and other devices to battery power?

Garden - Do you really need a lawn? Have you considered naturalizing your property to foster the return of birds, bees, and butterflies? Need advice as to how to transition? Consider the following:

[Garden for Wildlife Connecticut Audubon](#) [The Nature Conservancy Hollandia Nursery](#)

Siloed - Living in an apartment or condo, aye? That makes gardening a bit tough, unless there are community options. Perhaps you can put out bird and/or hummingbird feeders. Consider contributing to:

[OCEANA](#) [The Climate Reality Project](#)
[Arbor Day Foundation](#) [A Tree to Remember](#)

These actions don't have to be done all at once. Step-by-step transition is more lasting. Some aspects may only improve with a constant reassessment of what works best for you and our climate. There are no wrong actions but some may be better than others. Do you have an expanded checklist? We can all learn from each other. Okay, let's all get started!

OTHER NEWS

Ann Reeves' daughter Betsey Biggs was interviewed on [The Culture Show Podcast](#) (WGBH Boston) on her film *Melt* which was part of [The Arctic Voices](#) exhibit at the New Bedford Museum.

We are happy to announce that Christopher Rogalin has joined the contributors to the *Laudato Si' Newsletter*.

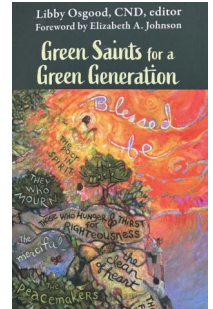
BOOKS TO INSPIRE YOU

Green Saints for a Green Generation, Libby Osgood, CND, editor.

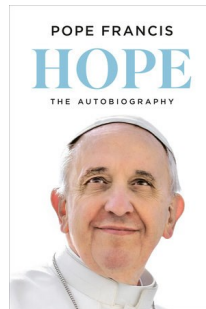
Green Saints for a Green Generation contains a collection of essays on saints, some canonized, some not, whose lives inspire us to care for creation. In her introduction to the book, theologian Elizabeth Johnson says:

"... we are all invited to be green saints, loving the world God created, appreciating its beauty, and acting for its flourishing in the face of violence, thoughtless consumerism, rampant greed, and climate change. Anyone who finishes the book without sensing this urgent invitation might be said to be reading without a pulse."

A conversation between Libby Osgood, CND, and the book's publisher Robert Ellsberg may be found [on YouTube](#).



Hope, the autobiography of Pope Francis has been on the *New York Times* Best Seller List since its release. The book with many photos was to be published posthumously, but Pope Francis decided to publish it to coincide with the Church's 2025 Jubilee of Hope. Carlo Russo, the book's editor shares: "In the autobiography, the reader will obviously be able to get a look into his personal life, his priestly life, and the entire pontificate. But it's clear that hope has been the glue that holds them together, because even in difficulties, in tragedy, Pope Francis always sends a concrete and invincible message of hope." For a further review, [read here](#).



"One voice can change a room, and if one voice can change a room, then it can change a city, and if it can change a city, it can change a state, and if it can change a state, it can change a nation, and if it can change a nation, it can change the world. Your voice can change the world."

—Former President Barack Obama