



## Summary of Laudato Si' Reflection and Study – Sisters of Charity Halifax 2015 – Current Day

The Sisters of Charity Halifax discerned Laudato Si' upon its release in summer 2015. Immediately inspired by the encyclical's message on reducing climate change, the Sisters created a resource guide for meaningful action. Titled *Lightening Our Carbon Footprint for the Congregation*, the guide focused on best practices for living a life of simple practices for change. The Sisters continued to share the message of Laudato Si' in Congregation newsletters and various other communications points.

Following Assembly in the summer of 2017, Sisters and Associates of the Sisters of Charity Halifax affirmed the following: *“(Our explicit choice to engage in contemplative prayer) will be strengthened through our study and reflection on Laudato Si' and through service to those who are living in poverty, are marginalized, and through our care of creation.”* While embracing the Congregation's Chapter Statement *“accepting our call to an all embracing spirit of hospitality...with all our sisters and brothers and **with all creation**,* the Congregation discerned to use the encyclical as part of prayer and daily life.

The Congregational Leadership Team (CLT) officially called upon Sisters and Associates to express interest in forming a committee to lead the discussion on Laudato Si'. Lead by the Spirit, a committee of approximately ten Sisters and Associates formed the Laudato Si' Focus Group (LSFG) and under consultation with the CLT, formed contemplative groups to discern the Laudato Si'. The groups were formed by geographical areas specific to the Congregation's Sisters and Associates, with the intention of contemplative groups meeting in person regularly.

In the weeks that followed, group leaders were chosen for the groups. All affirmed and were energized to use the encyclical as an invitation to transform their consciousness, and be called to a distinctive way of viewing, examining, and opening a space for a new perspective. Specifically, Pope Francis' reminder that *“rather than a problem to be solved, (our planet) is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise”* (LS, 12). *He then further impresses, “Our goal is...to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to (our common home) into our own personal suffering and thus discover what (we) can do about it”* individually and communally (LS, 19).

The LSWG created Contemplative Dialogue Guides for each of the six chapters of the encyclical with a goal of completing the study by the summer of 2018. The contemplative groups met monthly and a summary of each group's reflections were shared with the Congregation. Additional resources on the Laudato Si' were shared throughout the Congregation from other women religious organizations and associations including LCWR and Global Sister Reports, as well as articles Sisters and Associates came upon in their discernment on the encyclical.

Following the official contemplative groups meetings, the Congregation was inspired by their discernment of the encyclical which inspired further actions. These have included creating an action plan for offsetting their carbon footprint, prayer and discernment for actions pertaining to the encyclical, as well as ongoing sharing of resources related to the Laudato Si' in the weekly justice, peace and integrity of creation newsletters.

At its General Chapter in 2020, the Sisters and Associates continued to commit themselves to *“deepen our communion with and care for one another, all our sisters and brothers and Mother Earth; and to participate in ongoing learning, conversation. And discernment of actions we will take to address the climate crisis.”* All Sisters and Associates were invited to join a working group on climate change to continue our study and prayer centered on Laudato Si and to recommend actions to the Congregation. As one expression of this prayer and action, the Sisters donated funds (12/21) as a Christmas gift to an Indigenous Canadian community that needed trees.

The Sisters of Charity Halifax are grateful to the inspired leadership of Pope Francis and his love for creation.