

Laudato si', Pope Francis' recent encyclical, or letter, to the peoples of the earth on care for our common home, is a wonderfully challenging appeal to change the way we think and act in relation to our natural environment and to each other. He calls us to an integrated ecology in which care for the environment, concern for a more just economic system, and humility and trust before God, our Creator and Redeemer are held together. As you might expect, he quotes often from St Francis of Assisi – indeed the title of the document is taken from the first words of the Canticle of the Creatures,



'Praise be to you, my Lord', - and also from Franciscan theologians through the ages. What we are about here at Hilfield Friary, our spirituality, our life together and our work, rings in harmony with what he says - indeed, one might think that he had visited us before writing it!! It speaks to us and others beyond the boundaries of the Catholic Church and Christianity, and the violent reaction against it from conservative right wing politicians and from some in the world of globalised finance and fossil fuel business is a sign of how important this document is. Copies are available from the Hilfield Friary Shop.

Pope Francis ends his letter with these prayers:

A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.
Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature
in your risen glory.
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.