Laudato Si’ Action Platform Reflection

March 5, 2025 Ash Wednesday

Richmond Public Library, BC Canada

As I write my first Laudato Si’ Action Platform Reflection today, there is great Lamentation across North America, especially here in Canada since the U.S. Administration has decided to start an Economic, Social and Political War with its closest Neighbor and Ally in the North.

Amidst the great desolation of living in a World filled with False Narratives, Short Term Deal Making and an Uncontrollable Economic System that is leading to Destruction and War, I See Hope in the process of revealing the hidden sinful structures and systems that is surfacing into public view and consciousness.

The current man-made systems that limits power and authority to the few elite amidst the pain and the suffering of the poor is an affirmation to me of the path of Laudato Si’ Integral Ecology that I have discerned to take since Oct. 4, 2023 when Pope Francis sent his letter Laudate Deum to all People of Good Will

Journeying in the Path of Laudato Si’ has been a life changing transformative experience for me and my family, in this reflection paper, I hope to share to you our family values that has been nurtured for 4 generations in the Philippines, and how living Laudato Si’ in Canada has reinforced these values and lead us to a path of conversion, healing and reconciliation and community building through Ignatian Spirituality

There are many Values that we where taught in the Gothong Family, but I would like to highlight 3 values that closely resonates with Integral Ecology in Laudato Si’

1. Think 2 Generations ahead – in the same Way that the Indigenous People in North America practice contemplating how their decision today can impact 7 generations after them, our family has instilled in us a value of looking ahead, thinking forward to 2 generations after us. We are reminded again and again that we are stewards for the future generations, that our actions and decisions today can affect those that come after us.

To animate the Spirit of Laudato Si’ in our Family, we started to practice After School Exam – a Daily Parent and Child Listening Session to God, Creation and School Community with my Children Daniel (10), Dominic (8) and Daveney (5) , the experience of creating sacred space and time to listen, has deepen our relationship as parent and child with God, creation and school community. After my children review their day in school, they ponder where they have encountered God in Creation, this practice has developed their sensitivity, awareness and mindfulness of the presence of God in their day to day Life, practicing to find God in all things, and sharing their experience of wonder and awe to their parent.

We Hope this practice of After School Examen, will give us the foundation to Walk Together as a family for multiple generations in the spirit of Integral Ecology

A short overview of our lived experience of After School Examen

https://youtu.be/YGhCl1LJWSM?si=0nppRtdf0PKrNV6y

1. Spiritual Discipline – my parents Bob and Joy Gothong, 3rd Generation Ship owners in the Philippines has continued to build the family business that has been passed on to them by our ancestors through Spiritual Discipline

After studying the Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology in Rome and becoming a Certified Laudato Si’ Animator, I started to pray and Listen to the experience of different Animators from North America as part of the LSM North America Eco Conversion – Eco Spirituality Group, in my discernment, I heard a clear invitation towards Spiritual Depth as a Pathway to discern God’s will for my Life Journey towards Integral Ecology. With this call, I discerned to animate the spirit of Laudato Si’ from the lense of Ignatian and Franciscan Spirituality. A reflection of both spirituality can be found in this video

<https://youtu.be/hLuxEJkVXWw?si=aQvtjvRgDZSAYg63>

1. Community Building - when we moved to Canada in 2021, in a Pilgrimage of Healing and Reconciliation with God in Canada, I discerned to fully immerse in Ignatian Spirituality while in mission of building a Bridge between Canada and Philippines,

My Ignatian experience in Canada has been so enriching, engaging in conversation in the spirit with CLC in Canada members has shown me a glimpse of what it means to live an Integral Ecology Life, a life centered on Christ, in harmony with creation, walking with and for others towards Hope, Peace and Love.

My discernment to fully respond to Laudato Si’ with CLC in Canada came about after I prayed the 19th annotation 9 months Spiritual Exercise in Everyday Life with Jesuit West USA from Sept 2022 – May 2023

Providentially, on May 2023, Center for Christian Engagement of St. Mark’s Jesuit College in University of British Columbia held the first Pope Francis Conference in Canada and launched the Annual Laudato Si’ Lecture sponsored by Development and Peace – Caritas Canada Coordinator at St. Mark’s Jesuit Parish, Jenny Cheng and Dr. Felix Durity

The Inaugural Laudato Si’ Lecture lead me to have conversation in the spirit with Ignatian Companions both in Philippines and Canada, when there was enough signs that I have heard i.e. Ateneo de Manila University is on a 7 year Journey to become a Laudato Si’ University 2022-29, my alma mater Sacred Heart School – Ateneo de Cebu appointed the pioneering Coordinator for Integral Ecology Advocacy Bernie Aton – Poliquit who invited me to study the Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology in Rome, and CVX-CLC World Assembly in Amiens, France Living Document stated “Integral Ecology transverse all Frontiers” and hearing a CLC in Canada member that Integral Ecology is a gift Canada can share to the World, and when Laudate Deum came out listening to Pope Francis saying ‘we are not responding fast enough” I have discerned by then to fully respond to Laudato Si’ and make this my full time work since then…

In my prayers, I contemplated how St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier and St. Peter Faber would having brought Laudato Si’ to Life if they where with us today, what came in my reflections is that they would conduct a lot of Laudato Si’ Conversation in the Spirit, develop Laudato Si’ Spiritual Exercises and Build Laudato Si’ Communities

This I have done the past year, Laudato Si’ Conversations with CLC in Canada and Philippines members, Laudato Si Animators, Integral Ecology Communities… I learned the more I practice Laudato Si’ Conversations the more the spirit of Laudato Si comes to life in me and in others

The spirit has lead me to develop Laudato Si’ Spiritual Exercises through Ignatian Swimming Spiritual Exercises, where I practice praying (rosary and examen) while swimming and swimming while praying every Saturday that lead me to healing and reconciliation with God in Water. I consider this practice as my Laudato Si’ renewable energy that hopefully will animate my pilgrimage for the rest of my time on earth

On Community Building, recently together with a CLC in Canada Companion, we discerned to start a new CLC in Canada Community called Laudato Si’ Vancouver, to animate the Synodal Pilgrim Church of Pope Francis that Cares for our Common Home. Currently we are in the process of conducting Listening Sessions so we are able to be aware of the presence of the spirit of Integral Ecology in the community and where the spirit may be leading us.

Overall, I would like to express my gratitude to the Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology administered by Pontifical Gregorian University for inviting us to Journey with the Laudato Si Movement and Laudato Si Action platform, thank you to Christian Life Community in the Philippines and Canada, Jesuits of Philippines and Canada for accompanying us towards the spirit of Integral Ecology

Pilgrims of Hope,

Bobby “Listening Tree” Gothong