

Reflection on Our Journey Toward Integral Ecology

*Archdiocese of San Antonio
Laudato Si' Action Platform*



Prepared by the Office of Social Justice Ministry
Archdiocese of San Antonio
2025

Background:

The Archdiocese of San Antonio, established in 1847, covers 19 counties in South-Central Texas and represents more than one million Catholics. While most of our faithful reside in the city of San Antonio, located in Bexar County, our Archdiocesan family extends across communities in the surrounding 18 counties. The Archdiocese includes 134 parishes and 36 mission and is organized into 14 deaneries—eight urban and six rural – spanning over 27,841 miles. This vast and vibrant land reflects the richness, diversity, and faith of the people who call the Archdiocese of San Antonio home.

Guided by Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S., whose prophetic witness and deep commitment to *Laudato Si'* inspires our ministries, we embrace the call to integral ecology—a way of life that unites care for creation, care for the poor, and care for one another.

Our pilgrimages, parish initiatives, and community encounters have helped us rediscover that creation is not simply a backdrop to human life—it is the very context through which we encounter God and one another. Through the land, the water, and all living things, we experience the Creator's love calling us into communion. The Earth is not merely our environment; it is a sacred way to cultivate loving hearts that draw us closer to God and to each other.

As we reflect on our shared journey, we recognize that responding to the socio-ecological crisis is not only about addressing environmental issues—it is about conversion: turning away from indifference and toward compassion, solidarity, and hope.

Our Journey Toward Integral Ecology

Archdiocese of San Antonio – Laudato Si' Action Platform

1. The Socio-Ecological Crisis

The socio-ecological crisis has deeply affected the people of South Texas. The 2025 summer, experienced severe floods in San Antonio that claimed 13 lives on a single morning, reminding us how vulnerable our communities have become to extreme weather. On July 4th, over 100 people (including many children) lost their lives in devastating Hill Country floods, a tragedy that left a deep wound on families across our Archdiocese. Many others—especially the elderly, the poor, and those without shelter—suffer and die each year from the summer heat.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “The cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one.” (Laudato Si’, 49). We cannot separate the ecological crisis from the social one—they spring from the same roots of indifference, excess, and inequality.

Yet amid the loss, signs of grace emerge. Across our Archdiocese, communities are awakening. Parishes are answering the call to reconnect with one another and our common home. We are rediscovering that hope is not found in isolation but in solidarity—in choosing to walk together, pray together, and act together for the sake of all creation.



Figure 1: Answering the Cry of the Poor May 2025, San Antonio, Texas

2. Our Mission and Values

Mission: To create missionary disciples of Jesus Christ.

Core Values:

- Unity – walking together as One Body of Christ.
- Prayerfulness – grounding all action in our relationship with God.
- Stewardship – caring for our gifts, our communities, and our planet with gratitude.

Our mission and values call us to live *Laudato Si'* not as a program but as a way of being—a spirituality of relationship, compassion, and responsibility toward each other and creation.



Figure 2 Care for Creation Mass Sept 2025, Mission Espada, San Antonio, Texas

3. Connecting our Mission and Values to the Laudato Si' Goals

Our values of unity, prayer, and stewardship align naturally with the seven Laudato Si' Goals. They invite us to conversion—personal, communal, and pastoral—and to see the care of creation as part of our discipleship.

- Unity reflects Goal 7: Community Resilience and Empowerment and Goal 5: Response to the Cry of the Poor. Through unity, we learn to walk in solidarity with everyone, especially those most affected by environmental and social injustice. True unity creates bridges of compassion that lead to healing and shared responsibility for one another.
- Prayerfulness embodies Goal 6: Ecological Spirituality, drawing us closer to the Creator through accompaniment, and gratitude for the gift of creation.
- Stewardship embraces Goal 3: Ecological Economics and Goal 4: Sustainable Lifestyles, calling us to live simply, responsibly, and with care for future generations.

Together, these values remind us that faith and ecology are inseparable: caring for creation is an expression of love for God and neighbor.

4. Answering the Call

We feel called to join the Laudato Si' Action Platform because we recognize the sacred interconnectedness and interdependence of all creation. The Earth is not simply our environment—it is a way to cultivate loving hearts that draw us closer to God and to each other.

We also recognize our moral responsibility to act. Our participation is both a response to the Gospel and a way of deepening our faith. Through our pilgrimages, educational gatherings, and parish initiatives, we are experiencing what Pope Francis calls an ecological conversion—a change of heart that moves us from awareness to action, from gratitude to solidarity.



Figure 3 Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, Outdoor Care for Creation Mass

5. Our Journey

This year, we have been blessed with two powerful pilgrimages dedicated to the care of creation. Each one has been a living sign of hope—a sacred walk that united faith, ecology, and community. Along the trails between our historic Missions, parishioners, clergy, and young people walked together, prayed together, and rediscovered their connection to the land and to one another. It was not only a physical journey but also

a spiritual one—an encounter that reminded us that the road to ecological conversion begins with relationship.



Figure 4 Care for Creation Pilgrimage, Sept. 2025, San Antonio, Texas.

6. Our Hope for the Future

As we continue our Laudato Si' journey, we are committed to:

- Expanding parish Care for Creation teams.
- Encouraging every community to complete its own Laudato Si' Plan.
- Hosting educational events to promote awareness and an open invitation to enroll in the Laudato Si Action Platform.
- Continuing pilgrimages and days of prayer rooted in ecological spirituality.

We walk forward with faith and gratitude, knowing that the seeds we plant today—both in soil and in hearts—will bear fruit for generations to come.



Figure 5 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si, May 2025, Basilica of Little Flower, San Antonio, Texas