

August 28, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

You might recall that Pope Francis wrote the encyclical, *Laudato Si*, On Care for our Common Home in 2015, the first encyclical ever written on our environmental situation. As an outgrowth of that clarion call, a group called the Global Catholic Climate Movement emerged. When I was looking over the scriptures for this coming Sunday, I was struck by the passage we've heard a hundred times in the second reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans 13. 10: "Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law." I thought about the hurricane hitting the Gulf states so soon after this 15th anniversary of Katrina and the 625 fires we recently experienced in our beloved state. The fact that the magnitude and destruction caused by them is unprecedented serves to point us towards climate change as a major cause for their intensity. If the tragedy of the pandemic has shown us anything these months, it is that our lives are intertwined and more closely connected than, perhaps, we were aware.

The Holy Father includes this prayer as #246 in his encyclical. Perhaps, it can serve as our reflection for the coming week.

Blessings on us all! *Sheral*

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.