



europäische allianz katholischer frauenverbände
european alliance of catholic women's organisations
alliance européenne d'organisations féminines catholiques

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My mother turned 91 last week. When you reach that age, the number of cards you receive from friends and family is limited. Getting that old is survival and sur-vival.

Nevertheless, she was very happy with the good wishes that were sent to her. She put them on her dresser as if they were trophies. And everyone was allowed to see and read her trophies. I was particularly charmed by a card she was given with the following advice: "Be merry, do the right thing and let the birds sing!" It is a quotation from Don Bosco, the priest from Italy who was canonised in 1934.

Laudato Si

The Church has always paid great attention to creation and Don Bosco is no exception. His compatriot Francis of Assisi was and is for many the great example of how we should deal with nature. At the end of his life he wrote a song of praise for nature, the Sun Song. In it he sang 'the things of heaven' - brother sun and sister moon and the stars -, 'the things of earth' or the four elements - brother wind and sister water, brother fire and sister earth. Pope Francis, who named his papal name after the great saint of nature, dedicated his encyclical Laudate Si to creation in the broadest sense of the word.

Five years ago the Pope presented Laudato Si in which he drew attention to creation as our common home. In his message he asked the pervasive question of what world we want to leave to our children and to all those who come after us.

In order to reflect and take action, churches organise the Period of Creation between September 1st and October 4th. This year the Dutch working group Laudato Si is calling on parishes to plant a fruit tree during this period. How symbolic it can be: a fruit tree asks for patience, it takes several years before it bears fruit, when we see the result of our efforts. Perhaps this is an idea for our members of Andante: plant a fruit tree in the Period of Creation and send us a picture: now and with the first fruits! May each fruit be the symbol of our task to take care of the earth and to preserve it; our earth, our common home, in which we live. The global corona crisis shows how vulnerable this house is, but above all how vulnerable we are and how dependent we are on each other. "Are the countries working together to find a solution, or is it each for himself?" In an interview with the English newspaper The Guardian, Inger Anderson, head of the UN Environment Programme, said that the same question can be asked regarding climate issues.

During the Andante Study Days in Baden-Baden in May 2020, we would have studied the vulnerable world. Keynote speakers would have taken us into various perspectives of the climate crisis. But above all in solutions and opportunities for each of us. Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, this meeting could not take place. However the theme will certainly be discussed later on in future study days.

GCCM

A worldwide network of over 400 Catholic organisations, Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) offers many suggestions on how we can pay attention to a sustainable lifestyle, recycling, energy, etc. They also have an online training programme for Laudato Si animators.

<https://catholicclimatemovement.global/>

The fact that the Church takes social and economic issues to heart shows how closely Laudato Si and the European Commission's Green Deal are linked.

European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is the plan to make the EU's economy sustainable. We can do this by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities, and making the transition just and inclusive for all. More information: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

The Vatican encourages all parts of the Church to work towards a world that has a future. One can even speak of a "long sabbath period for Mother Earth to heal and recover from centuries of exploitation".

Laudato Si offers us a moral and religious compass for the common journey ahead of us. We are God's instruments!

Our member organisations have a lot of activities regarding this Period of Creation. Take a look at their websites to be inspired!!

May we let the birds sing and do the right thing; then we will all become happy! You don't have to wait until you turn 91!

Marleen Peters Van der Heyden

Member of CoCoA

P.S.: AndanteEurope has a Facebook page: @AndanteEurope

<https://www.facebook.com/AndanteEurope/>

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