

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

...a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

PRAYER TO THE CREATOR

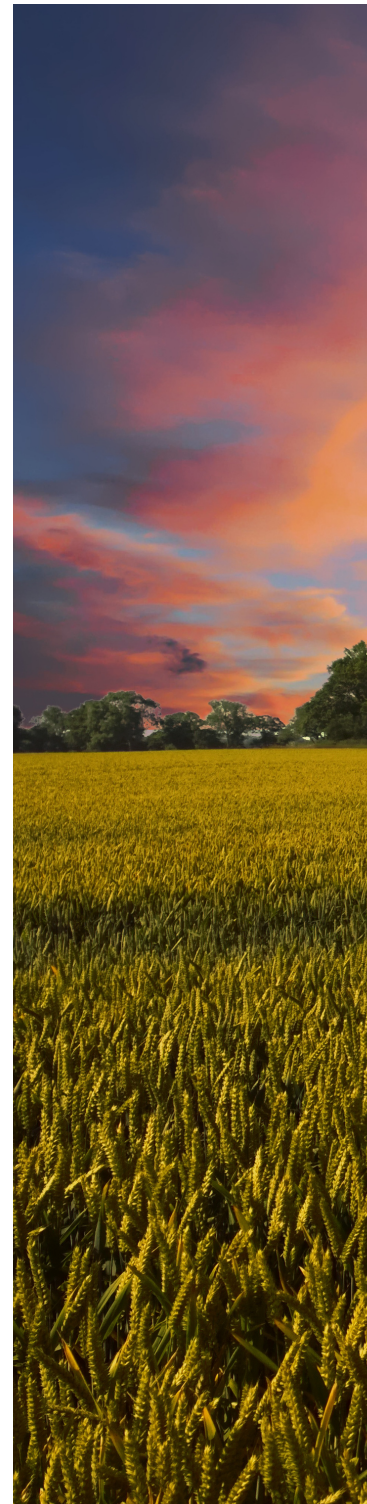
Lord, Father of our human family,
 you created all human beings equal in dignity:
 pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
 and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
 dialogue, justice and peace.
 Move us to create healthier societies
 and a more dignified world,
 a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open
 to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
 May we recognize the goodness and beauty
 that you have sown in each of us,
 and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
 and shared dreams. Amen.

From the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* of Pope Francis

CARING IN THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE: BISHOP GRIFFIN RESOURCE CENTER

The Bishop Griffin Resource Center in Columbus has been operating a drive-thru food pantry every Wednesday and Friday since March 2020. Even though the pantry serves nearly twice as many families as before the pandemic, with a current average of 800 families per month, they have been able to more than double the amount of food provided to each family. Families with children under the age of three are given diapers and wipes. An outside "pop-up" store has allowed families to continue to receive at no cost winter coats, hats, gloves, hand sanitizer, masks, and pet food. Volunteers are the backbone of the center, with their hard work serving a neighborhood hit hard by unemployment and under-employment associated with the pandemic.



FIRST STEP: KNOW YOUR CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES

Know services and agencies that can be referral partners for the parish and its parishioners when aiding vulnerable community members. For instance, encourage parishioners who need support maintaining their independence to contact Catholic Social Services (<https://www.colscss.org>) and who struggle to pay utilities to participate in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (<https://tinyurl.com/yy236oue>). Advocate for social services - including food pantries, public transportation, affordable housing, medical services, and mental health services - that assist vulnerable populations.



SECOND STEP: CONNECT WITH YOUTH MINISTRY

Many young people already have an interest in caring for the environment and one another. To help them understand the connections between the two and the role of their faith, introduce them to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development has a youth ministry session for middle and high school teens (<https://tinyurl.com/y3k5od6t>) intended to engage their everyday experiences and reflect on how we can, but sometimes do not, respect our common home and one another. There are suggestions for how to better care through everyday choices as well as a prayer and animation.



TAKE A STEP TOGETHER: KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY'S VULNERABILITY

Know which parts of your community are vulnerable to flooding, storm damage, and pollution or has residents unable to cope with extreme summer and winter temperatures. Use this knowledge to inform parish missions and evangelism.

Develop a list to check on and aid vulnerable parishioners before, during, and after extreme weather events. Include alerts before events to anticipate parishioner needs and consider use of parish facilities when appropriate.

Erin Cordle with the Office for Social Concerns (<https://tinyurl.com/y6nhytpv>) can provide disaster readiness and response information, including the Diocesan Readiness & Response Network and relevant contacts in government agencies. Collaborate with these agencies and arrange visits to your parish before their services are needed. The Climate Explorer web application (<https://tinyurl.com/yxv96u4h>) can help you examine risks in your parish using digital maps.



Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.