

## Finding the Hope

At St. Philip's Anglican Church in Milford we are studying Laudato Si, Pope Francis' encyclical letter on care for our common home. Before its much anticipated release last summer people were wondering if the Pope would take a strong stand. He does not disappoint. He tells it like it is, people are being treated badly, animals are being treated badly as are the land, the air and the water and sadly this is a result of our self-centred, egotistical, consumeristic society.

In a quest to satisfy our every need we have become willing to do so at the expense of the land and of people. Too many of us have turned our backs on God and made ourselves the centre of our universe. Laudato Si is saying exactly what we need to hear at this time. Pope Francis describes the state of creation today and calls us to make a change.

The good news is that if we accept the challenge we will become the Christians we are called by God to be. After all the damage we have inflicted upon this earth, upon the people and other living things of this earth, Pope Francis affirms that all is not lost, we are capable of making a new start, of choosing what is good. We need a new attitude, a new way of doing things.

God calls us to care for his creation and Jesus commands us to love one another. What kind of world do we want for future generations? The choice is ours to make. Jesus tells us God is our father and as such we are brothers and sisters. How will we live in communion with one another? We need to stop our wasteful, greedy, exploitative ways and become the good stewards of the earth we are called to be, to care for the land and to care for the people. We need to remember creation is God's gift.

Let us show our gratitude. We must not be overwhelmed. Laudato Si tells us how to care for this great gift. Little things will not solve the problem but they do matter. We can all do something. We can choose what is life giving or we can continue to be part of the problem. With kindness, love and caring actions we can change the world. We can rise to the challenges of environmental degradation and social justice by becoming the people God calls us to be.

In the words of Pope Francis: "Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life."

Paula Walker, member of St. Philip's Anglican Church in Milford and the Diocese of Ontario Green Group