

AUG 2025

11th Edition

LAUDATO VOICES

Magazine

«SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE AND HOPE FOR CREATION»



Laudato Youth Initiative

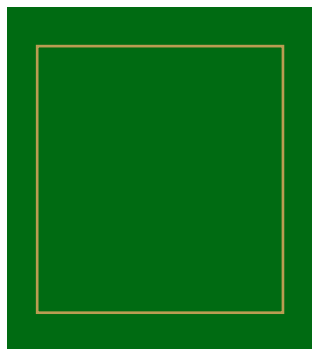
www.laudato-youthinitiative.org

'There can be no peace
without a culture of care' -
Pope Francis (Jan 1, 2021)



The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) is dedicated to empowering young people to forge a climate-resilient future. We believe that by uniting our efforts in our Laudato Si Clubs in schools, Universities, Dioceses, and communities, we can model the way toward effective climate action and create meaningful responses to the challenges posed by climate change.

Our mission centers on responding to the message of the Encyclical Laudato Si, the Catholic Social Teachings, filling the knowledge gap of our country's environmental laws, creating a synergy with SDGs, especially 13- Call to Action, by uniting youth with mentors we build a sustainable future for all. We strive to mentor and inspire a generation of stewards for the future who are equipped to tackle climate change with action and humility to learn from other.





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Editors

Beloved Sower of Peace and Hope,

We warmly welcome you to the 11th edition of Laudato Voices Magazine, August 2025. We give thanks to God for guiding us through the first half of the year and granting us yet another opportunity to share inspiring stories of faith, hope and care for creation.

As we continue to marvel at the beauty and wonder of our common home, we are reminded of the urgent call to protect and preserve it for future generations but also respond to our responsibility as stewards of the future. This edition explores the theme, ***“Sowing Seeds of Peace and Hope for Creation,”*** highlighting the tireless efforts of our Laudato Youth in their

Si Clubs, other individuals and communities who are taking bold action to care for our common home as inspired by the Catholic Social Teachings on the environment, Pope Francis’ ecological encyclical Laudato Si, SDG 13 and 2.

In this issue, we invite you to join us as we take a moment to honor and pray for Pope Francis, whose presence remains alive in our hearts through his faith and enduring gifts, including Laudato Si, a powerful legacy he left for the Church and the world.

We also extend a heartfelt welcome to Pope Leo XIV and share our collective hopes for his papacy, as published in the May issue of The Tablet Magazine, in the Young

Laudato

other indi-

Note

Catholics quarterly edition of INSPIRE, titled **‘The Pope of Our Own’**

Much has unfolded since our last edition in April. Our Laudato Si Clubs all over the Country were involved in several activities.

Our Leadership team actively participated in the Vatican Africa Conference in Nairobi, where the presence of our Laudato Si Clubs President enriched our experience in climate resilience and youth engagement.

We also took part in the Laudato Si’ Africa Conference 2025, under the theme ***“10 Years After Laudato Si’: Where is Africa?”*** a gathering that brought together delegates from the United States, South America, Europe, and across Africa.

We shared insights from our research on integral ecology in the African context, told stories of young people undergoing ecological conversion, and explored the deep synergies between Pope Francis' vision and African traditional knowledge systems where everything is truly interconnected.

Our contributions extended to a panel discussion where we presented our Laudato Si' Clubs model, including key initiatives such as the Laudato Si' Green Festival, Climate smart agriculture for community engagement to fight hunger and poverty, digital storytelling to change the narrative, and our ambitious One Million Tree Planting Drive.

This edition also puts a spotlight on the Laudato Si' Green Festival 2025, held at Holy Cross Lake View SSS in Jinja. Inspired by the promulgation of the Mass of Creation and creation Mass celebrated by Pope Leo XIV on July 9th, the Jubilee of Youth/digital missionaries, and the 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si', the festival that brought together students, educators, and community leaders in a powerful celebration of creation care and sustainable living.

In addition, this issue features a section of Laudato Voices featuring views and opinions of our young people of SDGs, Mental Health and Climate Change, Farming as a value and much more action activities from our vibrant network of Laudato Si' Clubs.

Through these stories, reflections, and practical insights shared in this edition, we hope to inspire you to be part of our growing initiative led by young people "*small hands big footprints*" united for climate action. Our contributors offer not only spiritual guidance but also concrete actions for living in harmony with our environment from inspiring to nurturing young people to take action.

As we contemplate the notion of integral ecology, and dig deeper in research to learn creative ways so celebrating our interconnection with nature and the sacredness of our world, we are reminded that every seed sown, no matter how small, can shape a more just and sustainable future.

May this edition of Laudato Voices Magazine encourage you to sow seeds of peace and hope, working towards a world where creation is cherished and protected. Together, let us continue to nurture a brighter future for all.

God bless you!

For God and My Country
Laudato Youth
United for Climate Action

Kisembo Immaculate
Publication Editor



Utilizing Social Media platforms for Climate Change awareness



Youth are poised to influence and provide climate change solutions. This is because of their numerical strength, where over 75% of Ugandans fall under age of 30. However, in order for this to happen, this young population needs to be engaged to participate fully and have their voice heard. This may not be done through physical meetings and engagements only, but also through digital space (i.e. Social media) which has come to be known as their favourite communication platforms. It needs to be utilized. And there are strong reasons for that.

Firstly, the state of digital space in Uganda is evolving. Over the years, there has been a lot of progress and growth in the number of people who can use technologies. This is largely due to our demographic effect. As such, you have many people who will easily adopt the digital space compared to the older generations.

This factor is intertwined with increasing internet penetration and smartphone accessibility in Uganda. Currently, by 2023, there were 15m smart phones—according to Uganda Communication Commission report of 2023.

More people are going online and using digital gadgets to send and receive news, information, knowledge, and entertainment. Social media platforms, therefore, have become vital for communication, news dissemination, and activism. Increasingly, social media platforms are becoming attractive to a big number of Ugandans, especially because of the increasing access to the internet, but also because the platforms are not as regulated or even as censored as the legacy media. Key social media platforms in Uganda include Facebook, WhatsApp, X, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Instagram, among others, taking a big percentage of the 12 million internet users in the country, according to Digital 2023 (Kemp, 2023).



TikTok, like Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube, have become a key part of Uganda's communication environment. This is especially true for the younger generation, who frequently feel excluded or limited from key climate change discussions. With over 5.5 million active users on TikTok, 600,000 on X, and 4.6m on Youtube, social media has potential for amplifying voices of young people about climate change issue. This is the same reason why Jürgen Habermas called this space the 'Public Sphere' where issues affecting the general public ought to be discussed and solutions found. Let's feed it into global context.

As of 2022, X had over 230 million active users globally (Marchal et al., 2021).



Therefore the influence is not only national, but potentially global. Through these platforms, Ugandan climate change discourse can be given innovative forms to create awareness and knowledge to young people. This approach to digital activism has attracted massive participation, particularly from the younger demographic, and has significantly increased the country's climate change discourse forum.



social media platforms like X and TikTok have democratised dissemination and access to information, giving young people direct channels to share their perspectives but also speak to the establishment. They offer immediacy, reach, and virality, enabling content creators to swiftly disseminate messages and engage with other users. After all, these platforms also act as a bridge for quick content creation, sharing and amplification, leveraging its wider reach and facilitating discussions. This approach is not new. It worked for campaigns like #MeToo where activists successfully leveraged digital platforms to shed light on structural inequalities, changing public discourses and pushing for global legislative reforms. It can work for climate change awareness too.

**Benard Kahwa,
LYI, Executive Director**

Digital Storytelling to inspire climate action.

Laudato Youth Initiative: Using Short Films and Video Series to Engage Youth in Laudato Si Implementation

How it works

The Laudato Youth Initiative uses an innovative, media-driven approach to foster youth participation in the implementation of SDG13 & 2, Laudato Si, Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home, and the Catholic Social Teachings. By producing short films and video series, the initiative effectively communicates complex environmental and ethical issues in relatable, visual, and engaging ways that resonate with young audiences and people who can't read these documents but could be educated by these films.

Storytelling through Visual Media: The videos tell stories rooted in real-life environmental challenges faced by communities, highlighting the role of youth in addressing these issues through local action.

Youth Voices and Faces: Young people are not just the target audience they are featured as actors, narrators, and creators, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment. They are the Hope to our vision of ecological conversion.

Educational yet Inspirational: Content is designed to inform youth about ecological issues like climate change, pollution, deforestation, and sustainable agriculture, while also inspiring hope and action through faith-based messages and activities.

Digital Accessibility: The short format and distribution via social media platforms (WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram) make the content widely accessible, even in areas with limited internet bandwidth.

Young people today are deeply concerned about the realities of climate change, and at the same time, they are zealous in their search for meaning and connection with God. The Laudato Youth Initiative bridges these two powerful forces—faith and ecological responsibility—to mobilize, empower, and mentor youth leaders who can, in turn, inspire others.



Short
Films
Tell the Story

Documenting what is happening to our common home



SDG.VISION
SHARING & INSPIRING ACTION

Laudato Youth Initiative

has been chosen to feature on SDG.Vision for its outstanding work making a valuable contribution to the



Laudato Youth Initiative's film

Laudato Youth Advocating for Ecological Conversion - Pilgrims of Green Hope

is inspiring others to take action on the SDGs



WWW.SDG.Vision



Effectiveness

Increased Awareness: Youth report a better understanding of the Laudato Si message and environmental issues after engaging with the videos.

Youth-Led Action: Viewers are inspired to initiate local environmental projects—such as tree planting, waste segregation, and climate-smart agriculture, often sparked by themes seen in the films.

Values Formation: The integration of faith, ethics, and environmental stewardship helps shape morally responsible citizens aligned with Catholic social teaching.

Community Engagement: The films often spark intergenerational conversations and community dialogue, fostering a broader culture of ecological conversion.

Scalable Model: our Laudato Si Clubs in Schools, parishes, and communities have adopted the format, making it a replicable model for other regions seeking to implement Laudato Si through youth engagement after watching the film documentaries or short series.



Uganda Catholic Television Environmental Dialogue

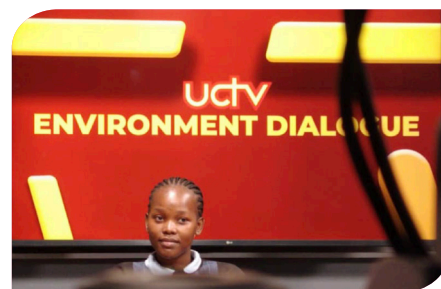
As a member of the Laudato Youth Initiative, I recently had the honor of participating in an environmental dialogue on UCTV (Uganda Catholic Television) that explored the vital role of youth in conservation and climate action. The discussion highlighted key topics such as climate education, youth engagement in policy-making, and resource mobilization for sustainability efforts. This experience not only deepened my understanding of the climate crisis but also reinforced the importance of intergenerational collaboration and faith-based action in addressing this global challenge.

Leveraging digital literacy to create awareness

I was asked several questions about my experience as a Laudato Youth, and here are my responses:

1. How best would you describe a Laudato Youth like you?

A Laudato Youth is a faith-driven, environmentally conscious young person who responds actively to Pope Francis' call to care for our common home. We are rooted in the spirituality of Laudato Si' and the Catholic Social Teachings, blending the Call to Action in Laudato Si with the Call to Action in SDG 13 and Uganda's environmental laws. We see creation not just as nature, but as a gift from God to be cherished, protected, and shared. Our approach is holistic, recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic issues.



2. Based on your own experience, how has the Laudato Youth Initiative shaped you?

The Laudato Youth Initiative has transformed my perspective on the world and my role in it. It has deepened my sense of responsibility toward the environment and people affected by ecological destruction. I've learned to connect my faith to real-world action, from tree planting to advocacy, and to understand that caring for creation is a form of reverence to God and discipleship. Through the initiative, I've gained valuable skills in leadership, community engagement, and environmental stewardship.

3. Talking about mental health, do you believe that young people have had to face mental health challenges due to the climate crisis? What's your experience though?

Yes, many young people feel overwhelmed, anxious, and helpless when thinking about the climate crisis – it's called eco-anxiety. Being part of the Laudato Youth Initiative has helped me channel those feelings into action, hope, and community support, which has greatly improved my mental well-being. Our initiative prioritizes mental health, recognizing the emotional toll of environmental degradation and the importance of self-care and community support.



4. So highlight for us some of the activities that the Laudato Si Clubs undertake?

Our clubs engage in various activities, including:

- Tree planting campaigns to restore ecosystems and promote biodiversity
- Clean-up drives to reduce waste and promote community cleanliness
- Awareness talks on climate change, mental health, and sustainable living
- Media campaigns to raise awareness and create educative content on environmental issues
- Sustainability programs to mark Earth Day and Laudato Si Week, promoting environmental stewardship and community engagement
- Care for Creation Masses to reflect on our faith and ecological responsibility
- Advocacy through creative arts, using music, drama, and poetry to raise awareness and inspire action
- Celebrating special events like the Season of Creation and the Laudato Si' Green Festival, promoting ecological awareness and community celebration

5. As a Laudato Youth Leader, how would you relate your activities in regards to faith and ecology?

Our activities are deeply rooted in our faith, and integral ecology informs our African interpretation of Laudato Si. Every tree we plant, every plastic bottle we collect, and every awareness session we hold is an act of love for God and His creation. We reflect on Scripture, especially Genesis 2:15, where we are called to "till and keep" the Earth. Faith gives our ecological work meaning, and ecology makes our faith visible through action.

6. Where does your passion to care for creation stem from?

My passion comes from a mix of faith, mentorship, family, and education. I grew up close to nature, and through the Laudato Youth Initiative, I was mentored to love it more and put into action. Pope Francis' message in Laudato Si' opened my eyes to the moral and spiritual crisis behind environmental destruction, inspiring and guiding me every day. I believe that caring for creation is not just a moral obligation but a Christian responsibility, and I'm committed to playing my part in protecting our common home.

As a Laudato Youth, I am proud to be part of a global movement that is driven by faith, hope, and action. We believe that caring for creation is not just a duty but a privilege, and we are committed to working together to protect our common home. Through our initiatives, we aim to inspire a new generation of environmental leaders who are equipped to address the complex challenges of climate change and promote a more sustainable future for all.

Kirikumwino Sarah
Laudato Si Club's President



By Sarah Kirikumwino
LYI – Laudato Si Clubs President.

The Vatican Africa Climate Summit marked a pivotal moment in Africa's climate journey—uniting generations to address one of humanity's most urgent challenges: climate resilience. Hosted by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, this summit brought together elders, youth leaders, scientists, and faith communities to build a deeper culture of care for our common home.

The Vatican Africa Climate Summit: Youth, Faith, and the Future of Climate Resilience.

Bridging Generations Through Dialogue

This intergenerational dialogue served as a powerful bridge between youth and elders, reflecting the belief that climate resilience is not only an environmental issue but a deeply human project. Together, participants addressed the shared responsibility of nurturing the Earth and protecting vulnerable communities especially climate-induced migrants, children, and marginalized groups.

Key Topics Covered about young people: Climate Migration, Justice & Children's Rights

One major focus was climate-related migration. As climate change displaces families, there is an urgent need for host communities to offer compassion and belonging. The summit emphasized protecting children's rights within climate action frameworks, recognizing the long-term implications for the next generation.

Faith Leadership and Moral Responsibility – We call it Integral Ecology in Laudato Youth Initiative

Pope Francis' leadership continues to be a beacon of hope in the climate initiative. Through the lens of Laudato Si', the Church offers not only spiritual guidance but a moral framework for climate action. As a matter of affirmation to the work we do in the Laudato Youth Initiative to Mentor Laudato Si Clubs – Our points of attention

“The summit called on Catholic institutions—schools, parishes, dioceses—to integrate ecological education and advocacy into their daily mission.”

This is a dream come true Bethany Land institute on the other hand is Forming Leaders in Integral Ecology for Rural Transformation in Uganda. With all this African Youth are being empowered to walk the path towards integrating ecological conversion.

Research, Resilience & the Role of Youth

As a matter of fact as the President of Laudato Si Clubs in Schools that are truly striving to enhance their Involvement in ecological research and innovations. I spoke to the importance of research highlighting the example of our fourth coming Laudato Si Green Festival that is purely planned to embrace intergaral ecology and enhance young people's involvement in ecological research.



From Climate Crisis to Climate resilience in Africa: A local and regional approach

We need to be ready and prepared to reduce the risk of Climate Change: Say no to deforestation, manage waste our communities needs to be educated to become resilient to challenges like floods, Carbon emissions, talking about climate change and Unite to care for others and take action that preserves the eco system. Reflecting on all these, the Vatican Africa Climate Summit affirmed that solidarity is not optional. Climate justice demands collaboration across faith, science, and society. As Pilgrims of Green Hope, the Laudato Youth are localizing climate action through education, advocacy, and faith-based mobilization.

The outcomes of this summit have been foreseen to contribute to global processes like COP30, COP31, and the 2026 Vatican Summit ensuring that African voices shape global climate policy.



Africa's Climate Solutions must be shaped by those who live the reality.

“Let us uphold the dignity of every human person, for climate action is not just about saving the planet—it’s about protecting people.”



Voice of the young people



June 30th marked a moment of great honor and inspiration as I joined fellow youth leaders, scientists, policymakers, and community voices at the CIFOR-ICRAF campus for the Vatican African Climate Resilient Summit. Hosted at the World Agroforestry Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, this gathering brought together diverse leaders around a shared vision: moving beyond mitigation to embrace climate resilience rooted in science, solidarity, and local leadership.

As President of the Laudato Si Clubs and a voice for the Laudato Youth Initiative, day one of the summit felt like a collective call to action. I had the opportunity to listen to and engage with remarkable leaders, including *His Eminence, Cardinal Peter K.A. Turkson, Chancellor, PASS/PASS*, Éliane Ubalijoro, Chief Executive Officer, CIFOR-ICRAF, Hon. H.E. Wilber Ottichilo, Governor, Vihiga County, and Chair Environment, Forestry and Climate change committee

Jacqueline Kado, Executive Director, NASAC, and Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Director of the Legal Division at the United Nations Environment Programme. Each speaker emphasized not only the urgency of climate action but also the power of youth, innovation, and policy to shape a sustainable future.





*In the words of
Dr. Éliane Ubalijoro, CEO
of CIFOR-ICRAF, “Resilience is peacebuilding”*

During roundtable discussions, I had the chance to share our work at Laudato Youth Initiative where we champion eco-innovations, biodiversity, agroecology, and climate-smart agriculture, particularly among youth in Uganda. The summit affirmed what we already believe: that young people are ready and eager to lead. From bioenergy and youth-led food systems to microclimate solutions, we’re seeing bold ideas matched with grounded science.

Importantly, the summit didn’t just create space for dialogue it mobilized us. Under the theme “From Climate Crisis to Climate Resilience at Local and Regional Levels,” we saw youth voices being strengthened and amplified. The message was clear: solidarity is not optional, and resilience must be rooted in inclusive, scientific, and spiritual action.

I was inspiring to see that our commitment of inspiring young people into eco innovations at the Laudato Youth Initiative, were emphasised values during the conference and path to strengthened commitment to integral ecology a vision that honors science, tradition, and spirituality. As we sow seeds of peace and hope, we must prioritize resilience not as a reaction to crisis, but as a proactive way of life.

This deeply resonates with our 2025 Laudato Si Festival theme: “Sowing Seeds of Peace and Hope for Creation.” Resilience is not just about recovery it’s about renewal. It is what enables grassroots farmers to rebound after drought, what makes cities greener and more adaptable after crises. It is, ultimately, a pillar of true climate action.

I was especially moved by Prof. Kameri-Mbote’s reflections on how law and norms shape our response to the climate crisis. Her message underscored that the future of resilience is African, innovative, and informed. These ideas echo the Vatican’s call for ecological citizenship and intergenerational solidarity, as emphasized by Cardinal Turkson, who reminded us that;

We received the earth in its beauty we cannot pass it on as a desert to those who come after us.



From Hope to Action



UNITED FOR CLIMATE ACTION

A visit that felt like a dream come true, witnessing a future where young people are not just participants but leaders in Africa's ecological journey. Our meeting with Bethany Land Institute (BLI) in Luweero did more than inspire us it ignited a shared mission for concrete action.

Laudato Si Africa Conference 2025

The Laudato Youth Initiative presented a paper at the Laudato Si Africa Conference (LSAC 2025), hosted by BLI from July 23-25, 2025. The conference theme is *“10 Years After Laudato Si’: Where is Africa?”* Our presentation focused on the topic *“What is ‘Integral’ About Integral Ecology in the African Worldview? Stories of Young African Voices Advocating for Ecological Conversion.”*

the Laudato Youth too shared their experiences and perspectives on integral ecology and sustainability in the African World View.



LIVING THE HOPE

On May 29th, Sarah Kirikumwino, President of Laudato Si Clubs, visited the Bethany Land Institute (BLI) in Nandere, Uganda and had the opportunity to meet with Professor Fr. Emmanuel Katongole, co-founder and president of BLI. Fr. Emmanuel Katongole is also a Professor of Theology and Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame (USA). BLI is a living example of ecological restoration and integral ecology in action, showcasing model gardens, intercropped fields, and animals. The institute's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship is truly inspiring.

Learning from a Visionary Leader

During the visit, Fr. Katongole encouraged the Laudato Youth to continue their mission and applauded their work with young people in schools and communities. He emphasized the importance of active Laudato Si Clubs in schools, stating that without them, hands-on agriculture may not be seen in schools. This message resonated deeply with the Laudato Youth, who believe that education is key to promoting ecological conversion and sustainability.



Laudato Si Africa Conference

10 years of Laudato Si where is Africa?

Laudato Youth Initiative Leaders Kahwa Benard and Sarah Kirikumwino, pause for a photo together with fellow youth leaders from across Africa, upon concluding their panel discussion on Mobilizing Youth for Integral Ecology at the LSAC, where they focused on our work in contextualizing Laudato Si' within the African contextual framework by leveraging the use of digital media and visuals to unite young people for climate action.



During our panel discussion, we shared insights about the Laudato Youth Initiative and its innovative approaches in implementing Laudato Si'. Our Laudato Youth Leaders, Sarah and Benard, introduced our digital storytelling model — *a creative tool designed to help participants understand how we are using technology to bridge the knowledge gap in ecological education and inspire climate action.*

This model is centered on telling African ecological stories and reporting environmental events that shifts the narrative and inspires more young people to contextualize Laudato Si' within their cultural frameworks. These stories highlight simply and bring to life the message of Laudato Si like our Series on “what is happening to our common home” its a jour-

ney to helping them understand chapter of Laudato Si this is a kind of transformation and environmental stewardship approach, shared through the wisdom of elders and the creativity of youth. From traditional ecological tales to modern expressions through music, art, and talent, young people are communicating the message of integral ecology in ways that are both relatable and powerful.

A cornerstone of our approach has been the formation of **Laudato Si' Clubs**. These clubs unite young people for climate action and have proven effective in implementing Laudato Si' across Ugandan schools, universities, parishes, dioceses, and communities. Through these clubs, youth are not only learning but becoming agents of change.



Laudato Youth Initiative Leaders (Left Kahwa Benard, Right Sarah Kirikumwino) with Fr. Emmanuel Katongole – Co-Founder/President of Bethany Land Institute; Professor of Theology & Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.



What Is 'Integral' About Integral Ecology in the African Worldview?



Reflecting on a Decade of Call to Action and Urgency, we joined the continent to reflect and listen to each other pondering the 10 years since the publication of *Laudato Si'*, at Bethany Land Institute, emphasis was on the question: "10 Years of *Laudato Si'*: Where is Africa?"

It was a profound honor for our youth leaders to join faith-based and global climate leaders in reflecting, learning, and leveling powerful lessons on ecological stewardship, faith, and justice.

Opening Remarks

Fr. Emmanuel Katongole Fr. Emmanuel Katongole – Co-Founder/President of Bethany Land Institute; Professor of Theology & Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame.

Welcome Address

Rt. Rev. Lawrence Mukasa Bishop, Diocese of Kasana-Luweero and Most Reverend Paul Ssemogerere, Archbishop of Kampala

Invocation:

Rev. Dan Groody, C.S.C. – Vice President & Associate Provost, Professor of Theology & Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame



Keynote Address by H.E. Cardinal Peter Turkson Chancellor, Pontifical Academy of Sciences & Social Sciences, Vatican City In a compelling keynote on “Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor,” Cardinal Peter Turkson explored the

7 Cs of Laudato Si’

1. Continuity

Rooted in teachings of Popes before Francis, from Pope Leo XIII to Vatican II

2. Collegiality

Integrating voices of bishops and the faithful across the globe

3. Conservation

Fostering dialogue on protecting our common home

4. Care

Stewardship over creation, countering the spirit of dominion

5. Convention

Changing behavior and lifestyle toward an ecological conversion

6. Citizenship

Ecological justice rooted in hearing the cry of the poor

7. Contemplation

Seeing God in creation and rethinking our relationship with the Earth



Catholic Church Renews Global Call for Climate Action at Laudato Si' Africa Conference in Uganda

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Katongole, Professor of Theology and International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and co-founder of BLI, called for a reimagining of rural Africa as the frontline of ecological transformation. "Rural communities must become laboratories of integral ecology, where sustainable agriculture, spirituality, and justice meet,"



His Grace Paul Ssemogerere, Archbishop of Kampala,

officially welcomed delegates and reaffirmed the Church's commitment to leading by example in climate action.

"The Church will continue to be a voice for the voiceless and a steward of creation,"

Rt. Rev. Lawrence Mukasa, Bishop of Kasana-Luwero Diocese,

Rt. Rev. Lawrence Mukasa, Bishop of Kasana-Luwero Diocese, condemned humanity's negligence as a driver of the climate crisis, urging society to reflect deeply on the spiritual and moral dimensions of environmental destruction.



Cardinal Peter Turkson

The Catholic Church has issued a renewed and urgent appeal for collective global action against climate change, calling on both political leaders and citizens to take immediate and shared responsibility for protecting the environment. The call was made by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences at the Vatican, during his keynote address at the Laudato Si' Africa Conference held at Bethany Land Institute (BLI) in Kasana-Luwero Diocese, Uganda.



Cardinal Peter Turkson Plants a tree at the end of the Conference

Delivering his message under the theme “Ten Years After Laudato Si’: Where is Africa?”, Cardinal Turkson emphasised the enduring relevance of Pope Francis’s 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’*, which focuses on humanity’s moral duty to care for the Earth, our “common home.”

“The Earth is a divine gift, but human behaviour is turning it into a wilderness and a desert,” Cardinal Turkson warned. “We must embrace ecological citizenship and educate all people to live in harmony with creation.”

Cardinal Turkson called on all people, especially Africans, to hear both “the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor,” noting that environmental degradation disproportionately affects vulnerable communities. He also urged African bishops to place environmental concerns at the forefront of the upcoming Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). We must move towards climate solutions that are with us, for us, and by us. We must place science at the heart of Africa’s climate strategy and amplify youth-led, evidence-based action.”



The three-day conference brought together religious leaders, scholars, policymakers, and environmental activists from across Africa and beyond. It aimed to assess Africa’s progress since *Laudato Si’* was released, celebrate grassroots ecological initiatives, and explore the Integral Ecology paradigm—an approach that links environmental, social, and spiritual well-being.

The event also honored the late Pope Francis, described by organizers as a formidable moral and spiritual leader and tireless advocate for ecological justice, who passed away on April 21, 2025. Participants at the conference stressed that Africa — a continent rich in natural resources but vulnerable to climate

shocks — must lead from the front in advocating for climate justice, rooted in its spiritual traditions and community resilience.

Through interdisciplinary research, policy dialogue, and faith-based action, the *Laudato Si’* Africa Conference has signaled a bold step forward in mobilising the continent around environmental stewardship as both a spiritual obligation and a developmental imperative. “This is no longer just about science or economics,” Cardinal Turkson concluded. “It is about moral courage and our responsibility to future generations.”

Listening to the Earth

My Journey at the Laudato Si Africa Conference

Attending the Laudato Si Africa Conference was more than a professional engagement—it was a spiritual awakening. For 3 days, I joined a vibrant tapestry of voices, farmers, faith leaders, scientists, policymakers, and youth all united by a shared urgency: how do we care for our common home in a way that honors both creation and community?

The conversations on integral ecology resonated deeply. This holistic view reminded me that environmental issues are inseparable from social justice, culture, and spirituality. The conference challenged me to rethink how my work in community development connects with this wider web of life. It is not just about planting trees or conserving soil; it is about healing relationships between humans, nature, and the sacred.

Spirituality was not sidelined but embraced as a vital source of strength and guidance. Hearing stories from indigenous leaders and faith communities revealed how culture shapes our ethics and policies. Their wisdom reminded me that caring for the Earth is also an act of cultural preservation and identity.

Policy discussions highlighted the urgent need for laws grounded in respect for the planet and its people. It became clear that ethical governance requires listening, truly listening to the voices of those most affected by environmental degradation, including marginalized communities.

What struck me most was the sense of hope and responsibility. This conference was not just about problems but about actionable solutions rooted in love and justice. As I left, I felt called to deepen my commitment, not only in my work but in how I live daily, walking gently on this Earth that sustains us all.

The journey toward ecological conversion is ongoing. Together, through culture, faith, and ethics, Africa can lead the way.

*By Ruth Nakalembe
Bethany Lands Institute*





An Experience in the Lazarus Forest

Once devastated, the Lazarus Forest now stands as a powerful symbol of renewal and hope. Streams of clear water flow gently through its heart, birds once silent now sing joyfully among the trees, and wild animals leap freely from branch to branch. The rebirth of this forest is a living witness to the principles of integral ecology where nature co exists with creation in the African storybooks and Laudato Si

Cool, calming winds drift through the forest, stirred by the graceful swaying of trees, a true sign that life has returned. Remarkably, rain falls here even when surrounding areas remain dry. It's as though nature itself recognizes the sacredness of this place. What was once a dream; **to restore this forest — is now a vibrant reality.**

BLI, the steward of Lazarus Forest, has an ambitious vision: to plant over 1 million trees by 2040. This forest has also become a hub for recreation and environmental education, offering activities such as bird watching and eco-tours.

Planting a tree here is not just an act of conservation — it is a bold voice for change, a stand for the future.



LAUDATO SI CLUBS

The New Hope for Faith and Environmental Conservation by Young People in Uganda

Discover how the Laudato Youth Initiative is living out the ecological legacy of Pope Francis and promoting St. Adolf, the St. Francis of Uganda. From inspiring faith to uniting for climate action, the Laudato Youth Initiative is mentoring a generation of future stewards and care takers of mother earth rooted in spiritual values and driven by a shared responsibility to care for our common home.

Our Laudato Si' Clubs have emerged as a dynamic force, mobilizing young people in **schools, parishes, universities, dioceses and communities** to respond to Pope Francis' call in Laudato Si'. Through environmental education, tree planting, waste management, mental health programs, youth leadership training and digital media storytelling, path ways of reimagining and reshaping the narrative of modern-day climate action response, grounded in Catholic Social Teaching to mentor young peoples longing for faith metorship, peace, and sustainable futures.

As climate challenges intensify in Uganda and across Africa, these clubs represent a new model of grassroots ecological leadership—beginning with the formation of ecological citizens and bridging the generational gap. This is achieved through mentorship, where wisdom is passed on by faith-driven youth leaders empowered by collaboration and youthful resolve.

Sarah Kirikuwino
Laudato Youth Initiative
Laudato Si Clubs President

LAUDATO SI GREEN FESTIVAL

Celebrating Faith, Ecology, and Inspiring Youth-led Climate Action

Theme: Sowing Seed of hope and peace for Creation

...

While many are familiar with socially-oriented festivals, the Laudato Youth Initiative pioneered a unique **Green Festival in Uganda, dedicated to faith and environmental conservation**. This groundbreaking event is designed to mobilize and unite young people for climate action, from regional outreach to national impact.

Recognizing that **youth cannot tackle the climate crisis alone**, the festival goes far beyond celebration. It serves as a vibrant platform for collaboration and partnership, where shared purpose drives real action.

The event brings together a diverse range of stakeholders: **community leaders, religious leaders, educators, agricultural and environmental professionals, and corporate organizations**. It calls on these groups to embrace corporate social responsibility in environmental stewardship, and to **forge synergies that amplify youth voices and scale sustainability efforts**. From our Laudato Si' Clubs to uniting other institutions to stand with the young people.

Through community engagement, mentorship, storytelling, tree planting and distribution, youth parliaments, eco-exhibitions, and knowledge sharing, the festival nurtures intergenerational learning. It empowers Laudato Youth to become sustainability champions—rooted in faith, equipped with practical knowledge, and backed by their institutions and a network of committed partners.

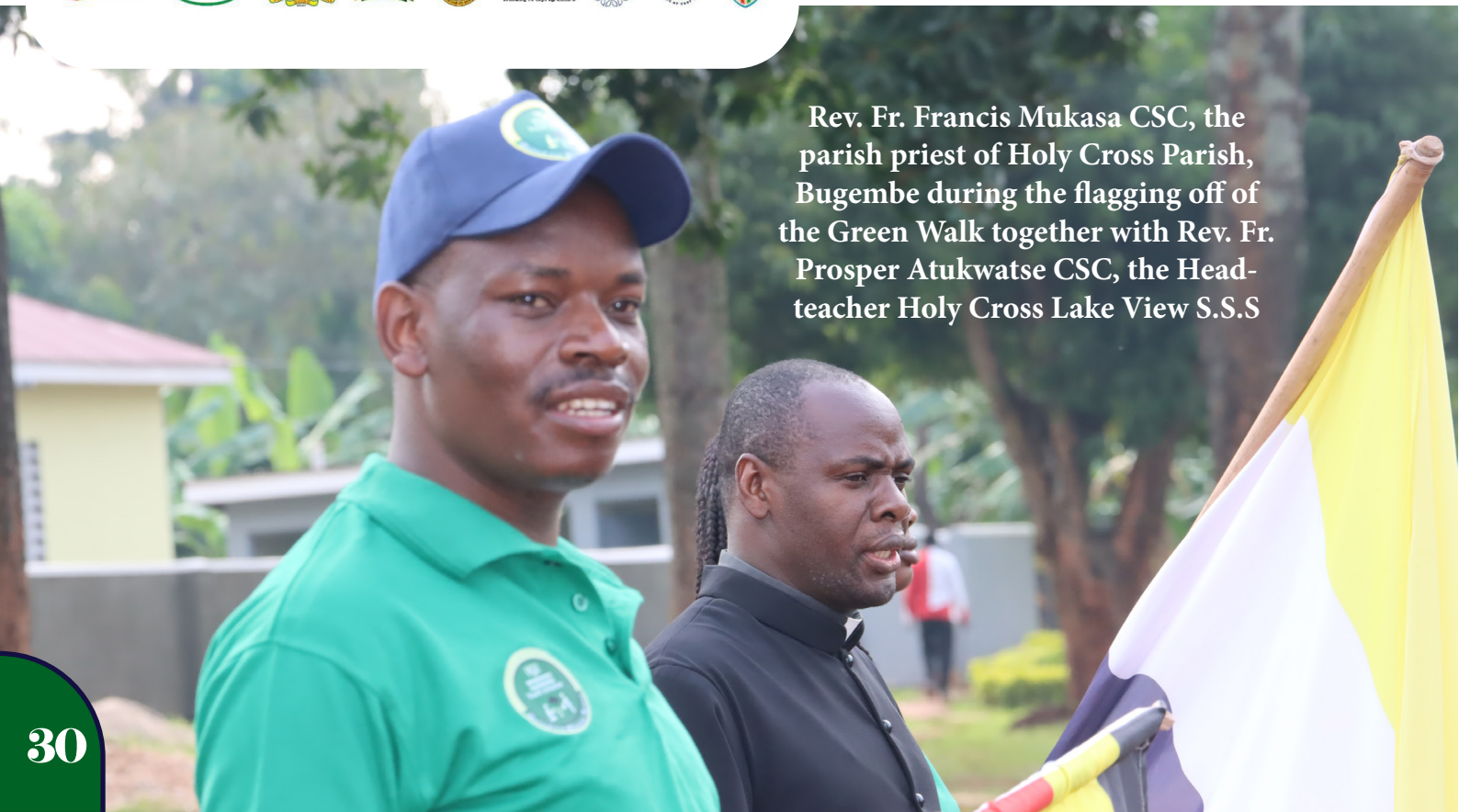
By promoting actions as simple yet vital as saying no to plastic bags, planting more trees, and engaging communities in environmental awareness, the Laudato Si' Green Festival is raising hope for a greener, more sustainable future for all—a future where everyone's talent contributes to caring for our common home. You will learn more on our festival page.





LAUDATO SI Club of Holy Cross Lake View S.S.S

Rev. Fr. Francis Mukasa CSC, the parish priest of Holy Cross Parish, Bugembe during the flagging off of the Green Walk together with Rev. Fr. Prosper Atukwatse CSC, the Head-teacher Holy Cross Lake View S.S.S



On July 19, 2025, the Laudato Si' Green Festival, organized by the Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View SSS, powered by the Laudato Youth Initiative, took place at Holy Cross Lake View SSS in Wanyange, Jinja. The festival's theme, "Sowing Seeds of Peace and Hope for Creation," aimed to remind everyone of their role in conserving Mother Earth.

The event began with a "Green Walk-A Walk of Faith," where students, heads of schools, religious leaders, and community members of Wanyange marched with hope from Holy Cross Parish Bugembe. The group was flagged off by Rev. Fr. Francis Mukasa CSC, the parish priest of Holy Cross Parish, Bugembe, who prayed for journey mercies and a successful event. Participating schools included Holy Cross Primary School, Dayspring Elementary School, St Jude Primary School, Busoga College Mwiri, St Mary's Secondary School Masese, Viva College, and Good Heart Secondary School.

The Green Mass, led by Rev. Fr. Muto Gerald, Chancellor of Jinja Diocese, featured a procession of the word, liturgical dances, and an offering of gifts of nature. In his homily, Rev. Fr. Muto emphasized the importance of caring for creation and highlighted the encyclical Laudato Si' by Pope Francis, which stresses that God's mercy is endless, but nature will not forgive when destroyed.

Rev. Fr. Prosper Atukwatse CSC, the Headteacher of Holy Cross Lake View SSS, highlighted the significance of the Green Mass and its connection to the Care of Creation. "We are lucky to be the first people in Uganda, if not the whole of Africa, to celebrate a Green Mass after the Pope's something we don't take for granted," he said. He elaborated on the three main focuses of the festival.

1. The promulgation of a new formulary of the Roman Missal dedicated to the Care of Creation by Pope Leo.
2. The Jubilee of the Youth, calling forth more young people into faith and climate action.
3. The 10th Anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si', guiding people to pray for those affected by climate change.





Laudato Si' Green Festival “Green Walk”

Celebrating Faith, Ecology, and Youth Action

The Laudato Si' Green Festival recently gathered hundreds of young people and community members in a vibrant celebration of environmental awareness, faith, and collective action. Organized under the Laudato Youth Initiative, the festival aimed to bring Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' to life—uniting youth in their call to care for our common home.

The event featured a powerful Laudato Si' “Green Walk”, which raised public awareness about the urgent need for ecological conversion. This was followed by a Green Mass, where young people actively participated through liturgical dances, hymns of praise, poetry, drama, and other creative expressions—showcasing their deep concern for the climate crisis and their vision for change.

The festival emphasized youth empowerment, faith-driven advocacy, and community involvement. It offered a space for young people to connect with their communities and demonstrate leadership in ecological conservation.

For a Country like Uganda in a continent like Africa, where many livelihoods depend on agriculture and natural ecosystems, the festival also served to deepen youth understanding of integral ecology. Through education, innovation, and creativity, the Laudato Si' Clubs are inspiring young people to bridge the gap between humanity's needs for holistic growth, Service,

ite Action

environmental conservation, and biodiversity.

The Laudato Si' Green Festival stands as a beacon of hope—a model of how faith, culture, and action can unite to form a generation ready to protect and preserve creation.

We take in what is from the atmosphere, which is Mother Earth. The encyclical Laudato Si' by Pope Francis emphasizes that God's mercy is endless, but nature will not forgive. Therefore, when we destroy nature, it will pay us in a very tough currency. We are supposed to maintain the green environment, recycle, and make people aware of the goodness of living in a green environment."

Rev. Fr. Olobo Leonard CSC, Financial Controller at HCLV S.S.S and Chair Board Director John Paul II Peace and Justice Centre, spoke about building a sustainable and peaceful future through education, faith, and advocacy. "Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems," he said, referencing Laudato Si' 61. He emphasized the importance of:

- Reducing waste and choosing simplicity over excess.
- Treating nature as a gift to cherish, not an object to dominate.
- Fostering dialogue between humanity and the natural world.

Peace-making includes economic justice, food security, access to clean water, and land rights, he added. As Pope John Paul II once said, "Even when the night is darkest, we can always light a candle of Hope."

Mr. Male Joseph, the guest of honor, emphasized the importance of building collaboration and agricultural innovation to enhance community livelihood. We can take advantage to learn the basic things so that we take them on to change and influence our communities in a good way.





MOTHER EARTH LAMENTS

One man's meat is another man's poison. As we go on with life there are some practices we carry out that benefit some of us and do not benefit the others.

For this case I take about the way mother earth laments, we destroy the environment in very many different ways. Like cutting down trees, draining swamps, burning bushes and very many other ways which are not catering for our environment and vegetation.

Mother earth keeps on lamenting every now and then for we are destroying her, we are not using what she is providing to us resourcefully, we are misusing it.

As we move on we should not make mother earth lament, we should take care of our environment. Pope Francis wrote about laudato si which means "Praise be" in that case we have the laudato si clubs which take care of the environment to keep it green in praise of God.

The ten years of the laudato si existence has made a very big difference in taking care of our environment. Let us take care and conserve our environment for us to live a better life and also in honour of the laudato si and Pope Francis.

**UNITED FOR CLIMATE ACTION
BY LAKER MARIA PAULINE SIC**

United For Climate Action

The Festival was graced by the attendance of schools including Holy Cross Primary, Dayspring Elementary, St. Jude, Busoga College Mwiri, St. Mary's Masese, Viva College, and Good Heart SSS, all gathered at Holy Cross Parish Bugembe.

Participating schools and organizations: Fruits of Faith Farm took part in the Knowledge Market Booth, presenting a sustainable model that inspired learners on urban farming and climate-smart agriculture as pathways for community

empowerment and improved family livelihoods. Kakira Sugar Company Limited generously delivered 3500 tree seedlings, which were distributed to all attendants.

Uganda Catholics Online live-streamed the Holy Mass, and several other independent media teams and organizations—such as the Rotary Club of Jinja, HOLA, John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre, and the host team, the Laudato Youth Initiative—also participated actively in the event.



POPE LEO'S HISTORIC MASS FOR CARE OF CREATION A CALL TO ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION



On July 9, 2025, a historic day in the life of the Church and for us as young environmental promoters who believe in integral ecology, Pope Leo XIV celebrated the inaugural Mass for the Care of Creation in the open-air gardens of the Borgo Laudato Si', a "natural cathedral" nestled within Castel Gandolfo's papal summer estate. Conceived as an ecological laboratory, this "Laudato Si' Village" was founded by Pope Francis in 2023 to enhance the principles of integral ecology, combining sustainability, education, and social justice.

This event follows the Vatican's approval on July 3, 2025, of the new "Mass for the Care of Creation", a liturgical response to Pope Francis' Laudato Si' encyclical. Pope Leo XIV officially introduced this rite at a Vatican press conference, insisting it should animate prayer, policy, and everyday choices we make are going to unite the church in action and prayer. Just weeks earlier, Pope Leo released a message for the 10th World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, titled "Seeds of Peace and Hope," invoking Isaiah's imagery to link ecological renewal with social justice and peace. He affirmed that initiatives like Borgo Laudato Si' a "laboratory where we live in harmony with creation" are seeds

invoking Isaiah's imagery to link ecological renewal with social justice and peace. He affirmed that initiatives like Borgo Laudato Si' a "laboratory where we live in harmony with creation" are seeds bearing fruit for generations. Everyday through our work we envision growing in solidarity to unite young people for climate action that will build a kingdom of Justice and peace and form care takers of mother earth and stewards of the future. The Spiritual and Ecological Purpose

Pope Leo emphasized the spiritual and ecological purpose of the Mass, highlighting the importance of caring for creation as an integral part of Christian mission.

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV emphasized that the Eucharist “gives meaning to and sustains our work”, and care for creation is integral to Christian mission. He encouraged Catholics to see caring for the environment not as peripheral, but as central to justice, charity, and faith: “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one.” His words invite us to reconsider our attitudes and take action to help those in need and those affected by climate change. A point which has remained a big focus for us in the Laudato Youth Initiative.

The Mass, using a newly approved formulary dedicated to creation care, is the 50th special-intention Mass added to the Roman Missal. Celebrated privately by the Holy Father with staff at the Borgo, it was marked by green vestments, which portrayed the beautiful theme colors of the Laudato Youth Initiative. We know earth prayers, and poignant reflections on humanity’s ecological responsibility are an act of faith and hope for God’s creation, and so we see this feast as one that will enhance our role in enhancing the work of care for creation in many ways.



The Significance of the Mass

Pope Leo emphasized the spiritual and ecological purpose of the Mass, highlighting the importance of caring for creation as an integral part of Christian mission. By situating the Mass outdoors, amidst trees, flowers, and wildlife, he reinforced the theology that creation is sacred, a gift, and a partner in worship. The Borgo models this harmony: its working farm produces sustainable food, educational programs engage diverse communities, including the marginalized, and its land establishes a circular ecological ethos. We believe that nature can connect us to God, and many people can receive healing and reconciliation in sacred places like natural gardens, or “reconciliation gardens.”



Churches can lead the way in reducing single-use plastics.

Start with simple, practical steps like using reusable offertory bags made from recycled plastics encourage families to adopt the 3Rs and to use reusable water bottles as part of their commitment to sustainability. We all can need to adopt the Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle model to care for our common home



Laudato Youth are using their talents and faith to unite spiritually and inspire action. Rooted in their love for creation, they live out the message of Laudato Si' — "Praise be to you, Lord."

In Africa, praise is deeply expressed through prayer, music, and dance, which remain an integral part of our liturgy. These gifts are not only acts of worship but also powerful tools for raising awareness and caring for our common home.



Pope Leo XIV has emphasized the importance of "Green Masses," or Masses for the care of creation, as a way to address the ecological crisis. He views these Masses as a concrete way to embody the Church's commitment to environmental stewardship and to inspire action on climate change.

The new Mass formulary, called pro custodia creationis (for the care of creation), is designed to emphasize the beauty of creation and humanity's responsibility to care for it.



*Remembering
those affected by
climate change*

Green Mass

During this open-air Care for Creation Mass, presided over by Rev. Fr. Gerald Muto, Chancellor of the Jinja Diocese, we gathered to pray for those who are suffering because of Climate and lack peace.

The inspiring Green Mass was rich with an African Liturgical notion of inspirational dances, and spiritually moving through the words of the pracher who challenged the Congregation to reflect and take on their role as care-takers of Gods Creation. Eco-gifts from nature were presented during the offertory time, carried in regenerative eco friendly bags, accompanied by the vibrant liturgical dances, and the youngest member of the club presented-delivered the book of the Gospels wrapped in banana leaves.

In his homily, Fr. Muto urged all, especially the youth, to take personal responsibility for the environment.



GREEN EXHIBITIONS

G

avail

Innovating through agriculture



LAUDATO AI
This is an Artificial Intelligence created by the Laudato Club to widen the research base about the environment.
It has the home interface for the user to ask any climate related question and get answers.
It also has a quiz interface which gives five related questions and the user is given 50s to complete it. The results are then displayed afterwards below the quiz interface.
©Developed by CKS-Tech & D@in Corp

Laudato Green Festival Guest of Honor (Mr. Male Joseph)

During the recent environmental festival, Mr. Male Joseph, the Guest of Honor, delivered a powerful message on the importance of collaboration and agricultural innovation in enhancing community livelihoods.

“We need to do it by sharing basic ways of community living. We are called to be keepers-do your task in the best and basic way,” he said.

We can take advantage to learn the basic things so that we take them on to change and influence our communities in a good way.

The Market Knowledge Booth

A major highlight of the event was the Market Knowledge Booth, which featured an Eco Exhibition Tent. This space served as a hub of creativity and innovation, where students and the guest of honor explored and showcased several exciting, eco-friendly projects developed by young environmental innovators.

Key Projects Displayed Included:

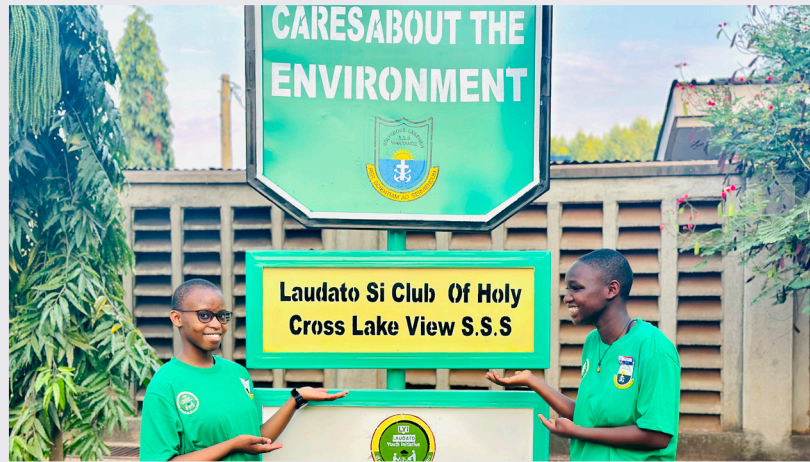
Smart Dustbin – A sensor-enabled waste bin designed to encourage proper waste disposal.

Laudato Ai – A tech-based tool aimed at promoting environmental awareness and education.

“What Is Happening to Our Common Home?” – A visual and interactive display illustrating the current effects of climate change in Uganda, including: Prolonged droughts, Flooding and landslides, Erratic rainfall patterns, Loss of biodiversity, Deforestation and wetland degradation.

Greenhouse – A model greenhouse showcasing sustainable agriculture practices for food security and climate resilience and other student-led innovations focused on renewable energy, recycling, and water conservation.

The event also featured lively performances poems, songs, and speeches from participating schools, all centered around the theme of caring for our common home.





United For Climate Action

LAUDATO SI GREEN FESTIVAL PICTORIAL





HOLY CROSS LAKE VIEW'S COMMITMENT TO MENTORING ECOLOGICAL-CITIZENS.

The Holy Cross Lake View SSS Jinja community recently gathered with other schools and organizations in Jinja and Kampala for the Laudato Si Green Festival 2025, a celebration of environmental stewardship and climate action. This event marked the second time the school has hosted the festival. The Festival was themed "Sowing Seeds of Peace and Hope for Creation"

The festival coincided with three significant milestones: the promulgation of a new formulary of the Roman Missal dedicated to the Care of Creation by Pope Leo, the Jubilee of the Youth, and the 10th Anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. These events serve as a reminder of the importance of environmental protection and the need for collective action to address the challenges posed by climate change.



A MORAL IMPERATIVE

At Holy Cross Lake View SSS, mentoring ecological citizens is a moral and spiritual imperative. The school's commitment to environmental education is not just about meeting curriculum objectives, but about shaping citizens for a wounded world. By educating students for life, the school aims to help them build social connections and friendships, and to become active participants in creating a better future. The school's approach to environmental education is multifaceted.

THE SCHOOL'S APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IS MULTIFACETED.

Through the Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View SSS, students lead various initiatives, including environmental audits, tree planting drives, eco innovations, upcycling projects, and regenerative farming activities. These initiatives have not only rallied the school community but also opened dialogue with neighboring schools and organizations to join in the pursuit of climate action.

The importance of collective action cannot be overstated. Climate change is a global issue that requires a collaborative response. By working together, schools, communities, and organizations can create a more sustainable future and promote ecological consciousness.

The Holy Cross Lake View community is committed to this cause, and the school's participation in the works of the Laudato Youth Initiative under the Laudato Si Action Platform of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development is a testament to this commitment. The school invites all Catholic schools in Jinja diocese and beyond to join in this sacred task of ecological conversion.

By working together and promoting integral ecology, Holy Cross Lake View SSS aims to raise an ecologically conscious society. As the African proverb goes, "It takes a whole village to raise a child." It will take all of us — working together — to raise a generation that is committed to protecting the environment and promoting sustainability. United for Climate Action, the Holy Cross Lake View community is dedicated to making a positive impact and creating a better future for all.

*Rev. Fr Prosper Atukwatse C.S.C.
Headteacher HCLV SSS Jinja*



SOWING SEEDS OF PEACE AND HOPE FOR CREATION

The world is facing a profound crisis, one that goes beyond scientific and environmental concerns. The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, as Pope Francis so eloquently puts it, is a call to our souls, a reminder of our role as stewards of God's creation. As people of faith, we are called not to surrender to hopelessness but to sow seeds—small acts, words, and choices that nurture life, restore the earth, and rekindle hope.

The Wounds of Creation

The reality of ecological destruction is stark. Rivers are polluted, forests are vanishing, and the climate is changing, leading to droughts and floods that destroy livelihoods. Species are going extinct at alarming rates, and our cities and towns are choking under the weight of uncollected garbage and polythene waste. The most vulnerable, especially in Africa, suffer the consequences of environmental degradation, highlighting the deep connection between environmental and social justice. This is not just a scientific issue; it is a spiritual and moral crisis. We have turned God's garden into a marketplace, a battlefield, and a wasteland. The Bible reminds us that "the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Ro-

mans 8:22), crying out for new life, peace, and hope.

Sowing Seeds of Peace

To sow peace is not just to avoid violence but to actively build relationships with one another and with the earth. This can be achieved through simple actions such as reducing waste, choosing simplicity over excess, and treating nature as a gift to cherish rather than an object to dominate. Fostering dialogue between humanity and the natural world is also crucial, recognizing the interconnectedness of our well-being and the health of the planet. By working together and promoting sustainable practices, we can create a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Planting Seeds of Hope

Real hope is not about pretending everything is fine; it's about knowing things are hard but believing they can get better with God's help and our action. Every small act counts, whether it's throwing trash in the bin, speaking up for someone who's being bullied, turning off lights, or saving water. These actions may seem small, but they are seeds of hope that can grow into a garden of peace and sustainability. By planting trees, protecting waters, and promoting eco-friendly habits, we can create a brighter future for all.



Living as Co-Creators with God

As Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us,

we are brothers and sisters to all creatures, part of a sacred community of life. Our role is not to dominate but to care for creation, to till and keep the earth with reverence and gratitude. By recognizing our vocation as stewards and co-creators, we can work towards a world where creation is not plundered but protected. We can make a difference by reducing our carbon footprint, supporting sustainable practices, and promoting environmental awareness.

A Call to Action and Prayer

Let us go forward as people of peace and hope, committed to sowing seeds of peace and hope for creation. Let us plant trees, protect waters, find alternatives to plastics, manage waste properly, reject corruption, and influence policy frameworks that protect the environment. Let us teach each other to love the earth and pray, act, and advocate for a world where creation is cherished and protected. Together, we can make a difference and create a brighter future for all. By working together and nurturing the seeds of peace and hope, we can create a world that is more just, sustainable, and peaceful.

By Rev. Fr Leonard Olobo C.S.C.

Rev. Fr. Olobo Leonard CSC, Financial Controller at HCLV S.S.S and Chair Board Director John Paul II Peace and Justice Centre

PAIN OF VEGETATION

It changes like climate
Becoming hot and cool
Shining and raining
In many hearts of Ugandans

The vegetation of Uganda
Cutting down trees to do many things
Something's good something's useful
Others useless like rubbish

It really rains on my face
Seeing the pearl of Africa
Being destroyed in such a quick way
With no mercy or pity
But with one blink of an eye
We can see it change
For a better future
By working hand in hand

Working together can change the
disaster to become history
And what was rain will become
sunshine with smiles on our face

KAIDHIWA ANGEL MARTHA

Cultivating Ecological Intelligence in Children: Let's Raise Children Who Can Name Plants and Their Uses

In today's world, many children can name their favourite snacks, cartoons, and mobile apps. But how many can name the trees in their yard, the flowers by the roadside, or the herbs that heal common sicknesses? Ecological intelligence means understanding how nature works, how plants, animals, and people depend on each other, and how to care for our environment. It is knowledge we cannot afford to lose.

When children know plants and their uses, they carry a treasure that benefits them and their community. A child who knows that the neem tree can be used for skin problems, that moringa leaves are rich in vitamins, or that certain flowers attract bees for pollination, will grow up respecting and protecting nature.

So, how can we cultivate this intelligence? It starts with exposure and curiosity. Take children for nature walks, let them touch leaves, smell flowers, and ask questions. Encourage gardening at home or school—nothing teaches patience and responsibility better than planting a seed and watching it grow. Invite elders to share their knowledge of medicinal plants and traditional uses. Teachers can also integrate local plant knowledge into science lessons, making learning practical and exciting.

The benefits are endless. We preserve culture, improve health, and inspire environmental protection. Most importantly, we raise a generation that sees the earth not as a resource to exploit, but as a home to protect.

If we raise children who can name plants and their uses, we raise guardians of our future. The green knowledge they carry today will be the seed of a healthier, wiser, and more sustainable tomorrow.
NABAKOOZA ESTHER TYRA





SAVE THE EARTH , SAVE THE HOPE OF LIFE

It's our duty to save the environment's beauty. Because there is no planet earth B. We have to take care of the one we have

The greatest threat to our planet Is the belief that someone else will save it. The environment is no one's property to destroy. It's everyone's responsibility to protect

I don't want to protect the environment. I want to create a world where the environment does not need protection

The truth is that the natural world is changing and we are totally dependent on that world. That world provides our food water and air It is the most precious thing we have and we need to defend it

The future will either be green or not at all. We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors.

We borrow it from our children. Don't be mean keep it green. Protect our earth today. For our children tomorrow. If we cannot sustain the environment. We cannot sustain ourselves

Sustainability is treating ourselves and our environment. As if we are to live on this earth forever The environment is where all meet Where all have a mutual interest Its is the one thing all of us share

If you really think the environment. Is less important than the economy . Try holding your breathe while you count your money. Think clean , go green

Go green do keep this world clean The proper use of science is not to conquer nature. But to co-exist with it , let's permit nature to have her way. She understands her business better than we do

LET'S ACT NOW

Save the earth, save the hope of life, Let's work together, for a brighter strife, every small action counts, every step we take, can make a difference, for our planet's sake.



NANYONJO PATIENCE
Laudato Si Club HCLV



May 16th 2025, began with a blessed opportunity to participate in the 10th Anniversary Mass of Laudato Si', presided over by His Grace, Paul Ssemogerere the Archbishop of Kampala.

This significant celebration was a moment to: pray and give thanks for the life and Papacy of Pope Francis for the seed of faith and of hope whose fruits for the past 10 years have inspired climate action. We had the opportunity to listen to voices reflecting on our shared journey of ecological conversion, shared experiences and testimonies of transformation inspired by Laudato Si'. There was engagement in dialogue about the hopes, challenges, and urgent actions needed now and in the coming years.

Our Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View S.S.S Jinja showcased ecological exhibitions which say no to Uganda's leading destructive practices of environmental destruction.





These exhibitions featured spiritual and science environmental projects. These exhibitions demonstrated eco-friendly alternatives to plastics, highlighted practical solutions in the minds of young people, aimed at enhancing waste collection and recycling initiatives to reduce the amount of plastic waste that ends up in our environment. This was to renew our commitment to care for our common home, deepen our solidarity with the vulnerable, and take bold steps for climate justice in Uganda and beyond.

The celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Laudato Si' was a powerful call to action — urging everyone to renew their commitment to care for our common home, deepen solidarity and Charity towards with those in need, and take bold steps for climate action





On 15th May 2025 at the sacred grounds of Uganda Martyrs Shrine Munyonyo youth leaders, faith communities, and environmental enthusiastic organisations gathered to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical, *Laudato Si*. This powerful two day encounter was more than a celebration-it was the birth of a bold united initiative to care for our common home.

The highlight of the gathering was the formation of the **Uganda Laudato Si Consortium** - a historic network of 17 faith based and civil society organisations working together for ecological justice. At the heart of this new alliance is the Laudato Youth Initiative, young catholics committed to uniting climate action and ecological conversion. This was a dream come true said the Laudato Youth Initiative Director Mr Benard Kahwa 'at the heart of the laudato youth are the concepts; Faith and ecology, Unity for Climate Action.

The 17 organisations united joined together to form a collaborative network united in their commitment to fight climate injustice, promote environmental sustainability and respond boldly to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.



Uganda Catholic Institutions and faith-based organisations
pledge to eliminate single use plastics



Smart Dustbin, to simplify plastic litter collection.



Regenerative Activities for Creative Recycling



What is Happening to Our Common Home?



Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View engaged with Busoga College Mwiri in an Environmental Exchange Program

The Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View (HCLV) recently visited the Environmental Club of Busoga College Mwiri, participating in a valuable environmental exchange program. This initiative allowed students from both schools to share ideas, learn from each other, and engage in hands-on environmental activities, including a mentorship session led by teachers from both clubs.

Program Highlights

The program included knowledge sharing about local ecosystems, joint conservation projects, and discussions on sustainable practices. Students interacted, exchanged knowledge, and developed a deeper understanding of different perspectives on environmental issues.



Knowledge Sharing

Key Outcomes

- Mentorship and leadership development
- Practical skill development in research and project management
- Promotion of sustainable practices



Discussions about

The exchange program strengthens synergies for community engagement and supports the integration of hands-on activities from the new curriculum, while also raising awareness about the adverse environmental impacts of tree-cutting both within the school and in neighboring communities and a head of events like the national tree planting day.



Tree Planting and

Future Collaboration

This program fosters partnership opportunities and strengthens inter-school commitment to environmental conservation and future community engagement through activities such as the Laudato Si' Green Festival



On Palm Sunday, the Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View unveiled the Fr. Robert Hesse Sustainability Project, a tribute to their beloved founder. The day began with a solemn mass led by Msgr. Isaiah Mayombo, the Vicar General of Fortportal Diocese.

Memorial Tree Planting Ceremony

A memorial tree planting ceremony was led by Fr. Prosper Atukwatse CSC, the Headteacher of the school. The trees symbolize Fr. Bob's enduring legacy and commitment to sustainability.



Honoring Fr. Bob Hesse's Legacy the Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View SSS Launched a Sustainability Project in honor of their school founder

After Mass, the club members embarked on a spiritual pilgrimage to Bugembe Parish and Holy Cross Primary School, both founded by Fr. Bob, CSC. They were warmly received by Fr. Innocent Ahuniriza, CSC, who encouraged them to deepen their commitment to environmental care as an expression of their faith. ***"Fr. Bob loved to care for the environment,"*** he added. Later, the group planted additional memorial and fruit trees, followed by a spiritual reflection session and a quiz led by Fr. Apire Berry, CSC.



Honoring Fr. Bob's Memory

The day's activities included Tree Planting, Reflection about his life and work in Bugembe and beyond, cleaning Fr. Bob's grave, offering prayers, and singing a song in his memory.



The late Fr. Bob Hesse, CSC Planting a tree with young people



Commitment to Sustainability

The Laudato Si Club remains committed to continuing Fr. Bob's vision through environmental initiatives, aiming to make their school and parish model green ministries. Their plans include engaging the community in sustainable development, inspiring young people through creative activities, and fostering faith and growth.



A Lasting Legacy

By honoring Fr. Bob's legacy, the club strives to make Holy Cross Lake View and the broader community shine brighter. Rest in Peace, Fr. Bob Hesse CSC.

LAUDATO SI CLUB OF N YAKASURA SCHOOL



OUR CULTURE OUR HERITAGE

A land of beauty, rich and rare
Admired by all, beyond compare
Nature's attractiveness, a treasure to see
With vibrant life, in harmony

In Queen Elizabeth's majestic land
Monkeys swing, with a playful hand
Tourists flock, with curiosity keen
Seeking knowledge, and a glimpse unseen

The ecosystem thrives, with balance true
A delicate dance, between me and you
But we, in ignorance, bring harm and pain
To the wildlife, that we claim to sustain

No mercy shown, as we destroy their home
Leaving them vulnerable, with no place to roam
Their future uncertain, their fate unsure
A legacy of loss, forever endured

Let's join hands, to create a change
A sustainable future, where all can range
For the betterment of our world, we must strive
Protecting nature, and the life that thrives

Before it's too late, and our judgment arrives
Let's act with urgency, and a heart that survives
For our culture, our heritage, and our earth
We must preserve, and give new birth.

Katuhe Enid & Nyangoma Olive
Laudato Youth Nyakasura School

WICKED GENERATION

Nature's beauty fades away
Greens wither, dry grounds stay
Rodents cry, yet none care
Vanity reigns, future impaired

Leaders present, but lack insight
Implementation, no foresight
Promises broken, actions blind
Future generations left behind

Troposphere weak, grounds barren too
Animals weep, birds' songs turn to rue
The earth cries out in pain and fear
As humans ravage, year by year

Streams of life, now death's dark flow
Pollution chokes, the earth below
Rich are careless, blame wealth's show
Ignorance grows, a shameful sight to know.

A wicked generation, lost in plight
Destroying the earth, without a fight
No regard for the future's fate
Leaving behind a desolate state.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSRVATION IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

The Jubilee Year 2025, themed "**Pilgrims of Hope**," is a profound call to spiritual renewal and environmental stewardship. Pope Francis' message resonates deeply, emphasizing the importance of caring for creation, promoting ecological balance, and adopting sustainable practices to safeguard the future of our planet.

As we journey through this special year, we're invited to deepen our relationship with God and promote hope. The Jubilee Year focuses on four key aspects: forgiveness and reconciliation, spiritual renewal, pilgrimage, and indulgence. By embracing these themes, we can cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the environment and our fellow human beings.

Environmental conservation is a crucial aspect of the Jubilee Year. We're encouraged to reduce waste, plant trees, and promote ecological balance. By caring for creation, we preserve nature's beauty and goodness for future generations. This can be achieved through simple yet impactful actions like reducing energy consumption, using public transport, recycling, and supporting eco-friendly initiatives.

The Pope's words remind us that nature is a magnificent book in which God speaks to us, granting us a glimpse of His beauty and goodness. As "**Pilgrims of Green Hope**," let's embody hope and inspire others through our actions. We can promote ecological awareness, support sustainable initiatives, and protect the environment. By working together, we'll ensure a brighter future for all, in harmony with God's creation.

Let's take this opportunity to make a positive impact on the environment and our communities. As we celebrate the Jubilee Year, let's strive to be stewards of God's creation, promoting hope, sustainability, and environmental conservation for a better tomorrow. Through our collective efforts, we can create a world that is more just, equitable, and sustainable for all.



KOBUSINGE RITAH AND KAHUNDE JUDITH
LAUDATO SI CLUB OF NYAKASURA SSS

ENVIRONMENT, SOURCE OF LIFE

The 21st century has witnessed a stark reality: the environment is under severe threat. Climate change, displacement, and industrialization have become intertwined issues, leading to human rights violations, poverty, and loss of life. The relentless pursuit of industrialization and modernization has often come at the expense of environmental conservation, leaving behind a trail of destruction.

Industries such as oil refineries, cement factories, and manufacturing plants have significantly contributed to climate change, releasing harmful emissions that pollute the air and water. Deforestation, largely driven by industrial expansion and urbanization, has exacerbated the problem. Trees, which absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, are being cut down at an alarming rate, leading to increased atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, ozone layer depletion, and global warming.

The consequences of environmental degradation are far-reaching and devastating. Increased direct sunlight can cause skin burns in animals, while heightened heat waves can disrupt activities, including education, as seen in countries like Sudan. Nuclear factories pose additional risks, emitting radiation that can lead to blood cancer, genetic mutations, and birth defects.

However, there is hope for a sustainable future. By adopting environmentally friendly practices, we can mitigate the damage and protect our planet. Installing catalytic converters in industrial chimneys can reduce harmful emissions, while promoting afforestation and reafforestation can help purify the air and increase rainfall. Alternative energy sources like solar, biogas, and energy-efficient technologies can also play a crucial role in reducing our reliance on harmful practices.

Let's take proactive steps to protect our environment and ensure a sustainable future. By working together, we can preserve the beauty and wonder of our planet for future generations. Our environment is the source of life; let's cherish and protect it.



MASIKA AGATHA AND BIIRA MIREMBE AMINATAH
LAUDATO SI CLUB OF NYAKASURA SSS

United For Climate Action.

Laudato Si Club of Divine Mercy, S.S.S

“Green Walk”

A WALK FOR MOTHER NATURE: A REFRESHING ADVENTURE

The Laudato Si Club of Divine Mercy SSS had a nature walk that was an unforgettable experience, offering a feast for the eyes and a chance to connect with the natural world. The scenic trail took the Laudato Youth through towering trees, lush greenery, and picturesque landscapes. The diverse group of participants, including the Headteacher of Divine Mercy Mr Ojok Robert, Fr Benedict Mugisa C.S.C., Brother Cleophas Kyomuhendo C.S.C., Mr. Daniel Rusahura, the Patron of the Laudato Si Club of the school, Ms Basemera Sharon and the Laudato Youth. They shared observations, asked questions, and enjoyed each other's company.

The journey began from Kalyango Hills to Amabeeere ga Nyina Mwiru to Mountains of the Moon University and then Saaka Novitiate.

As the students walked, they enjoyed fresh air and exercise, invigorated by the cool breeze and scent of nature. The peaceful environment encouraged mindfulness, allowing individuals to be present in the moment, appreciate the beauty around them, and enjoy the view. The walk provided ample opportunities for capturing stunning photos of the landscape and creatures.

Bro. Cleophas Kyomuhendo shared wisdom with these students that added depth to the experience. “Young people have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment” (Laudato Si, 209) he said.





He therefore encouraged everyone that had participated to return with a deeper love for the earth and a stronger commitment to care for it because the earth is what we all have in common. He later officiated the certificate awarding ceremony to the students at Holy Cross Novitiate Saaka.

This pilgrimage was an act of thanksgiving not only to observe creation but to embrace the students' responsibility to it. From a stormy dawn to a bright afternoon, nature taught them resilience and unity. This nature walk was a refreshing and enriching experience, reminding participants of the beauty and importance of the natural world. The experience fostered a deeper appreciation for nature's beauty and left students feeling more grounded and calm.

This event ended with a prayer asking the Lord God to keep the students strong and alive as environmentalists. They prayed in gratitude and hope that this green walk would shape everyone's daily life with awareness, appreciation and action.

The nature walk demonstrated the importance of taking time to appreciate and connect with the natural world. By doing so, students developed a greater sense of responsibility towards the environment and cultivate a deeper appreciation for its beauty.

AYEBALE FRED

Laudato Si Club of Ave Maria S.S Rwibaale (in Formation)

Conserving The Environment

In remarkable efforts to conserve the environment, the Laudato Youth of the Laudato Si Club of Ave Maria Secondary School Rwibaale in Formation came together to plant numerous trees as part of the conservation efforts. This initiative not only highlights the importance of reforestation but also highlights the dedication of young people in protecting our mother earth and ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come.

The Significance of Tree Planting

Tree planting is a crucial step in combating climate change, as trees absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, helping to purify the air we breathe. This effort also contributes to: **Soil Conservation:** Tree roots hold soil in place, preventing erosion and landslides that can devastate communities and agricultural lands.

Biodiversity: Trees provide habitats for various species, promoting ecosystem balance and supporting the rich diversity of life on Earth.

Climate Regulation: Trees help regulate local climates, providing shade and cooling effects that can reduce the urban heat island effect and improve air quality. We extend our deepest gratitude to Opportunity Bank for their generous support in providing the trees for this initiative. Their contribution has enabled the students to make a tangible impact on their environment, teaching them valuable lessons about the importance of community partnerships and collective action. **The tree planting exercise at Ave Maria Secondary School** is part of a broader movement to empower young people to take action against climate change. By engaging in environmental activities, students develop a sense of responsibility and awareness about the importance of protecting our common home. This initiative aims to:

Educate: Raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation and the role individuals play in protecting the planet.

Empower: Equip the students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to take action and make a difference in their communities.

Inspire: Encourage other students to join the club, creating a ripple effect of positive change that can spread far and wide.

By planting Trees

This event serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that collective action can have on our environment. As we continue to work towards our goal of planting one million trees, we hope to inspire more young people to join us in this crucial effort. Together, we can:





Create Green Spaces: Enhance the beauty of our communities and provide habitats for wildlife.
Mitigate Climate Change: Reduce the effects of climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

Build Resilience: Help communities become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events.

The success of this tree planting exercise demonstrates the potential for youth-led initiatives to drive positive change. We look forward to continuing our work in environmental education and action, empowering the next generation to become leaders in sustainability. By working together, we can build a greener, more sustainable future for all.



SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES AT ST ADOLF HOLY CROSS PARISH: CARE FOR CREATION IN ACTION

Small Christian Communities

...

(SCCs) at St Adolf Holy Cross Parish, Kanyabachope, are vibrant groups of Christians who come together to share their faith, support one another, and serve their community. Guided by their patron Saint St Adolf Mukasa Ludigo, the Holy Spirit and the Blessed Virgin Mary Our Mother, these communities have been instrumental in living out the principles of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home.

The SCCs at St Adolf Holy Cross Parish engage in various activities, including prayer, cleanliness, tree planting, and animal rearing in homes and villages. By embracing the values of *Laudato Si'*,

they have been able to achieve a lot in responding to Pope Francis' invitation to care for Mother Earth. Through their efforts, they are not only caring for the environment but also promoting a sense of community and social responsibility.



Key Initiatives *The SCCs at the parish undertake the following initiatives:*

- 1. Care for creation:** Members work together to promote environmental sustainability, reduce waste, and protect natural resources. They recognize the importance of preserving God's creation and take practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 2. Support vulnerable communities:** SCCs reach out to those most affected by environmental degradation, such as the poor and marginalized. They provide support and assistance to those in need, promoting social justice and equality.
- 3. Promote integral ecology:** Christians reflect on the interconnectedness of human and environmental well-being, seeking to address social and environmental issues together. They recognize that caring for creation is not just about the environment, but also about the people and communities that depend on it.

IMPACT

By integrating Laudato Si' into their lives, SCCs at St Adolf Holy Cross Parish help to:

Deepen their faith: By reflecting on God's creation and our role as stewards. Members grow in their understanding of God's love and care for the world.

Build relationships: By working together on environmental and social issues. Members develop strong bonds and a sense of community, working together towards a common goal.

Serve others: By promoting sustainability and supporting vulnerable communities. Members demonstrate their commitment to serving others and promoting social justice.

The SCCs at St Adolf Holy Cross Parish are a powerful way to live out the message of Laudato Si', fostering a sense of community, care for creation, and commitment to justice and peace. Through their efforts, they are making a positive impact in their community and beyond, inspiring others to join them in

caring for our common home.

As Christians, we are called to live out our faith in community with others. Small Christian Communities (SCCs) provide a unique opportunity for believers to come together, share their faith, and serve their community.

If you're looking for a way to live out your faith in a more meaningful way, consider joining a Small Christian Community. Join one today and discover the joy of living out your faith in community with others. Together, we can make a positive impact in our world and grow in our understanding of God's love. St Adolf, Pray for Us.

FR. KAWOOYA RONALD C.S.C.
PARISH PRIEST, ST ADOLF
HOLY CROSS PARISH
KANYABACHOPE



FORT PORTAL DIOCESE YOUTH EMBRACE THE LEGACY OF POPE FRANCIS

Each year, the Fort Portal Diocese hosts one of its most anticipated events “the Annual Youth Conference”

A gathering of over 5,000 young people for a week of spiritual growth, formation, and goal setting. This year’s gathering took on special significance as it aligned with the 10th anniversary of Laudato Si’ at St Adolf Ongoing Formation Centre Mukabura in FortPortal.

This year’s conference offered much more than inspiration; it mobilized young people to live out the vision of Pope Francis through action, reflection, and stewardship. On 17th May 2025, Rev. Fr. Dr. Kawooya Ronald C.S.C the Parish Priest of St Adolf Holy Cross Parish Kanyabachope and the Laudato Youth Programs Manager Ms Immaculate Kisembo presented insightful reflections on what it means to lead a life of values through caring for the internal and external environment. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” Philipian 4:13 was the theme for the youth Conference 2025.

ACTION CLIMATE

Rev. Fr. Dr. Ronald Kawooya, C.S.C., Parish Priest of St. Adolf Holy Cross Parish, Kanyabachope, shared with the

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youth about the moral value of caring for creation. Caring for creation that includes caring for ourselves. As 1 Corinthians 6:19 reminds us, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?” That means promoting physical health, safe living, and

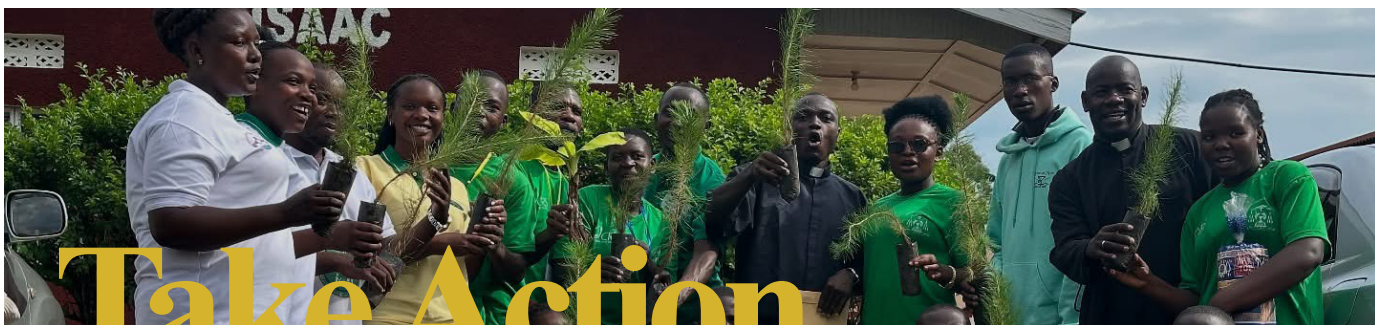




but also addressing mental health challenges like anxiety, climate grief, and societal pressure. Many youth, especially young women, face unique struggles in our rapidly changing world. He emphasised education, hard work, for instance, embracing modern farming.

He invited young people to reflect on the teachings of Pope Francis, who taught that creation is a gift from God, not a commodity to exploit. His message links seamlessly with Catholic Social Teaching, especially the principles of solidarity, simplicity (kwenihira), and care for the poor. Creation care becomes spiritual when we act with open hearts, grounded in faith and justice. We are called to be more than environmentalists—we are to become ecological disciples: prayerful, humble, and deeply rooted in our Catholic tradition.

Immaculate Kisembo highlighted the importance of Caring for biodiversity and creation. She began by appreciating the efforts of the Laudato Si Club of Fort Portal Diocese and its visibility at the event leading environmental activities encouraging participants to take trees home to



Take Action

But beyond these visible acts, the initiative leader emphasized a deeper call

to reawaken the sacred bond between humanity and the Earth. She called upon the youth to pay keen attention to the biodiversity loss, deforestation, and pollution that are not only ecological issues, but also moral issues. Therefore, appealing to them to participate in activities that would benefit their economic growth and restore ecosystems, for instance, using organic manure from animals to grow crops, and integrating indigenous knowledge into conservation. Young people are not just beneficiaries of nature, but guardians of it for a brighter future.

Immaculate emphasised that every young person must be

hard working and embrace humility if they are to grow in value through appreciating economic growth that comes with appreciating nature. I emphasize these because they are foundational African values that made our parents succeed in life and raise us up well. Whether we go to universities to study, we must maintain these values in our homes. ***“We cannot claim to protect the planet while ignoring the silent storms within our hearts and minds. Healing the Earth must begin with healing ourselves.”*** She also emphasized the productive use of social media. When the media is used responsibly, it is a tool of transformation. ***I challenge you, fellow young people, to flood your digital spaces with messages of hope and innovations for intellectual growth, not despair,*** she added.

THE SACRED IDENTITY OF NATURE

A CALL TO REVERENCE



Ever since the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. (Romans 1:20)

In today's world, environmental problems and concerns for creation have become increasingly pressing. Despite efforts to address these issues, we continue to struggle with effective solutions. I believe that beneath the complexity of environmental challenges lies a deeper cause: the loss of the sacredness of nature.

When the sacred becomes profane, it signifies a violation and devaluation of what was once revered. The modern world has profaned the natural environment, treating it as a machine or object for use, rather than recognizing its divine foundation. This desacralization has led to severe degradation of the environment.

Traditional worldviews once considered nature sacred and beautiful, reflecting eternal power and divine presence, "for in him all things in heaven and earth were created" (Colossians 1:16). However, modern humanity has stripped nature of its sacred identity. There is an urgent need for repentance and a shift in mindset regarding the sacrilege committed against Mother Earth.

Unless we renew our awareness of the sacred nature of creation, our progress in caring for and preserving the environment will suffer. Let's recognize the divine presence in nature and treat it with reverence and respect. By doing so, we can work towards a more sustainable future and preserve the beauty of creation.

To move forward, let's adopt a mindset that respects the environment, preserves natural habitats, and promotes sustainable practices. By working together, we can restore the sacred identity of nature and create a better future for all. This requires a collective effort to care for and preserve our natural environment, acknowledging the intricate web of life that binds us together. Let's heed the call to reverence and stewardship, recognizing that our actions have consequences that extend far beyond our immediate surroundings. By embracing the sacred identity of nature, we can foster a deeper appreciation for the world around us and ensure a more sustainable future for generations to come.

EDSON ONESMO MWOLEKA, C.S.C.

Sowing a hopeful future by mobilizing and strengthening youth voices and action towards responsible use of AI. Following Pope Leo XIV's Warning on AI and Intellectual Development, we hear the bells ring again after Pope Francis' *Antiqua et Nova* (January 28, 2025) a Papal Call to Action towards Artificial Intelligence. This call to action resonates deeply with us, and we believe that it is essential to respond to this challenge with a sense of urgency and purpose.

On Friday, June 20, 2025, Pope Leo XIV issued a cautionary message during a Vatican-hosted AI and ethics conference, warning that artificial intelligence could negatively affect children's intellectual, neurological, and spiritual development (Associated Press, 2025). He stressed that mere access to data should not be equated with true intelligence, and urged that AI must be governed by ethical standards that protect human dignity and foster authentic wisdom (Associated Press, 2025; Politico, 2025). This warning serves as a wake-up call for us to re-examine our relationship with AI and to ensure that we are using it in a way that promotes human flourishing.

You may agree with me that young people's intellectual development is usually at an early stage. Much of what needs to be done is expose them to creative activities and values that develop their mental capability. Moreover, the traditional African value system embraces the fact that children are also worthy of the right to human dignity and that right being respected. It is essential that we prioritize the well-being and development of our young people, and that we provide them with

the tools and resources they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The Two Foundational Vatican Documents

1. *Antiqua et Nova* (January 28, 2025): A doctrinal note by the Dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith and for Culture and Education, emphasizing that AI must only complement human intelligence. It warns that unsupervised AI in education can erode critical thinking, deskill learners, and weaken their relational capacities (Vatican Dicasteries, 2025; Bishop Tighe, 2025). This document provides a critical framework for understanding the role of AI in education and the need for responsible AI usage.

2. Pope Leo XIV's Address (June 20, 2025): Reiterating that while AI is "an exceptional tool," its use must always respect human dignity, requiring responsibility and discernment to ensure it serves the common good (Vatican News, 2025). This address highlights the importance of considering the ethical implications of AI and ensuring that its use aligns with our values and principles.

The Risks of Unsupervised AI

Antiqua et Nova highlights specific risks: Dependency on ready-made content leading to diminished critical thought. The potential erosion of relational and reflective capacities. Deskilling of young learners when AI replaces rather than supports human effort (Vatican Dicasteries, 2025; Bishop Tighe, 2025). Pope Leo XIV echoed these concerns, warning of an unmooring of young minds from reality without proper guidance (Associated Press, 2025; Politico, 2025). These risks under-

score the need for careful consideration and intentional action to ensure that AI is used in a way that supports human development and flourishing.

To address these risks, the Laudato Youth Initiative proposes a four-pillar response:

- 1. Family Involvement and Educational Empowerment:** Families must wisely discern when and how children can be introduced to the use of Artificial Intelligence. Families could also guide how and what children could do with AI by offering children enough time and avoiding replacing technology as a means to keep children busy.
- 2. Peer-Led Advocacy Training:** Youth ambassadors to host dialogues and produce awareness campaigns. Collaborating with educators to establish ethical AI guidelines for youth environments even in schools.
- 3. Initiatives for Human Relational Reconnection:** Programs that encourage encounter and connections for human development and social connections, such as digital fasts for nature walks, screen-free days for green days, and community service events.
- 4. Policy & Ethical Dialogue:** Pushing for ethical oversight in AI's educational development. Ensuring youth voices are heard in consultations shaping school and Church AI policies. We have come up as Laudato Youth to launch AI literacy programs in at least in some Laudato Si Clubs in schools, we have seen students launch "Laudato Ai" to help raise awareness about climate change this could be applied universities to enhance farming and diseases prevent in plants as a way of embracing technology.

A JOURNEY OF GRATITUDE: REFLECTIONS ON FAITH, FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



As I stand at the threshold of this new chapter in my life, having completed my Bachelor's degree in Social Work and Social Administration at Mountains of the Moon University, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude and reflection.

This milestone marks not just the culmination of years of hard work and dedication but also a moment to acknowledge the divine guidance that has accompanied me throughout this journey.

With each challenge faced and victory celebrated, I have felt the presence of a higher power, guiding me toward my goals. I am equally grateful for the people who have surrounded me during this transformative period – my parents, relatives, and friends who have been my pillars of support, offering love, encouragement, and wisdom. Their unwavering belief in my potential has instilled in me the confidence to pursue my dreams.

My academic pursuits were enriched by my involvement in the Laudato Si Clubs mentored by the Laudato Youth Initiative focused on environmental conservation and care. These clubs provided me with a platform to engage in meaningful activities, such as planting trees and raising awareness about the importance of caring for our planet. Each tree planted or environmental impactful activity represents not just a commitment to the environment but also a legacy for future generations.

As young people, we have a unique opportunity to create a safer and more environmentally friendly world. This journey begins with education and awareness. By engaging in community projects, organizing workshops, and leading by example through eco-friendly habits, we can make a significant impact. Simple actions like reducing plastic use, conserving water, and using public transportation can inspire others to follow suit.

As I embark on this new chapter, I carry with me the lessons learned from my experiences and the support of my community. With the guidance of the divine and the love of those around me, I am inspired to continue my efforts in environmental stewardship and social responsibility. I believe that our collective actions can create a brighter future for all, and I am committed to playing my part in this journey.

AYEBALE FRED

In today's world, economic and political interests often take center stage, sometimes compromising the core values of organizations. Despite the growing awareness of climate change, some environmental bodies prioritize political objectives over genuine efforts to combat climate change. This "political climate's pollution" can infiltrate even well-intentioned organizations, undermining their effectiveness and integrity.

The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that environmental organizations often use fundraising and awareness campaigns to further their goals. However, when these efforts are driven by political agendas rather than a genuine passion for environmental protection, they can become counter-productive.

This type of pollution can disorient and compromise even the most well-organized and efficient systems, ultimately hindering progress in the fight against climate change.

As members of the Laudato Youth initiative, it's essential to recognize the threat posed by this political climate's pollution and take steps to mitigate its impact. We must promote love and passion for the environment through hard work and acts of charity, rather than allowing political agendas to drive our efforts. By being unique and acting with integrity, we can eliminate political intentions and drive out this pollution.

Our focus should be on sensitization programs that educate others about environmental issues without seeking fame or political gain. We should instill a love for the environment in the younger generation, promoting a genuine appreciation for nature and its importance in our lives. By staying true to our values and mission, we can create a positive impact and drive out the political climate's pollution within our initiative.

THE POLITICAL CLIMATE'S POLLUTION: A THREAT TO ENVIRONMENTAL INTERGRITY.

Integrity is essential in any environmental initiative. When we prioritize political agendas over genuine environmental protection, we risk undermining the very cause we are trying to support. As the Laudato Youth initiative, we must remain committed to our mission and values, ensuring that our actions are driven by a passion for environmental protection, rather than personal gain or political agendas.

By working together and staying committed to our mission, we can make a difference and create a better future for our planet. We must recognize the importance of our role in promoting environmental protection and take steps to ensure that our efforts are genuine and effective. Let's remain committed to our cause and work together to protect the environment, rather than allowing political agendas to drive our actions.

In conclusion, the political climate's pollution is a significant threat to environmental integrity, and it's essential that we take steps to mitigate its impact. By promoting love and passion for the environment, staying true to our values, and prioritizing genuine environmental protection, we can create a positive, lasting impact on the environment. Let's work together to protect the planet and promote a genuine passion for environmental protection.

UNITED FOR CLIMATE ACTION

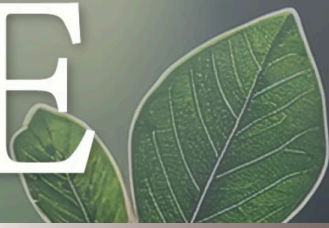
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United For Climate Action

HOPE



A call to uphold the teachings and ecological Legacy of Pope Francis

We ought to view his teachings in "Laudato Si" as a gift that he left behind of the church and its generations to come

Even though his pilgrimage journey of Hope here on earth ended he rose with Christ and went on another pilgrimage on Easter Monday.

Pope Francis reminded us all that faith must be lived with care for human dignity through charity, justice, and care for all creation, challenging us to see the poor, to welcome the strangers, and to protect our planet as a sacred duty. This was even made clear in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

"The Earth is our common home, and it cries out for care."

His papacy was a call to simplicity, solidarity, and mercy with preferential option to the poor and elderly a quiet revolution of the heart. "Hope

would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps." (*Laudato Si'*) This is the legacy we carry forward. Faith in Action, Simplicity, Hope, Charity, humility, Peace building and care for God's Creation

Pope Francis always reminded us: *"Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis."*

It was with deep sorrow and reverence that the world and we, the *Laudato Youth Initiative*, learnt of the passing of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, the father of our cherished encyclical who returned to the Lord on Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, at the age of 88.



The news, confirmed at 9:45 AM by Cardinal Kevin Farrell from the Casa Santa Marta, stirred hearts worldwide.





We should say his death that occurred so close to the Easter Octave is profoundly symbolic. It was a moment of grief and hope rooted in the Resurrection, the heart of Christian faith. Pope Francis, a selfless advocate for the poor, the planet, and peace, completed his earthly pilgrimage in this Jubilee year after calling us to a pilgrimage of hope and will rise with Christ to eternal glory. His life, mission, and unwavering voice for justice and care for our common home will continue to echo through generations.

In his last message on Easter Sunday, April 20th 2025, Pope Francis wished everyone a Happy Easter and then asked Archbishop Ravelli to read his Easter message with its plea for peace and respect for human life: the unborn, the elderly, the sick, the poor, and migrants.

One key message we picked from his gestures and words is that he loved people, especially young people. He was a grateful person. Among his last words is *“thank you”* to his caretaker for taking him out to greet the people of God, which became his last public appearance.

A Shepherd Who Heard the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the less privileged

In June 2015, Pope Francis gifted the world with *Laudato Si*, a groundbreaking encyclical that became a cornerstone of environmental

thought, interfaith dialogue, and global action rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and enriched with ecological spirituality. *Laudato Si* calls for an “ecological conversion.” At the 10-year anniversary of its release, he was called to the Lord. May he rest in peace and continue to pray for us .



How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!

Romans 10:15

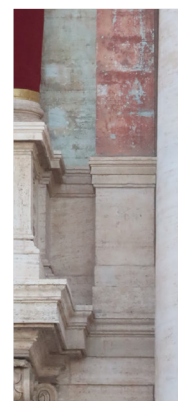
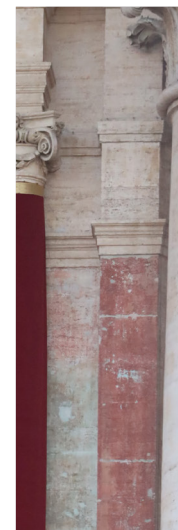
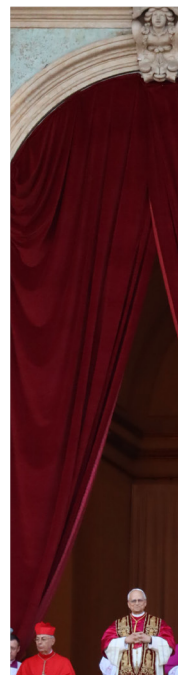


HABEMUS PAPAM

As crowds gathered in St. Peter's Square awaiting the announcement of the new Pope, our mentor, Brother Adolf Mugume C.SC. stood among them. To his great joy and surprise, the name announced was none other than Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, whom he had personally met just a few months prior.

Brother Adolf shared: "I am grateful to witness the election of a Pope who reminded me a few months ago of our call to listen to God's people and serve them with humility, centered on Jesus Christ and His message of justice and peace. He spoke of building a Church that puts Christ at the center and treasures the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, fostering a united human family and peace in the world."

Laudato Youth leaders Sarah, Fred, and Immaculate reflected on the new Pope's significance in The Tablet Magazine's Young Catholic Voices section. A Pope who deeply understands the call to be a good Shepherd in today's complex world attuned to the challenges of our time and committed to upholding Pope Francis' legacy.



A Pope who deeply understands the call to be a Good Shepherd in today's complex world attuned to the challenges of our time and committed to upholding Pope Francis

Pope Leo has witnessed firsthand the effects of climate change



Disclaimer:

The following three pages are an extract from the tablet Magazine that featured opinions of Laudato Youth leaders Sarah, Fred and Immaculate about our hopes for the new pope published in The Tablet Magazine's Inspire Issue, under the Young Catholic Voices section. The content has been reproduced in our magazine in accordance with the original presentation and rights reserved by The Tablet Magazine (thetablet.co.uk).

THE TABLET

Issue 17 | 31 May 2025

inspire

YOUNG
CATHOLICS'
QUARTERLY

FROM THE
MAKERS OF
THE
TABLET

A pope of our own

Grieving a shepherd • Hope is action
Heroes and platitudes • Drawing an apocalypse

ALAMY/AP, GREGORIO BORGIA



Pope Leo greets the crowds in St Peter's Square.

A pope of our own

This month's conclave was the first in the adult lives of Catholics under 30. What did it mean to witness the election that will shape the Church for this generation?

Welcome to the papal apartments Wyatt Olivas

"Peace be with you." These words rang out through the speakers in St Peter's Square on 8 May. These words from Pope Leo were not just for the people in the square – they were for the whole world. I think those first words were exactly what we needed to hear.

My heart was nervous in the days leading up to the conclave. I have no clue why – it's not like I had a vote! But I think the pressure from social media trying to tell us who we should want as pope really shook me.

Still, I urge people to let go of that feeling and trust in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knew who was going to be pope, and now we have him. It's time to let the Lord continue to lead.

I hope to see Pope Leo continue to call on young people to lead in the Church. I hope he encourages the Church to take a chance on them. And I hope that together, we can keep moving forward on this synodal mission.

Wyatt Olivas is a student at the University of Wyoming. He was the youngest delegate at the Rome assemblies of the Synod on Synodality in 2023 and 2024.

Huddled round a phone screen Maria Teresa Madison

As young people, we've spent most of our lives with Pope Francis, so naturally the conclave felt like a momentous occasion. What really struck me about the day of the result was the sense of excitement and community: a group of us were huddled around a phone screen waiting for the new pope to be announced, and the joyful anticipation was palpable.

I admire Pope Leo's continuation of Pope Francis' legacy in his commitment to social justice and climate change. I am also hopeful that, as an American himself, he will serve as a voice of peace and reason amid the troubles of current US politics.

Maria Teresa Madison reads Classics at Clare College, Cambridge and is her college's representative for the university chaplaincy, Fisher House.

Empower the young Sarah Kirikumwino

As young Catholics, we're grateful for the Church's platform to express ourselves, share

joy, and spread love. We appreciate the Church's leadership in addressing obstacles and promoting peace, justice, and family values. Given our generation's size and energy, we believe we can make a significant impact.

We're passionate about tackling global issues, particularly climate change, which affects lives, lands, health and development. We urge Pope Leo XIV to prioritise climate action, peacebuilding, and social justice, supporting initiatives that promote sustainability, compassion, and human dignity.

We expect the Pope to empower young people to take action, nurture family bonds, and promote a culture of care and mercy. By working together, we can build a better future for all, reflecting God's love and grace. We look forward to contributing to the Church's mission, inspired by faith, guided by values, and driven by a commitment to the well-being of all, especially the most vulnerable.

Sarah Kirikumwino is a Ugandan youth climate action leader. She attended the 2024 Youth Adaptation Forum for Africa organised by the Global Centre on Adaptation.

'He's my cardinal!' Maria Toone

The election of a new pope is a great historical event, one which has captivated the world's media. As the Pope walked out on to the balcony, my family and I were incredibly excited. When his name was announced, my sister exclaimed, "He's my cardinal!"

If you too have been spammed with Catholic content on WhatsApp groups over this past month, you may have come across the website prayforacardinal.com. In our family, we had all been randomly allocated a cardinal through this platform and my sister was lucky (or "blessed") to be allocated the future Pope, Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost!

We were delighted and surprised because when my sister had suggested that she thought he was a contender, I had responded that it was unlikely we'd have an American pope. I was proved wrong!

His opening address was beautiful: a message of peace, love and unity. It was this final point that struck me most. In a time where many, including myself, have been deeply saddened by polarisation and division in the world and even in the Church, to have a leader emphasise this brought me great joy. I was delighted by his chosen motto *In illo uno unum* – "In the One, we are one", the words of St Augustine. May Pope Leo XIV lead the Church in remaining one in the Lord.

Maria Toone is a recent graduate and an active leader within Catholic Youth Ministry in the UK, Generation Hope, Youth 2000 and theASCENT.

A guiding light Fred Ayebele

As a young Ugandan, I look up to the Pope as a symbol of spiritual guidance, hope and inspiration. His message of love of neighbour, care as a shepherd, and extending God's mercy should be felt deeply within our hearts to encourage us to do good.

I believe he has the power to shape the lives of young people like me through his words and actions. As a young Catholic, I hope the Pope will guide me to live out my faith in daily life, inspire me to serve others and make a positive impact, offer wisdom and direction in these times of uncertainty by encouraging young people to get involved in community service, to advocate for social justice and human rights, to be agents of change in our communities through spreading messages of hope, love, and peace, to become leaders and change-makers. He – and we – can provide a moral compass in a complex world.

Through his spiritual leadership, I believe Pope Leo XIV can inspire and empower young Ugandans, and young people around the world, to build a brighter future, with a spiritual perspective, according to our different spiritual environments.

Fred Ayebele is studying for a BA in Social Work and Social Administration at the Mountains of the Moon University in Fort Portal, Uganda.

A new chapter Ryan Lee

I found it quite touching how quickly the cardinals came together to elect Pope Leo – a sign of unity within the Church – and I'm filled with hope as we begin this new chapter. His years of pastoral service as a missionary, and his deep theological grounding, suit him to face the challenges of our time. I am excited to see how he will carry out his ministry!

Ryan Lee is a student at the University of Cambridge and a former chair of Fisher House.

The Pope next door Mary Mansfield

My first thought as the Pope stepped out on the loggia of St Peter's was that it was nice to see the papal mozzetta and stole again. My second thought was surprise that he was an American – a feeling also expressed in the eloquent hesitation in the square after the announcement of Prevost's name, despite his being a contender for the Chair of Peter.

And while I'm more interested in papal fashion than Church politics, it's worth recalling that, in the not-so-distant past, an American pope was discussed merely as an impossibility; the risk of having a papacy tied to a major world power was deemed too

great, given the likelihood of the strings of Church and State becoming knotted in the global entanglements of political interests. The election of this American Pope would seem to say less about a shift in the Church (with Prevost likely to maintain what Francis began), and more about the progressive shift towards political globalisation.

But the election of an American pope is certainly not without consequence for the Church, particularly the US Church. The nationwide publicity machine immediately initiated interviews with the Pope's brothers – live from the lawns of suburban America – creating an image of the newly-minted Leo XIV as Bob, the boy-next-door pope.

Will this domestication of the Catholic Church for Americans allow this country of Protestant roots finding a native identification with Catholicism, giving the US what the heritage of Christendom is for Europe? Will an American in the Vatican see either the baptism of American culture, or a baptism by American culture? As social media puts it, if the Pope is a Midwesterner, will babies now be baptised with ranch dressing?

Mary Mansfield is a design associate at Verso Ministries, a US-based pilgrimage company.

Pope Leo's priorities Kisembo Immaculate

The election of Pope Leo XIV marks a significant moment for the Catholic Church and young people worldwide. As the first US-born pope, he brings a fresh perspective, building on Pope Francis' legacy. With his background in social justice, shaped by experiences in Latin America, Pope Leo is poised to address pressing issues like poverty, inequality, climate justice, and peace.

I hope to see him prioritise social justice and climate change, empowering youth voices in climate action and promoting environmental sustainability. In the spheres of mental health and youth engagement, he can create programmes to develop deep spiritual connections and leverage modern communication tools, and to encourage young people to deepen their faith through involvement in church activities – particularly with the greater involvement of women. His work for interfaith dialogue and ecumenism can build bridges between faith communities, with a preferential option for indigenous people and developing countries.

As Pope Leo starts his papacy, his ability to balance social justice reforms and faith will shape the Church's future and open doors for the growth of the Church and her people in faith, building God's kingdom of justice and peace. May the Lord bless our Holy Father.

Kisembo Immaculate is an educator at Holy Cross Lake View School in Jinja, Uganda, and is

a publications editor for the Laudato Youth Initiative. She has published articles on mental health, faith, peace and ecological justice.

Beyond ideology Ciaron Tobin

The Pope is a breath of fresh air for the Church. Unexpected, non-partisan, and blurring those who would categorise him with a political ideology. The conclave was full of unhelpful speculation and smears by a divided laity. But the cardinals moved beyond this and followed the Holy Spirit. Watching it at my university chaplaincy was a joy, to witness the stunned silence and then joyful prayer for his health and success as Successor to the Chair of St Peter.

Ciaron Tobin is a postgraduate student at St John's College, Cambridge, and captain of the Fisher House rowing team.

'We can all walk together' Emmanuel Donkor

A widely-circulated social media post articulates a profound truth about Church leadership: Pope John Paul II taught us what we believe, Pope Benedict XVI explored why we believe, and Pope Francis illuminates how we believe. Each pontiff, equipped with a unique charisma, assesses the Church's needs and endeavours to address them effectively.

Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* observes that "modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses". Pope Francis discerned the urgent need to demonstrate to contemporary world how we believe. His focus on fostering a Church that embraces everyone is not merely an ideal; it is a call to action, one that builds bridges instead of walls, advocates for peace and justice, and champions a synodal church that listens to the cry of the poor and marginalised, including migrants and our precious Earth.

I ardently believe that this is the direction we, as a pilgrim Church, must pursue in today's world. It is essential to bear witness to our faith in a manner that leaves a lasting impact on the lives of modern people. While I do not expect Pope Leo XIV to adopt Pope Francis' style, I sincerely hope he will continue to guide the Church along this vital path.

The election of Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost as the 267th Pope is timely. He stated, "I am a son of Saint Augustine, who said: 'With you I am a Christian and for you a bishop.' In this sense, we can all walk together towards that homeland that God has prepared for us." His words assure me he is the man for the role.

Emmanuel Donkor is a Spiritan seminarian studying at the Spiritan International School of Theology in Enugu, Nigeria.

LAUDATO VOICES

LAUDATO YOUTH: SHAPING DEVELOPMENT AND

ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE IN UGANDA THROUGH CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Catholic Social Teaching (CST) plays a significant role in shaping development and ecological justice in Uganda. We are a country of God, and so our work must be guided by God: “For God and my Country.” Rooted in Gospel values and Church tradition, CST provides a moral and ethical framework that guides individuals, communities, and institutions in promoting human dignity, social equity, and care for creation. Laudato Youth has tried to explore ways how CST influences development and ecological justice in the Ugandan context as a way to encourage young people to prioritize God to build a God-fearing nation and people that will love and develop their country.

Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

CST is built on key principles that guide its approach to social, economic, and environmental issues. These include: Human Dignity, Common Good, Solidarity, Preferential Option for the Poor, Subsidiarity, Stewardship of Creation, and Rights and Responsibilities. These principles are drawn from encyclicals like *Laudato Si'*, *Rerum Novarum*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Evangelii Gaudium*, and they are increasingly relevant in the Ugandan context.

The Role of Catholic Social Teachings in the Development of Our Country

a. Human-Centered Development

CST emphasizes the dignity of the human person. In Uganda, this has translated into: Catholic institutions (churches, schools, hospitals)

providing education, healthcare, and vocational training, especially in rural and underserved areas, and so we see this shaping the future of our country and invite young people to focus more on building on these efforts that laid a firm foundation for our country's economic development and now the concern of its ecological sustainability. Promoting holistic development that prioritizes human well-being over mere economic growth.

b. Economic Justice and Empowerment

The Church in Uganda advocates for fair distribution of resources, decent work, and rights of workers: young people need to open up to work towards building on this firm foundation. Catholic organizations like Caritas Uganda support income-generating projects, microfinance initiatives like Centenary Bank have helped communities alleviate poverty, agricultural cooperatives, and efforts remain vessels of economic justice in our country. The young people now need to focus on efforts that can build on legacies like those of St. Adolf Mukasa Ludigo, the patron of farmers and hard workers, to promote our country's identity as an agricultural country with firm religious roots. CST critiques economic systems that marginalize the poor, calling for inclusive growth and accountability in governance. These are lessons we must all learn and devise solutions to ensure all are empowered and supported to thrive. The Laudato Youth Initiative is mobilizing young people to be creative and value work for better formation.

Peace Building and Good Governance

The Church is actively involved in civic education, reconciliation, and peacebuilding, especially in post-conflict regions like Northern Uganda. We need to do more to promote peace even at the family level.

The theme of our Laudato Si festival (an environmental forum that unites young people in prayer and action to discern their role as stewards of the future and in shaping the next generation of a climate-resilient generation) this year is “Sowing Seeds of Peace and Hope for Creation.” CST informs these efforts by promoting: Justice, forgiveness, and healing; participatory governance and respect for human rights.

a. Stewardship and Environmental Ethics

Drawing from Laudato Si’, CST urges care for creation: The Church in Uganda promotes tree planting, reforestation, and organic farming. Catholic schools and parishes include environmental education and practical eco-projects. Our Laudato Youth Initiative is filling in this gap; we have opened numerous Laudato Si Clubs in schools, parishes, dioceses, and communities to unite young people for climate action.

b. Advocacy Against Environmental Degradation

CST encourages prophetic witness against exploitation: The Ugandan Catholic Bishops’ Conference has spoken out against deforestation, wetland destruction, and extractive industries that harm ecosystems and communities, for example oil drilling in the Albertine region. We are now raising our voices to this message, encouraging individuals to play a role towards implementing a step-by-step solution to addressing these challenges, including the most worrying waste management that is turning some parts of our country into filth, causing environmental hazards from seeing people die because of rubbish at the Kiteezi landfill to witnessing increased flooding due to poor disposal of plastic materials. We need to be the change we want to see in our country. The Church calls for environmental justice, where the poor, who suffer most from ecological degradation, are protected.

c. Integration of Faith and Ecology

The concept of “integral ecology” in CST connects

social and environmental concerns: The Church links poverty eradication with environmental sustainability, recognizing that the two are interdependent. More projects should focus on sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and climate change resilience.

Challenges

- Limited resources and infrastructure
- Resistance from political leaders and development partners who prioritize investments in areas like wetlands, as well as economic elites
- Environmental policies that lack maximum enforcement
- Need for greater involvement of people in taking responsibility to care for the environment, including addressing issues like littering, land neglect, and deforestation
- Cultural practices conflicting with environmental ethics that require review

Opportunities

- Strong Church presence and credibility in Uganda, driving progress
- Growing youth engagement in climate action, with the Laudato Youth Initiative reaching out to a significant number of youth at the grassroots level, in schools, churches, and communities
- Partnerships with NGOs, government, and global Catholic networks to accelerate action response
- Membership in the Laudato Si Action Platform, enabling sharing of knowledge, fostering of community, and inspiration of action across various Laudato Si Clubs
- Pope Francis’ global moral leadership on ecological issues, guiding our efforts to uphold his ecological legacy

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) plays a transformative role in promoting both development and ecological justice in Uganda. Through education, advocacy, community empowerment, and moral guidance, the Church addresses the interconnected challenges of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. As Uganda faces rapid demographic and environmental changes, CST remains a vital framework for building a just, peaceful, and sustainable society.

R

RAISING HOPE FOR A RECONCILED CREATION

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF LAUDATO SI

The global Catholic community and people of good will came together to commemorate a decade of ecological conversion with Laudato Si'. On May 24, 2025, the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' groundbreaking encyclical on care for our common home was celebrated. The Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission of the International Unions of Superiors General (UISG/USG) hosted a global webinar, bringing together voices from across continents in celebration and renewed ecological solidarity.

A Global Celebration of Faith and Stewardship

The webinar featured speakers from various faith-based organizations, including our Laudato Youth Initiative Mentor, Br. Adolf Mugume, C.S.C. Br. Adolf's message emphasized the importance of youth leadership in ecological conversion, stating,

“Young people are not only the future of the Church, They are also the present care takers of God's creation. What they do today matters even tomorrow.”

A Decade of Impact and Inner Conversion

The event reflected on the transformative power of Laudato Si', which has sparked ecological ministries, community-based action, interfaith dialogue, and environmental education worldwide. Participants explored themes of inner ecological conversion, renewing their spiritual relationship with God, creation, and each other.



It is not enough to feel concern. We are called to act.

Our faith must be incarnated in choices, structures, and paths of transformation.

The Church invites us to act together, in community, with purpose.

Our Story Celebrated

The Laudato Youth Initiative's work was highlighted during the webinar, showcasing their efforts in youth-led climate actions, tree planting campaigns, educational outreach, and policy advocacy. The initiative embodies the vision of Laudato Si' by walking with young people on their ecological conversion journey.

webinar

Raising Hope for a Reconciled Creation

Celebrating 10 years of Laudato Si'

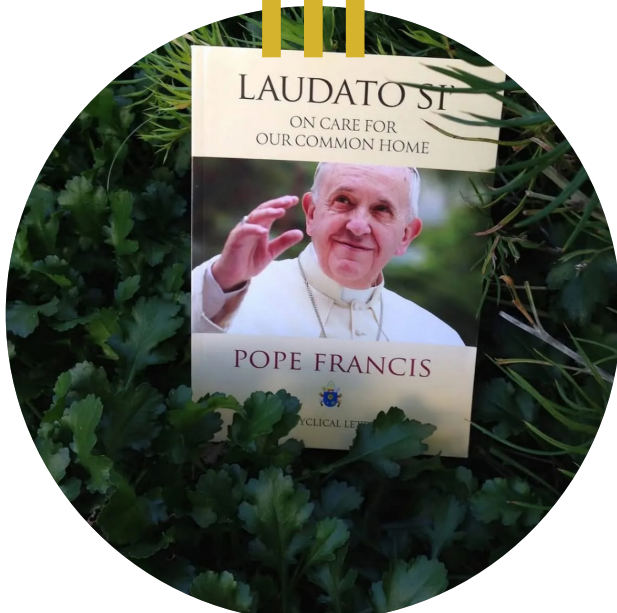
May 29, 3:00–4:30 pm (Rome Time)

Looking Ahead with hope

As the Laudato Youth Initiative looks forward to World Environment Day 2025,

they recommit themselves to caring for our common home. Through Laudato Si Club's activities and programs, they will continue to raise hope for a reconciled creation — a world where all life is respected, protected, and nurtured.

Creator God teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, and to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature. Laudato Si', 246.





DOLF MUKASA LUDIGO: THE SAINT FRANCIS OF UGANDA

In the inspiring life of the Uganda Martyrs who gave their lives for their faith on 3rd June, 1886, St. Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo stands out not only as a martyr of the Church but as a figure of ecological and spiritual harmony. Referred to by Laudato Youth as “the St. Francis of Uganda,” Ludigo lived a life of faith, courage and humility, he cared for the land, and embraced deep Christian charity — qualities that resonate powerfully with today’s ecological needs and the Laudato Youth Initiative’s work and other young people committed to climate justice and stewardship of God’s creation.

Humble Origins, Noble Spirit

St. Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo was born around 1862 in Misazi, Myeri, in present-day Kyenjojo District, under Butiti Parish. He was the son of Bamwesekesa and Kyote, a mother who endured the trauma of abduction alongside her son. Like many others during this time, Ludigo was kidnapped and taken to Buganda, where he grew up and eventually became part of the royal household. There, he was given the name Mukasa and later nicknamed Ludigo due to his resemblance to a prominent clan elder from Busoga.

Though a foreigner in Buganda, Ludigo rose to a position of responsibility — overseeing the King’s gardens, a role that immersed him in the life of the land and placed him in direct contact with farmers, herdsmen, and young workers. His care for this role was more than administrative; it was a reflection of his soul — rooted in labor, charity, simplicity, and responsibility for the earth and others that is integral in the African world view.

Faith and Martyrdom

Ludigo encountered Catholicism in 1881, drawn by its teachings and the witness of missionaries like Père Mapeera (Fr. Simeon Lourdel). He committed himself to the faith, though he was only baptized later, on November

16, 1885 a decision he made with full maturity of heart and mind. His baptismal name, Adolphus, symbolized his complete dedication to Christ.

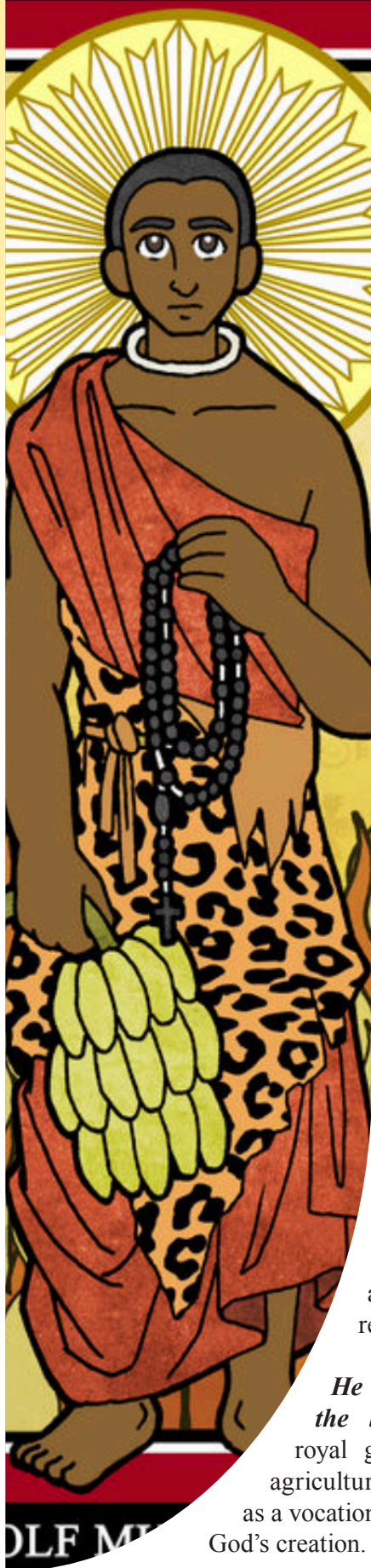
Those who knew him described him as exceptionally calm, intelligent, and thoughtful. He never shunned any task, no matter how lowly. He cooked for others, served with kindness, and treated everyone with dignity — qualities that mirror St. Francis of Assisi, who found God in both creation and humble service.

When Kabaka Mwanga II began persecuting Christians, Ludigo did not shrink back. Instead, he presented himself at the palace in his best attire, not in pride but as a witness to the dignity of his faith. After condemnation, he walked with regal composure to his death, until his fine clothes were taken from him at the Ssezibwa tree as custom required. On June 3, 1886, at just 24 years old, he was burnt to death at Namugongo, offering his life as a sacrifice for Christ.

Patron of the Farmers, Herdsmen, and Ecological Hope in Uganda

St. Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo is widely venerated as the patron of farmers. His practical knowledge of agriculture and faith and deep sense of community make him a timeless model for integral ecology.





In an age of environmental crisis in Uganda, Ludigo's life offers a spiritual and practical model for today's youth, particularly those involved in ecological and justice-focused initiatives like the Laudato Youth Initiative draw inspiration from his life inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which calls all people to care for our common home.

Relevance to the Laudato Youth Initiative

As Uganda celebrates 3rd June Martyrs day Laudato Youth Initiative invites young people to connect faith, action, and the environment. St. Adolphus Ludigo is a natural patron for this attitude, faith and actions, for several reasons:

He lived in harmony with the land. As manager of royal gardens, he understood agriculture not as mere labor but as a vocation — a way of stewarding God's creation.

He valued the dignity of workers. His service to others, including cooking for fellow Christians and treating all with equality, speaks to *Laudato Si'*'s call for integral human development.

He embraced simplicity. Though a man of dignity, Ludigo did not cling to possessions or power. His

humility is a model for living simply so others may simply live.

He bore witness through action. In a world where words often outweigh deeds, Ludigo's courageous, loving life is a call to active discipleship — to serve, to protect creation, and to stand for truth, even unto death.

In the vibrant chorus of the Uganda Martyrs, St. Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo sings a quiet but profound melody one of peace, courage, and communion with the earth. He is a bridge between martyrdom and mission, between faith and ecology, between past and future.

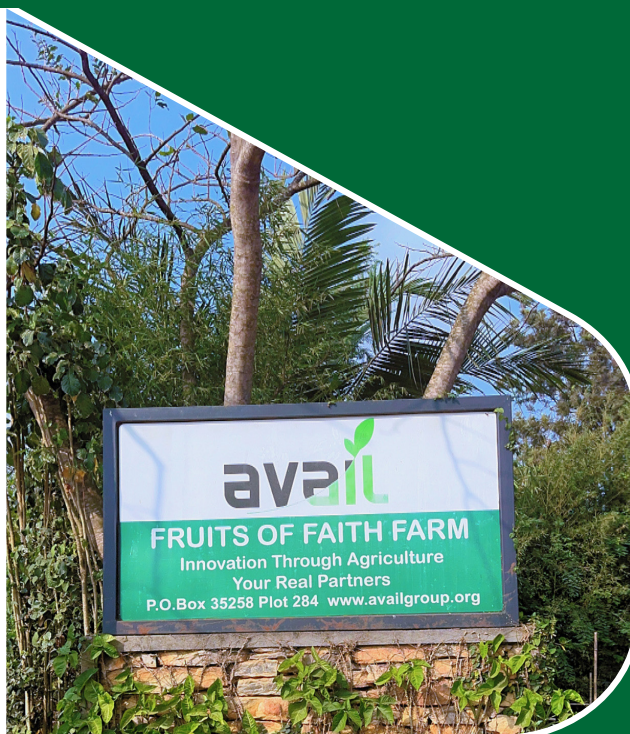
To farmers and herdsman, he remains a source of inspiration and strength. To the Church in Uganda, he is a symbol of humble, earthy sanctity. To the global Church he is the St. Francis of Assisi Uganda must celebrate his legacy with vivid hope for God blessed our land with fertile soils for agriculture and so we must work hard to visualise this icon of hope and faith for a nation of God like Uganda. For God and My Country. Laudato Youth Initiative – united for Climate Action.

To young people striving to live out *Laudato Si'*, he is a Saint for Our Time — a Ugandan martyr with a Franciscan soul. One of our Laudato Si Clubs at St. Adolf Holy Cross Parish Kanyabachope stands out as an icon of hope from the Land of St. Adolf in Mwenge where he was born.

St. Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo, patron of the land and life, pray for us. Guide young hearts to live simply, love deeply, and care boldly for our common home.



LYI and Avail Fruits of Faith



Laudato Youth Initiative partners with fruits of faith farm to enhance Innovations for Agriculture and Climate-Smart Farming Through Laudato Si Clubs

As part of our commitment to environmental stewardship and youth empowerment, the Laudato Youth Initiative, in partnership with Mr. Joseph Male, Director of Avail Group, is advancing climate-smart agriculture through practical, school- and community-based initiatives starting with teaching young people the importance of farming and its role in Agriculture the backbone of our Country's economy. To help them understand this young people are engaged in manageable hands on activities starting with the creation of kitchen gardens.

These gardens do more than provide fresh vegetables for students they serve as living classrooms

where young people learn to:

- 1. Grow food sustainably and serve their communities***
- 2. Receive climate-smart agricultural training through our Laudato Si' Clubs***
- 3. Apply their knowledge to develop entrepreneurial skills that can help transform their families and communities***

This program strengthens the new curriculum by inspiring young people to think creatively and pursue innovations in the field of agriculture. The skills learned are then transferred back to their homes and communities.



From teaching the importance of farming and kitchen gardening to promoting eco-tourism and conducting educational seminars, climate-smart agriculture in Uganda is proving effective in both urban and peri-urban environments. It equips learners with hands-on, practical skills that align with curriculum requirements while emphasizing environmental conservation. Students in Laudato Si Clubs are taught to incorporate sustainable practices such as:

Upcycling plastic bags (We are saying no to single use plastics), Water-saving technologies, Organic mulching and Indigenous pest control methods.

Through these innovations, Laudato Youth are learning that farming can be both sustainable and forward-thinking. As Mr. Joseph Male puts it, *“We innovate a better way.”* Our Laudato Si Clubs guide students to:

1. *View farming not as a last resort, but as a viable and rewarding career path*
2. *Connect agricultural learning to real-life challenges such as food security and climate change*
3. *Engage meaningfully with their communities through eco-conscious projects*



Environment Health and Safety

The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) is proud to partner with Foresters Investment Group Limited, a firm committed to delivering top-tier consultancy services across diverse environmental and socio-economic sectors. Their team of certified Environmental Practitioners, approved by the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), offers comprehensive and reliable solutions tailored to meet specific needs.

The firm comprises of highly competent practitioners equipped with the knowledge, skills, and experience in key areas such as Environmental and Social Impact Assessments, Spatial and Urban Planning, including Geo-Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS), Wetlands and Watershed Management, Urban Waste Management, Landfill Development, Environmental Monitoring, Capacity Building, Institutional Development, and Environmental Health and Safety.

During our recently concluded Laudato Si' Green Festival, Foresters HSE Consults joined hands with us to amplify youth voices for environmental action. Our Programme Manager, Ms. Immaculate Kisembo, extended a message of gratitude to Mr. Happy Peter, Director of Foresters HSE Consults, and shared in meaningful discussions on how we can collectively expand the impact of our initiatives.

These discussions focused on enhancing Environmental Education and Awareness, Health and Safety Services, and addressing urgent concerns such as air quality and the dangers posed by pollution.



thereby helping communities build resilience through our growing network of Laudato Si' Clubs.

Together, we are also committed to advancing our One Million Tree Planting Drive, among other key initiatives.

Environmental management, health and safety, and disaster preparedness are critical, especially in areas where pollution, floods, and fires pose significant threats to both human life and ecosystems.

We remain committed to mobilizing and empowering young people with practical skills and resilience measures grounded in sustainability.

Our activities in institutions span diverse sectors, including but not limited to teaching young people climate-smart agriculture, addressing the unique environmental and social challenges of our time. Inspired by our faith-based ecological values, we strive to ensure sustainable outcomes that foster strong adaptation and community resilience.



What is happening to our common home?

As Uganda experiences escalating climate impacts from wildfires and deforestation to flooding and pollution understanding and reducing our carbon footprint has become critical. Let us take a look at how key drivers; bush burning, deforestation, plastic pollution, and flooding are intensifying Uganda's climate crisis.

Biomass energy (firewood and charcoal) accounts for 90-94% of household energy use, with electricity comprising just 1.4%, pushing communities to clear trees for fuel and income

A 2021 Global Forest Watch report shows Uganda lost nearly 1.1 million hectares of tree cover from 2001 to 2023, with most cleared for charcoal, fuel, or agriculture.

In Gulu District, 38,700 ha have been cleared (2001-2021) largely for charcoal; this emitted 440,000 tonnes of CO₂ in 2021 alone

A mobile phone survey (Oct–Nov 2023, 2,762 respondents) found 42% view deforestation as the key driver of climate change in Uganda.



Forests and wetlands are under threat, join hands to support our eco systems, support livelihoods and build resilience by saying no to bush burning and deforestation

Very Unhealthy Air Quality Reported in Fort Portal: A Call for Immediate Caution

A recent air quality reading from the Rwengoma area in Fort Portal shows PM2.5 levels have reached $146\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, placing the region in the “Very Unhealthy” category according to international air quality standards. These levels are cause for serious concern and signal a potential public health risk, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and individuals with respiratory or heart conditions.

What Does PM2.5 Mean?

PM2.5 refers to fine particulate matter that is 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller. These particles are tiny enough to penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream. Common sources include vehicle emissions, burning of biomass, industrial activity, and dust.

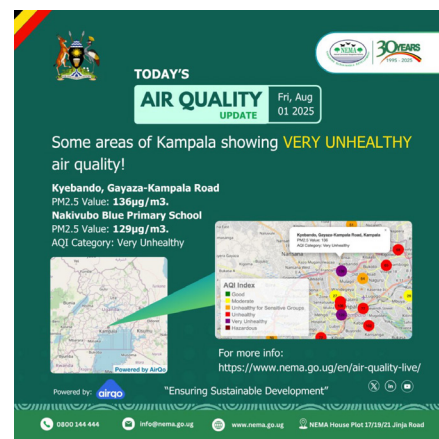
When concentrations reach this level, everyone—regardless of health status—is advised to reduce prolonged or heavy exertion outdoors. For sensitive individuals, it is recommended to remain indoors and use air purifiers if available.

Some of our communities

Are already experiencing these effects

The months of July Neema reported several cases deterioration in Air Quality

Citing towns like Fort Portal and some areas of Kampala, a red flag to public health culminating from pollution and climate change.



Health Implications

Sustained exposure to high PM2.5 levels can cause:

- Shortness of breath and irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat
- Aggravation of asthma and bronchitis
- Increased risk of heart attacks and strokes
- Long-term lung damage in children





Plant a tree to
be part of the
Solution

What You Can Do

- Stay away from exposure during peak pollution hours (typically early morning and evening).
- Wear a mask, especially if you are outside and exposed to dust and smoke from burning waste.
- Limit excessive use of firewood.
- Check live updates on air quality through the NEMA Air Quality Portal.



Monitoring and Action

This update is part of ongoing efforts by AirQo in collaboration with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to provide real-time air quality monitoring across Uganda. These insights should empower you our youth, your family, institution and policymakers, to take informed actions to protect public health.

As urban areas like Fort Portal continue to grow, monitoring air quality becomes not just a scientific concern but a matter of public responsibility and collective well-being.

Stay informed. Stay safe. Clean air is everyone's right.

Data Source: NEMA Uganda

Our ambitious One Million Tree Planting Drive

*Why the one million tree planting drive? the reality is most of our communities in Uganda Suffer Livelihood-Driven **Deforestation***

Forest Cover Collapse

Uganda's forest cover plummeted from 24% in 1990 (4.9 million ha) to just 9% by 2018 (1.83 million ha) a loss of over 3 million ha in less than 30 years. Annual deforestation remains alarmingly high, around 50,000 ha per year, contributing to CO2 emissions equivalent to over 8 million tons.

Subsistence Agriculture & Fuel Needs

A majority of Ugandans up to 98% rely on wood energy (firewood and charcoal) daily for cooking and household energy needs. Afrobarometer surveys confirm deforestation and air pollution are perceived as the top environmental threats, driven by rural dependence on biomass resources.



We plant Trees that Feed

United For Climate Action

Household-Level Research

In the Nalwekomba wetland area, 76% of respondents earn under UGX 100,000/month (\$27 USD), and they cite charcoal/timber sale and firewood use for money as key factors driving tree cutting and land degradation. In Western Uganda's Albertine Rift, research interviewing 399 households found: 69% depend on customary forests for tobacco curing, 68% for brick burning and nearly 48% expanded farmland by about 0.57 ha over 15 years clearing forests to sustain livelihoods.

National Context on Livelihood & Poverty Forest dependency is tied directly to poverty: over 35% of the poorest Ugandan rural households rely heavily on forest resources due to lack of assets and land ownership.

Forest resource harvesting is deeply embedded in informal rural economies: three-quarters of villages sell wood products (poles, timber, charcoal), mostly off-farm and informally. Income and climate resilience.

These findings show clearly that environmental destruction in Uganda is predominantly a survival strategy, not a deliberate choice to exploit nature. Poverty, lack of alternatives, and household needs (fuel, income, agriculture, energy) are the primary drivers behind deforestation.

This emphasizes the importance of initiatives like our One Million Tree Planting Drive to address root causes by offering:

Alternative ideas for livelihoods and sustainable agriculture

Raising awareness and tree planting for income and climate resilience

Community education and empowerment and youth mobilization.



Poems

raising voices for Mother Earth

LET US SILENCE MOTHER EARTH'S LAMENT

"The earth has enough for everyone's needs, but not enough for everyone's greed." This powerful quote reminds us of the importance of living sustainably and responsibly. Mother Earth cries out in pain as we harm it every day, with pollution, deforestation, and destruction in every way.

The consequences of our actions are far-reaching, affecting not just the environment but also our own well-being. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, and environmental degradation threaten our very existence. Rising temperatures, melting ice caps, and extreme weather events are just a few of the many signs that our planet is in distress. Mother Earth's cries echo through the ages, pleading for us to use her resources wisely, not to misuse them.

The Laudato Si' movement, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, has made a significant impact in promoting environmental care. The phrase "Laudato Si'" means "Praise be," and the Laudato Si' clubs have been instrumental in spreading this message of care and stewardship for our planet. Through their efforts, communities are coming together to reduce waste, conserve water, and protect natural habitats.

As we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Laudato Si', let's reaffirm our commitment to protecting the environment. Let's work together to conserve our planet, honor the Laudato Si' spirit, and ensure a better future for all. We can make a difference by reducing our carbon footprint, using public transport, carpooling, or driving electric vehicles. We can plant more trees, conserve water, and reduce waste.

Every small action counts, and collective efforts can lead to significant positive change. Let's take care of Mother Earth, and she will take care of us. Join the movement, and together, we can create a brighter, more sustainable future. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and future generations to act now. Let's silence Mother Earth's lament and work towards a world where nature and humanity thrive in harmony.

LAKER MARIA PAULINE

EMBRACING OUR RESPONSIBILITY: PROTECTING THE PLANET

It's our duty to save the environment's beauty,
Because there is no Planet B, we have to see,
That we care for the one we've got.
The greatest threat to our planet is the thought
That someone else will save it, that's just not right.

The environment is no one's property to destroy in the night;
It's everyone's responsibility to protect with all our might.
I don't want to protect the environment, I want to create
A world where the environment doesn't need protection.
The truth is that the natural world is changing fast,
And we're totally dependent on that world that will surely last.

It provides our food, water, and air we breathe
It's the most precious thing we have, and we need
to defend it with ease.
The future will either be green or not at all.
Don't be mean, keep it green, protect our Earth today,
For our children's tomorrow, in a better way.

If we cannot sustain the environment,
we cannot sustain ourselves.
Sustainability is treating ourselves and
our environment with care and wealth,
As if we're to live on this Earth forever,
with love and might.
The environment is where we all meet,
where all have a mutual interest in sight.
It's the one thing all of us share, a common ground.

Think clean, go green, do keep this world clean.
The proper use of science is not to conquer nature
but to co-exist with it.
Let's permit nature to have her way
She understands her business better than we do,
so let's follow her lead.



Have you ever imagined what transportation might look like in an eco-innovative future? Countries like Switzerland are already taking bold steps in that direction. Br. Adolf shares his experience of the Pilatus in Switzerland, where smart, sustainable transport systems are no longer a fantasy they are reality. Imagine flying cable cars designed for 24/7, all-weather operation, with near-zero accident risk, minimal carbon emissions, low noise levels, and very low consumption of clean electric power. These systems not only reduce environmental impact but also preserve the natural landscape, with the added potential of creating green zones along their routes. This is an example of real, innovative transport solutions developed by countries investing in smart, eco-conscious technologies, like cable cars that serve both people and the planet.

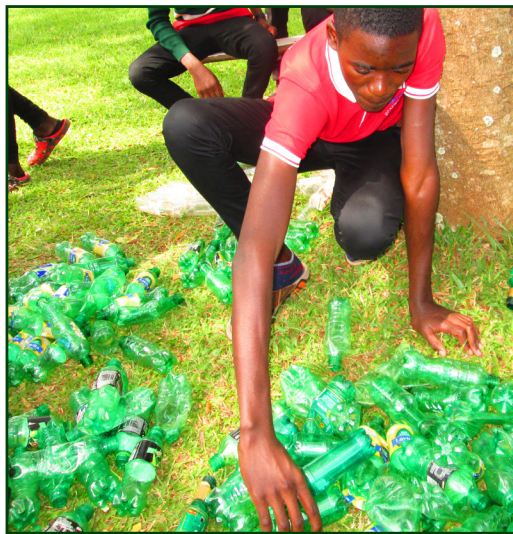
PICTORIAL



Laudato Si Clubs



LYI Activities



The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) in Uganda is leveraging digital innovation and faith-based environmental action to advance Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action). Through exhibitions, projects, and training in recycling, organic farming, solar energy, and plastic management, LYI is promoting ecological awareness and sustainability among young people. The Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View S.S.S

The Laudato Youth Initiative: A Grassroots Approach

Operating from the John Paul II Justice & Peace Centre in Kampala, LYI coordinates over 16 Laudato Si' Clubs across secondary schools, universities, and communities in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, impacting over 10,000 youth. The initiative emphasizes the fusion of ecological awareness with Catholic Social Teaching, African traditional wisdom, and modern technology, providing a holistic approach to environmental sustainability. By engaging young people in hands-on environmental projects, LYI is fostering a new generation of environmental leaders who are equipped to address the complex challenges of climate change.

FAITH BASED DIGITAL INNOVATION A CATALYST FOR CLIMATE ACTION IN UGANDA.

Digital Innovation and Local Climate Action

LYI's initiatives include:

has not only reduced plastic waste but also raised awareness about the importance of sustainable practices in daily life.

1. Recycling and Plastic Management: Smart dustbins and tech-driven waste separation mechanisms were showcased during the 2025 Laudato Si' Green Festival. Participants committed to refusing disposable plastic bottles at events, promoting reusables and reducing waste. This initiative

2. Organic Farming and Agroecology: LYI clubs provide training on organic manure, kitchen gardens, biodiversity restoration, and agroforestry. These initiatives promote sustainable food systems, improve soil health, and enhance biodiversity, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable food future.

3. Solar Energy and Clean Technology: LYI promotes knowledge about clean energy and raises awareness, encouraging institutions to adopt solar energy. By partnering with organizations like the Joint Energy and Environment Projects (JEEP), LYI is supporting the development of clean energy solutions that can be scaled up to meet the needs of local communities.

4. Climate Education and Digital Storytelling: LYI amplifies youth voices through school exhibitions, poetry competitions, and digital platforms. By sharing their stories and experiences, young people are inspiring others to take action on climate change and promoting a culture of sustainability.

Outcomes and Impact

The initiative has achieved notable success in raising ecological awareness, influencing behavioral change, and embedding sustainability in faith-based education. Over 10,000 youth have participated in Laudato Si' Clubs, which serve as catalysts for peer education and community mobilization.

The adoption of a plastic-free events policy by faith-based networks and the cultivation of long-term ecological behaviors such as tree care reflect the depth of behavioral transformation.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Despite its success, LYI faces challenges such as ensuring long-term sustainability of planted trees and gardens, funding limitations, and bridging the gap between digital awareness and hands-on implementation.

However, these challenges have not deterred the initiative; instead, they have encouraged LYI to innovate and adapt, leveraging digital platforms to reach more people and engage local communities in sustainability efforts.



The Laudato Youth Initiative stands as a model of how faith-based digital innovation can drive local implementation of global goals such as SDG 13. By merging spirituality, youth leadership, and sustainability, LYI shows that grassroots movements are powerful catalysts for climate action. With the right support and strategic expansion, LYI's model can be replicated across similar contexts in Africa and beyond, inspiring a new generation of environmental leaders and promoting a more sustainable future for all.

LYI Recommends

1. Expanding Monitoring & Evaluation frameworks to measure real-world environmental impact and inform future programming.
2. Developing partnerships with local innovators and NGOs to support practical training and community-led initiatives.
3. Integrating climate education into formal curricula to en-

sure that young people have the knowledge and skills they need to address climate change.

4. Leveraging faith-based storytelling to deepen moral commitment to climate action and promote a culture of sustainability.
5. Fostering youth-led research to inform national climate strategies and international advocacy, ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and valued.

Integral Ecology

In the spirit of Laudato Si', we affirm that everything is interconnected, our environment, our economy, our society, and our spiritual lives. Through creative youth-led action and leadership training, LYI empowers young people to co-create solutions that reflect this deep interconnectedness. Our programs intentionally honor indigenous African knowledge systems and stories, ensuring no part of creation or human dignity is left behind.

The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor

Pope Francis reminds us that climate change is not only an environmental crisis, it is a moral crisis. In many African communities, the effects are already here: deforestation, pollution, floods, droughts, and loss of biodiversity. But we believe it's not too late. Laudato Youth are responding by: Acknowledging these lived realities, Raising awareness through youth-led campaigns, Advancing climate-smart agriculture and taking bold actions to restore ecosystems and protect human life. Our focus spans urgent issues like climate health impacts, pollution, waste, and resilience.

Ecological Conversion

The Season of Creation 2025 is a call for ecological conversion, a profound inner transformation toward gratitude, simplicity, and stewardship. Through:

- Care for creation Masses
- Eco-action projects
- Faith-based education
- Digital storytelling
- Mentorship of youth leaders

We guide young people to live out their faith in ways that tangibly care for our common home. We uplift the African interpretation of Laudato Si' and connect it with Pope Francis' urgent appeal in Laudate Deum—a final gift and challenge to the Church and humanity to act now.

Pope Leo XIV on Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding

"Now is the time for dialogue and building bridges." In one of his first major addresses, Pope Leo XIV reaffirmed the Catholic Church's commitment to interfaith dialogue, peacebuilding, and human fraternity, stating: "Now is the time for dialogue and building bridges, not walls."— Pope Leo XIV, Address to Religious Leaders, May 2025



Takeaway Indigenous Wisdom

1. Adopt Nature Based Air Filters
2. Shift from Charcoal to Clean Cooking Systems
3. Walk, Cycle, or use public transport
4. Plant trees and Protect Urban Green Spaces in your home town



Drawing inspiration from the legacy of Pope Francis, especially the teachings of Fratelli Tutti and the Document on Human Fraternity, Pope Leo emphasized that:

1. Peace cannot be achieved without dialogue among religions and cultures.
2. Religious leaders must be agents of unity, not division.
3. True dialogue respects differences while working for the common good, especially in areas of justice, environmental stewardship, and human dignity.

What We're Doing

Laudato Si Green Festivals and Masses for the Care of Creation, bringing together students, teachers, clergy, stakeholders and community leaders in prayer and action

Advancing our One Million Tree Planting Drive, restoring ecosystems and creating carbon sinks

Expanding climate-smart agriculture programs in schools and communities

Supporting youth-led eco-projects focusing on clean air, waste management, and water conservation

Providing spiritual formation and Catholic Social Teaching rooted in Laudato Si' and the Season of Creation

Join hands with us

We invite to explore our ministry. We mentor **Laudato Si Clubs** in schools, universities, parishes, dioceses and communities we invite you to partner with us by starting a Laudato Si' Club, or supporting our programs, or simply sharing our message together we can unite for climate action

Let us walk in the footsteps of Pope Francis and turn hope into action for creation.

Whether through planting a tree, reducing plastic waste, mentoring a student, or leading a prayer, every step matters.



United for *Climate Action*



Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI)

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Laudato Youth Initiative