

LAUDATO VOICES

MAGAZINE

"Peace be with you all"

Pilgrims of Green Hope
United for Climate Action

Laudato Voices Magazine is the official publication of the Laudato Youth Initiative—Uganda's premier Catholic Initiative empowering young people to unite faith with environmental stewardship for bold climate action.

www.laudato-youthinitiative.org

ABOUT OUR INITIATIVE

The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) mobilizes young people in Laudato Si Clubs, translating the principles of the Catholic Social Teaching and Pope Francis' Laudato Si', into practical faith driven solutions and Ecological Education.



By integrating African cultural wisdom and knowledge systems, Catholic Climate Education values, and local spiritual heritage inspirations, particularly the example of St. Adolf, the Uganda Martyr and patron of hardmen and farmers, LYI fosters ecological citizenship across schools, universities, parishes, dioceses, and communities.





Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI)

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the 12th Edition of Laudato Voices Magazine—our special Christmas and End of Year **"Peace be with you"** issue. The world longs for ecological hope and peace. In response, our youth are stepping forward with faith, action, creativity, and innovation. The work of the Laudato Youth Initiative and our Laudato Si Clubs in schools, universities, parishes, and dioceses has become a true ministry of hope, peace, and charity. Throughout this year, as **"Pilgrims of Green Hope,"** we have conducted impactful activities that reflect this commitment. Our focus has been on **cultivating local solutions for global impact**, and the results have been outstanding. We have reached the grassroots, inspiring young people and communities to embrace integral ecology and care for our common home. For all of this, we thank God.

This edition highlights the recap and progress of our one-million-tree planting drive in the jubilee year. We cover the Laudato Si Green Festival, Wetlands and Climate Action Dialogue, Eco Walk, National Tree Planting Day, community engagement activities, and the Season of Creation.

"Hope is bold; it can open new horizons by drawing on the strength of the Spirit." — Pope Francis, Laudato Si.



The National Youth Conference in Gulu is also featured. You will find stories on mental health, National Tree Planting Day in Mwiri, Cancer Run participation, and messages from our Laudato Si Club patrons. We also share inspiring activities from clubs across Uganda, insights from our Eco-Wisdom Quiz, tribute to the late Bishop Charles Martin Wamika and much more. Together, these stories reflect a nation awakening to ecological responsibility, renewed hope, and solidarity among young people with LYI.

This edition includes highlights from Pope Leo XIV's address at the **Raising Hope Conference at Castel Gandolfo**. It provides an overview of reflections and aspirations toward COP30, describes our **involvement with the Laudato Si' Action Platform**, and shares news about new Laudato Si' Clubs. We also spotlight our Clubs President, Sarah, leading a prayer at a global event, summarize the **Delexi Te**, and examine a key feature **on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence for the good** and safety of the youth on the media space.

May this festive season inspire us to continue nurturing hope, caring for creation, and building peace in families and communities with joy. With these reflections in mind, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a hopeful New Year. On behalf of all of us at Laudato Youth Initiative, peace be with you.

Ms Immaculate Kiseambo
Chief Editor



The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) mobilizes and empowers young people through faith-driven action in Laudato Si Clubs, translating the principles of Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Sustainable Development Goals into practical solutions for ecological justice in Uganda and beyond. By integrating African cultural wisdom and knowledge systems, Catholic Climate Education values, and local spiritual heritage inspirations, particularly the example of St. Adolf, the Uganda Martyr and patron of hardmen and farmers, LYI fosters ecological citizenship across schools, universities, parishes, dioceses, and communities.



Through the promotion of integral ecology, implementation of hands-on environmental innovations, and organization of events such as the *Laudato Si'* Green Festival, LYI encourages youth to become responsible environmental stewards of today and the future and supports the development of communities that address the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor in institutions and grassroots communities, advancing a just and sustainable future for all.



The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) continues to strengthen its presence and impact in Uganda through school-based engagements that promote youth-led climate action and ecological education. During our September 23rd, 2025 visit to Ave Maria Secondary School, the LYI leadership team (Mr. Benard Kahwa, Executive Director; Immaculate Kisembo, Programs Manager; and Fred Ayebale, Media) received a warm welcome and held an enriching session with the school's Laudato Si Club under the theme: "Building Climate Resilience through Collective Action."

We were graciously received by Sr. Mildred Asiimwe, the Head Teacher, and the school leadership team, including Sr. Marceline Twinomugisha, Deputy in Charge of Administration, and Mr. Peter Onap, Deputy in Charge of Academics and Club Patron. Sr. Marceline led a reflective session in the main hall as we introduced the initiative and its relevance to the school's environmental values. Mr. Onap has been instrumental in guiding the club's daily activities.

Youth Taking the Lead in Environmental Stewardship

Just like in many other schools our clubs are embracing stewardship Ave Maria's Laudato Si Club is actively engaged in agroforestry, regenerating plastic bottles and keeping their environment clean. Students address plastic pollution, maintain green spaces, and promote a culture of environmental eco-consciousness among their peers. This trend that is increasingly being seen in schools running our clubs inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si' and St. Adolf the Patron of Farmers and Hardesmen.



During our visit, students expressed their passion through skits, a short play, and creative speeches, all echoing the urgent need for environmental care. A Q & A session allowed open dialogue and showcased the students' strong grasp of climate issues affecting their communities. This inspires us to mentor the club toward more action and community engagement, starting with individual commitment and extending to collective efforts and outreach to neighboring communities.

When schools like Ave Maria teach eco-conscious values, students return home as agents of change in their families.





Planting Seeds of Change

Aligned with LYI's flagship campaign, the One Million Tree Planting Drive, the session included a practical activity where fruit and indigenous trees were planted on school grounds. These trees, chosen for their ecological and nutritional value, will contribute to shade, biodiversity, soil stability, and food security. These are core aspects of resilience-building in Uganda's climate-vulnerable regions.

The team also facilitated a session on agricultural innovation, emphasizing climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems. This aligns with national efforts to integrate climate education into school curriculums and mirrors successful models from our other Laudato Si Clubs in Uganda, where environmental stewardship is combined with hands-on agricultural learning. Pope Francis helps us see that integral ecology calls for openness to categories that move beyond mathematics and biology into real action for ecological conversion.

Symbolic Recognition

Call to Action

Laudato Si Clubs Patron



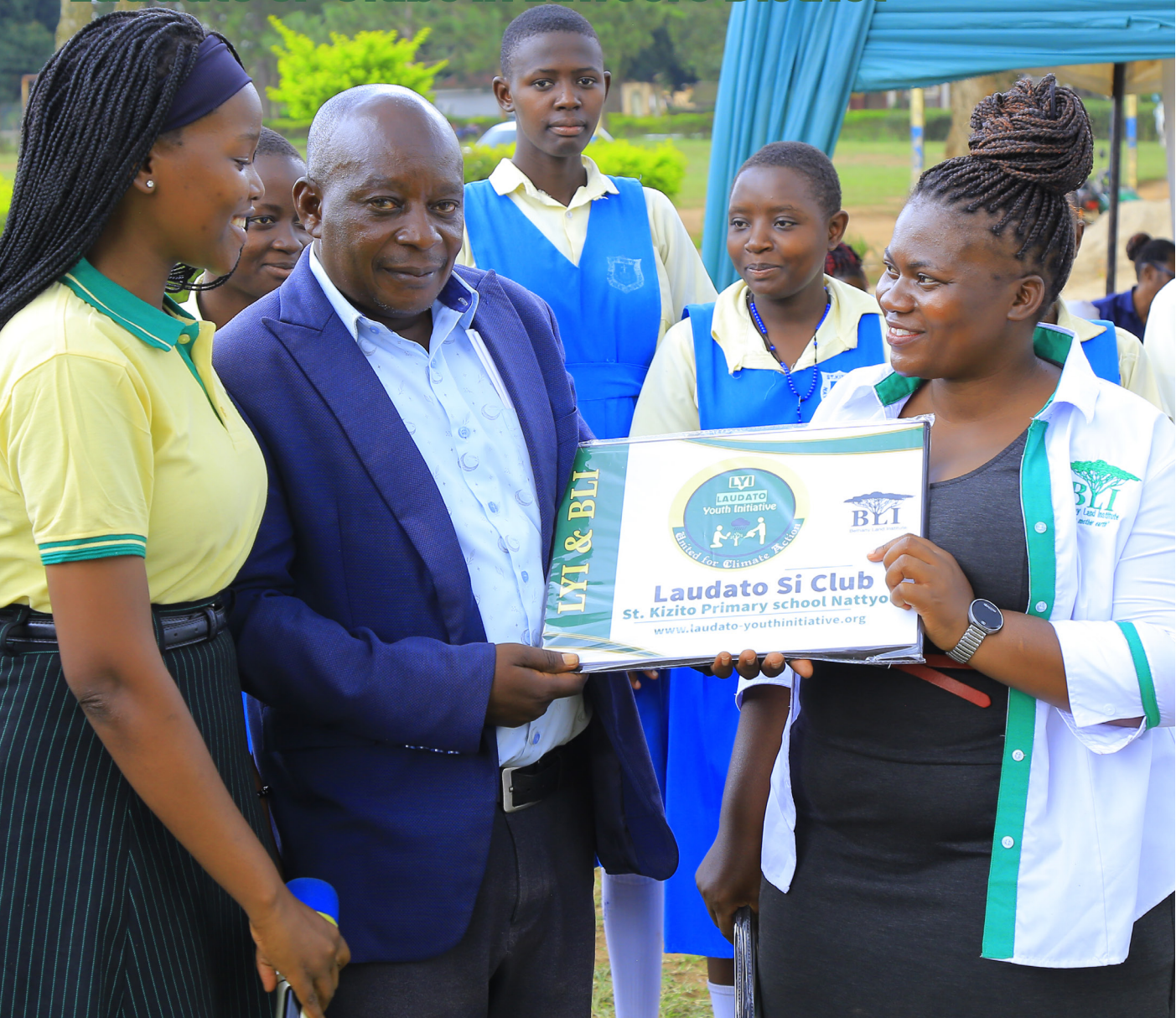


Symbolic Recognition and a Call to Action

To conclude the visit, the club received a Laudato Si Club flag and emblem, symbolizing unity and commitment to ecological conversion. This gesture mirrors our shared practices across Laudato Si Clubs in Uganda, where symbols like flags, badges, or tree nurseries represent living commitments to Pope Francis' call to care for our common home.

Schools like Ave and others Maria are creating a difference. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Laudato Si club members, their patrons, and administration of Ave Maria Secondary School for their hospitality, energy, and dedication to environmental stewardship. Their involvement affirms the momentum of youth-led action for climate justice and sustainability in Uganda said Mr. Benard Director LYI.

Laudato Youth Initiative Launches Laudato Si' Clubs in Luweero District



In a vibrant celebration of faith, ecology, and youth leadership, the Laudato Youth Initiative, in partnership with Bethany Land Institute (BLI), officially launched Laudato Si' Clubs in selected primary schools across Luweero District on Tuesday, 30th September 2025. The launch took place during the Laudato Si' Prayer Month Showcase, hosted at St. Kizito Primary School in Natyole, and brought together students, educators, community leaders, and government representatives.

The day opened with a solemn Mass that set a reflective tone for the celebrations. This was followed by colourful and creatively crafted student performances—poems, songs, dances, and drama pieces—each echoing themes of integral ecology, care for creation, and responsible stewardship inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. These presentations highlighted the growing environmental awareness among young learners and their eagerness to take action.



The core moment of the event was the formal inauguration of Laudato Si' Clubs in St. Kizito Nattyole, Wakatayi Primary School, and Bukasa Roman Catholic Primary School. These clubs are designed to nurture ecological responsibility among children, provide hands-on environmental learning, and empower young people to become sustainability champions in their communities.

More than 300 participants attended the showcase, reflecting strong community support for ecological education. Government officials commended BLI and the Laudato Youth Initiative for fostering partnerships that inspire youth-led climate action.



Adding to the day's significance, the BLI Choir was invited to animate the Mass for the dedication of the Primary Seven candidates of St. Kizito Natyole—a recognition of their commitment and musical excellence.



The launch of the Laudato Si' Clubs marks a major milestone in advancing environmental stewardship in Luweero District. It sets the stage for a new generation of young leaders committed to caring for our common home, and for the growing impact of the Laudato Youth Initiative in uniting young people in schools, parishes, universities, and communities to care for our common home.

Ruth Nakalembe, Community Engagement officer BLI







Laudato Si Club St. Maria Goretti Girls Secondary School

OUR JOURNEY WITH LAUDATO YOUTH INITIATIVE IN FORMING STEWARDS OF THE FUTURE

At St. Maria Goretti, we have strengthened our commitment to nurturing responsible, creative, and socially conscious ecological citizens. Our partnership with the Laudato Youth Initiative enables us to focus on shaping learners as future stewards—developing their hearts, minds, and actions beyond academics. This has inspired our students to think more deeply about using their talents and to develop innovative ways to achieve sustainable living.

The Laudato Youth Initiative empowers St. Maria Goretti students through the Laudato Si club to take concrete action in caring for the environment, each other, and their community, inspired by Pope Francis's call in *Laudato Si'*. Our students actively practice stewardship through sustainability initiatives, including tree planting, waste management, research, and recycling. They learn that every action, big or small, contributes meaningfully to caring for our common home.

Leadership development is central to the Laudato Youth Initiative. We cultivate student leaders who lead environmental efforts, inspire peers, and promote stewardship within and beyond the school.

Through leadership training, students recognize their role as stewards. They understand their actions shape a sustainable world, foster-

ing responsibility that endures beyond their school years. Joining the Laudato Youth Family means being part of the legacy-makers who will have a positive impact on their community. They learn to use communication skills in public speaking, debate, research, innovations, and faith.





Practical engagement is central to this journey. Through activities such as tree planting, recycling, waste reduction, climate awareness, and creative ecological projects, students connect knowledge with real-world stewardship, ensuring their learning supports environmental protection.

The success of this initiative relies on collaboration among students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and the Laudato Youth Leadership Team. Together, we foster an environment where ecological responsibility is valued and celebrated, shaping a community that honors the dignity of creation and its preservation. Faith and innovation.

“

Leadership development is central to the Laudato Youth Initiative.

— **NAMARA BETTY CLUB
(PATRON)**





Our journey with the Laudato Youth Initiative inspires hope as students grow into stewards committed to the planet, human dignity, and compassionate leadership.

St. Maria Goretti is nurturing a generation devoted to stewardship. Guided by shared values and faith, we see these efforts grow into a future dedicated to caring for our common home.



From tears to hope, Pope Leo approached the glacial ice and proclaimed a blessing over the water and all present: “May we work for the flourishing of all creation.”

In the afternoon of October 1, at the Focolare Movement’s International Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo, Rome, the Raising Hope Conference was inaugurated with the participation of His Holiness Leo XIV, alongside notable figures such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, former Governor of California, and the Hon. Marina Silva, Brazil’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change.



The session combined testimonies, spiritual and artistic moments, in thanksgiving for the 10th anniversary of the encyclical *Laudato Si’*. Representing the *Laudato Si’* Movement, Associate Director Christina Leaño and Brazil Director Igor Bastos presided over the day’s opening.

A symbolic moment came when Pope Leo XIV touched and blessed a block of ice more than 20,000 years old, broken off due to climate change from a glacier in Greenland, as well as water brought from around the world—gestures embodying compassion and concern for the cry of the Earth and the poor.

Laudato Si’: What remains to be done?

“This Encyclical has profoundly inspired the Catholic Church and many people of goodwill,” Pope Leo began in his speech on *Laudato Si’*, “it opened strong dialogue, reflection groups, and academic programs.” The Pope noted how his predecessor’s encyclical spread “to international summits, to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, to economic and business circles, to theological and bioethical studies.”

Giving thanks to the Heavenly Father “for this gift we have inherited from Pope Francis,” Leo stressed that today environmental and social challenges are even more urgent. On this anniversary we must ask ourselves:



“What remains to be done? What must we do now to ensure that caring for our common home and listening to the cry of the earth and the poor do not appear as passing trends or, worse still, are seen and felt as divisive issues?” he asked.

Return to the heart: from data collection to care

“Today more than ever it is necessary to return to the heart, the place of freedom and authentic decisions,” affirmed the Pontiff, because although it “includes reason,” it also “transcends and transforms it.” “The heart is where external reality has the greatest impact, where the deepest search takes place, where the most authentic desires are discovered, where one’s ultimate identity is found, and where decisions are forged.”

In this regard, he stressed that “only by returning to the heart can a true ecological conversion take place.” “We must move from collecting data to caring; and from environmental discourse to an ecological conversion that transforms both personal and community lifestyles.”

Leo reminded those present that this experience of conversion orients us toward the living God: “We cannot love God, whom we do not see, while despising His creatures. Nor can we call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ without sharing His vision of creation and His care for all that is fragile and wounded.” No room for indifference or resignation

Before concluding, the Pope looked with hope to the upcoming international summits —COP30 in 2025, the World Food Security Committee session, and the 2026 Water Conference— “so that they may listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

He also encouraged young people, parents, and those working in administrations and institutions to contribute to “finding solutions to today’s cultural, spiritual, and educational challenges, always striving tenaciously for the common good.” **Finally, he reflected: “God will ask us if we have cultivated and cared for the world He created and for our brothers and sisters. What will our answer be?”**

1.5 billion Catholics can get involved

Actor and former Governor of California, founder of the USC Schwarzenegger Institute and the Schwarzenegger Climate Initiative, Arnold Schwarzenegger, began his address by congratulating the Holy Father for installing solar panels on the roofs of the Vatican: “I am standing next to a hero,” he declared.

“There are 1.5 billion Catholics — that power and strength must be used to get involved in the climate movement,” Schwarzenegger said, urging more focus on talking about pollution: “The average person doesn’t understand when we talk about net zero or rising temperatures. Instead of speaking to the head, we must speak to the heart. We can end pollution if we work together, because God put us on this Earth to make it a better place.”

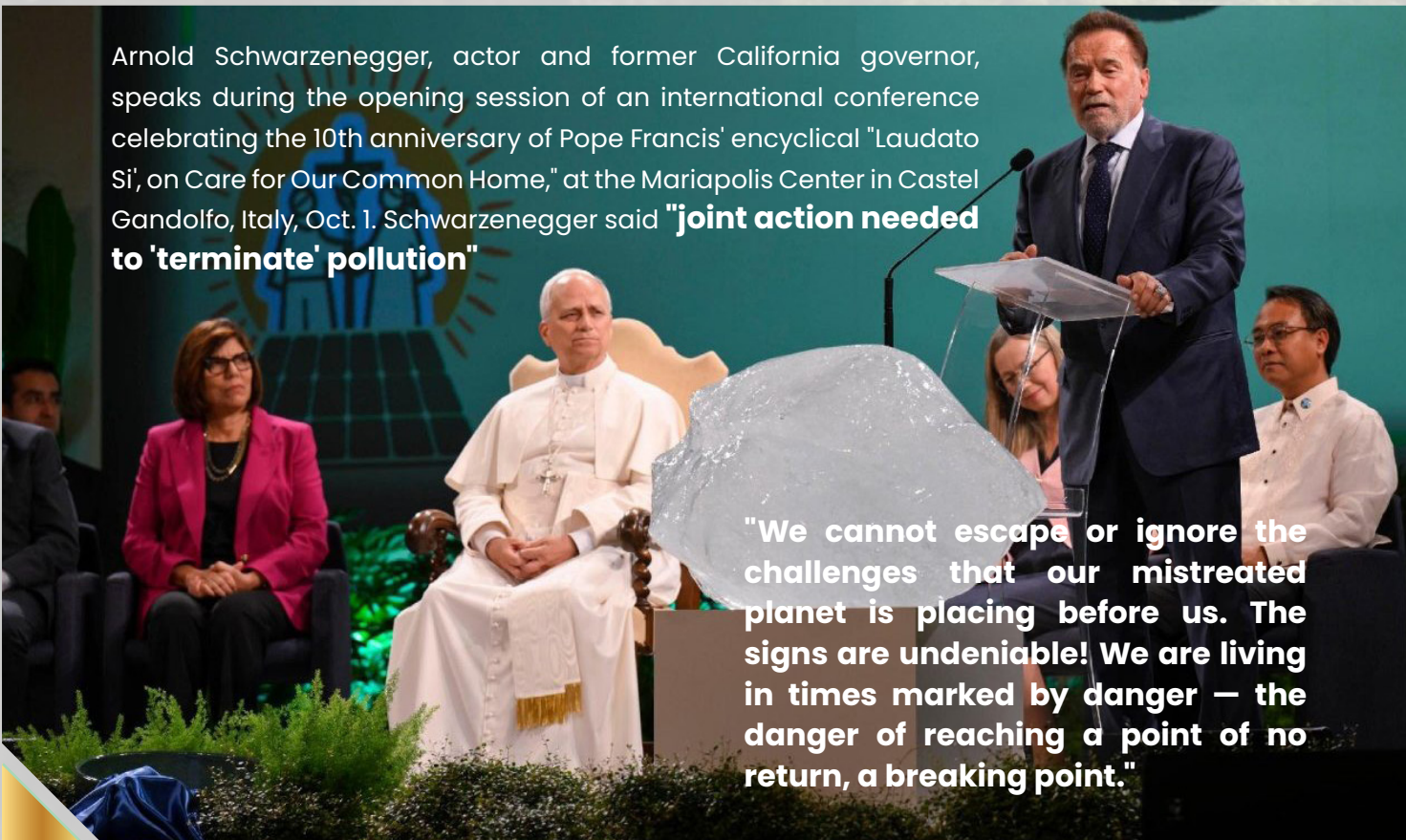
Raising Hope Conference

On the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on Care for our Common Home, Pope Leo XIV participated in the international event "Raising Hope for Climate Justice" with over 400 religious leaders, climate experts, and representatives from civil society and institutions from around the world. In his message he called for **'true ecological conversion' from words to action on environment**



Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor and former California governor, speaks during the opening session of an international conference celebrating the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home," at the Mariapolis Center in Castel Gandolfo, Italy, Oct. 1. Schwarzenegger said **"joint action needed to 'terminate' pollution"**

"We cannot escape or ignore the challenges that our mistreated planet is placing before us. The signs are undeniable! We are living in times marked by danger — the danger of reaching a point of no return, a breaking point."



A Symbolic Moment

A symbolic spiritual moment followed when representatives from East Timor, Ireland, Brazil, Zambia, and Mexico brought water from their homelands, poured into a common bowl on stage. They embodied the cry of indigenous peoples, wildlife, ecosystems, future generations, migrants, the poor, and the Earth itself.



A block of Greenland's ice

The ice traveled more than 5,000 kilometers from the fjords of Nuuk, Greenland, to Castel Gandolfo, Rome. Artist Olafur Eliasson organized the transfer with the support of geologist Minik Rosing. Collected from the Nuup Kangerlua fjord, the block of ice had detached from the Greenland ice sheet due to climate change and was melting into the ocean.

Greenland's vast ice sheet is one of Earth's most important climate regulators. Formed from compacted snow over tens of thousands of years, it contains layers more than 100,000 years old with ancient air bubbles recording the history of our atmosphere. NASA's Earth Observatory estimates Greenland's ice sheet is losing about 270 billion tons per year due to climate change.

As the ice releases meltwater into the ocean, it reminds us that our global relationship with ice sheets is existential: they connect us to the past, shape our present climate, and —depending on our care or neglect— will determine our common future. If the ice melts completely, NASA predicts sea

"We plant trees whose shade we will never sit beneath. We tend the soil that others will harvest. We clean the waters, trusting they will flow clear again."

— Prayer recited by Sarah Kirikumwino
Laudato Si' Action Platform Annual Celebration, November 20, 2025



**ANNUAL
CELEBRATION OF
THE LAUDATO SI' ACTION
PLATFORM ON NOVEMBER 20, 2025**

**CELEBRATING
FAITH
WITH ITS
SLEEVES
ROLLED
UP**

During the annaual celebration of the LSAP our Clubs President Sarah lead the opening prayer. This inspiring webinar also featured reflections and words of encouragement from Bishop Eugène Cyrille of the Diocèse d'Abomey and Sr. Damien Marie Savino, FSE, who together offer insights from pastoral leadership and ecological science, reminding us that true renewal begins with attentive care for the world entrusted to us.

They encouraged us to follow the news from COP30 and look ahead to 2026, as we remember that celebration is a strategic act of hope. In a world so often driven by urgency, taking time to honor what has already been achieved renews our imagination and courage for the work ahead.

**ANNAUAL CELEBRATION PRAYER
LED BY SARAH OUR LAUDATO SI
CLUBS PRESIDENT**

This prayer is a contemporary reimagining of the Romero Prayer, originally written by the late Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw and often misattributed to Saint Óscar Romero. It was composed with those who care for our common home and all who labor quietly for ecological renewal.

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view of creation.

The healing of our common home is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our sight.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a small part **of the great renewal that is God's work in the world.**

Nothing we do is complete, and that is another way of saying that the wholeness of creation always lies beyond us.

No campaign restores every forest.
No prayer cools every warming sea.
No act of solidarity mends every wound of the poor or the planet.
No gathering, however global, fulfills the dream of communion.

This is what we are about.

We plant trees whose shade we will never sit beneath.
We tend the soil that others will harvest.
We clean the waters, trusting they will flow clear again.

We join the slow work of resurrection, the quiet mending of all that has been broken.

We cannot do everything, and there is peace in knowing that.
It frees us to do something, and to do it with love and perseverance.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, a chance for the Spirit to breathe through our small acts and make them more than we could imagine.

We are sowers, not saviors;
caretakers, not creators;
pilgrims on this beautiful, wounded earth, walking together toward restoration, trusting that God makes all things new.



THE LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM

EQUIPS CATHOLIC INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO JOURNEY TOWARDS TOTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE SPIRIT OF LAUDATO SI'.

It is sponsored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the Laudato Si' Action Platform provides concrete resources to protect our common home.

You can also learn more about The Laudato Si' encyclical, published by Pope Francis in 2015, which builds on millennia of scripture and Catholic teaching about our relationship with God's creation.

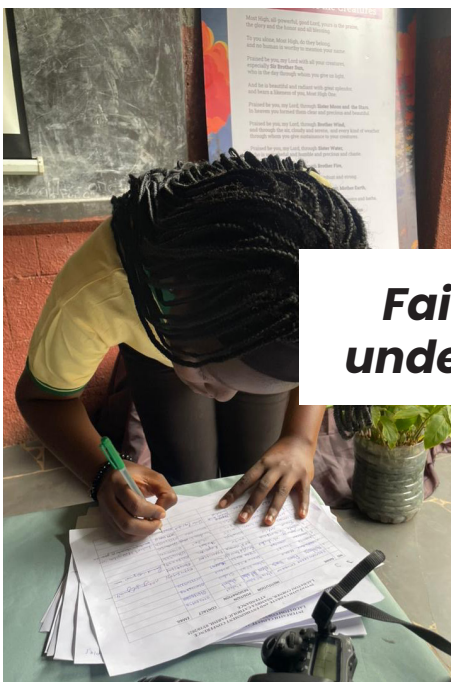
2nd INTERFAITH CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT, 3rd October 2025

"Creation and Peace: A Sacred Call to Heal Our Common Home", an Interfaith Conference held in Kampala, Uganda

A sacred call to action was witnessed as people of different faith gathered to mark the end of the Season of Creation and celebrate the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology. This was no ordinary event; it was a beautiful interfaith event, uniting believers from different **religious traditions with one shared intention: to care for our common home.**

We gathered not as strangers of different creeds, but as neighbors and co-stewards of creation, united by a spirit of peace, love, and

and shared responsibility. This year's Season of Creation theme, **"Peace with Creation,"** deeply resonated throughout the gathering, as we acknowledged the urgent need to **make peace with God, with nature, and with one another.** In a time when division seems to grow, this gathering was a powerful testament to unity, love, and common purpose.



Faith as a Foundation for justice and peace understood well in the lens of Integral Ecology

At the heart of the conversation was one key question: How can we instil our faith values to lead us to embrace integral ecology?

As the Laudato Youth Initiative has always emphasised, the Church has a vital role in promoting integral

ecology. Through our baptism and formation, we are called to be stewards of the Earth. This is not an optional mission but a sacred duty. We encourage believers to mark important feast days and liturgical moments with ecological actions. These include planting trees, organising creation masses, or launching environmental campaigns within communities. These acts go beyond symbolism. They are statements of faith in action.

Church leaders, too, hold the moral and spiritual authority to influence hearts and policies. We believe that places of worship can host demonstration gardens or model farms. These spaces turn sermons into living testimony. They become not just sites of charity, but hubs of climate education and ecological justice. Here, the Gospel and the environment meet, not in theory, but in practice.

The Role of Families and the Power of Young People

Parents and guardians have a special role in shaping a new generation of climate-conscious individuals. Those who raise and nurture children must become aware of the climate crisis we face and act as role models of ecological responsibility. At the interfaith conference, I delivered a message as Club President, calling on young people to prioritise

climate action in their schools, homes, and communities. “This is not a choice,” I reminded them. ***“Climate action is a moral responsibility.” I encouraged youth to use their talents, whether in music, poetry, art, or leadership, as tools for climate advocacy and awareness.*** We believe that talent is a gift, and when expressed with purpose, it becomes a force for change. Whether through song, dance, or dialogue, young people must lead the way in creating a generation that is fully aware of its surroundings and willing to protect them.



Climate and Mental Health: A Silent Crisis

We cannot ignore the hidden toll of the climate crisis, especially on mental health. Many young people face eco-anxiety, fear, and hopelessness as they witness environmental destruction. LYI recognises the need to empower youth with knowledge and tools. We also aim to protect them from the emotional and psychological burdens. Ecological action is healing work for the planet and for our spirits. When we care for the Earth, we also care for ourselves and each other.

“Peace with Creation” is not a slogan. It is a necessity. Biodiversity continues to suffer because of our disconnection, our selfishness, and our failure to love our neighbors as ourselves. We must put down the tools of harm and instead, pick up the tools of peace. These tools include dialogue, reforestation, clean energy, climate education, and prayer. Let us use our faith, not as a reason to divide, but as a sacred bridge that unites us in this shared mission. as we give hope, share God’s love, unite the human-

Laudato Youth Initiative Featured at 2nd African Congress on Catholic Education.

The Laudato Youth Initiative's ecological education model, centered on the African interpretation of Laudato Si, was featured at the 2nd African Congress on Catholic Education, held at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) from December 4 to 7, 2025. The event brought together leaders in Catholic education, environmental stewardship, and youth empowerment, emphasizing the growing role of young people in building a sustainable future for Africa.

This event marked significant progress in advancing Laudato Si's vision of integral ecology and climate education within African Catholic institutions. The Congress provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and a shared commitment to fostering environmental awareness among Africa's youth.

In Laudato Si, the Pope calls for environmental education that fosters

ecological citizenship. The Laudato Youth Initiative contextualizes this vision for Africa, drawing inspiration from figures such as St. Adolf Ludigho, a Ugandan martyr and patron of herdsman and farmers. This approach aligns closely with the African Education Pact (AEP), which promotes an education model rooted in Christian and African cultural values. This mission defines the Laudato Youth Initiative.

Our model identifies key elements that define Catholic schools, supports the formation of Laudato Si Clubs in institutions, churches, and communities, and encourages non-Catholic schools to join climate action inspired by Ubuntu philosophy. We also examine how ecological education can inform the African Education Act, enabling institutions and churches to fulfill their mission of evangelization through initiatives such as the Laudato Si Green Festival.

The Laudato Youth Initiative seeks to empower young people to lead climate action in parishes, dioceses, schools, and communities. This vision has been appreciated on events such as the Laudato Si Africa Vatican Summit in Nairobi, the 10-year anniversary of Laudato Si in Luweero Uganda, and now further advanced as CUEA, Tangaza University College, and Hekima College assembly.

The Congress was especially significant for the Laudato Youth Initiative, as our work was featured under the theme 'Ecology/African Cultural Paradigms in Education.' Augustine Bahemuka of Hekima University College presented the research paper, "Seeding Ecological Citizenship Among Youth in Africa: Implications of Laudato Si," highlighting the impact of our programs across the continent.



Delegates from Catholic universities across Africa met to discuss how Catholic schools can become agents of change. They addressed challenges such as conflict, climate change, resource exploitation, economic inequality, social injustice, and youth unemployment, reaffirming the Church's mission to evangelize through action and advocacy.

The presentation outlined strategies for Catholic schools to develop students as 'ecological citizens': young people who understand the environmental, social, and cultural impact of their choices and act as responsible stewards of creation.

Our experience with Laudato Si Clubs demonstrates that

ecological education fosters responsibility and stewardship among youth. As students appreciate the beauty of creation, they develop greater respect for God, their peers, and the environment, laying the foundation for lasting change.

The conference resolutions affirmed that ecological education and care for our common home are essential for a sustainable future for Africa's youth. The Laudato Youth Initiative calls for integrating environmental care and sustainability into Catholic education at all levels, including greater awareness of Laudato Si' and indigenous African ecological traditions. We must restore Africa's degraded ecosystems for future generations.

The Congress welcomed His Eminence Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture & Education, who delivered a message from the Holy Father. African leaders, including Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo and Cardinal Antoine Kambanda, shared theological and cultural insights. Delegates discussed human dignity, fraternity, the common good, ecology with emphasis on Laudato Si', and African cultural paradigms in holistic education. The collaboration among CUEA, Tangaza, and Hekima reaffirmed their leadership in Catholic intellectual formation. The Congress concluded with a Mass at Holy Family Basilica, and its outcomes now serve as a blueprint to inspire Catholic education and ecological action across Africa.

Laudato Youth Initiative — 2025: A Jubilee Year of Hope, Action, and Growth

This Jubilee Year, branded under the theme “Pilgrims of Green Hope”, has marked a milestone for Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) — a year of bold commitments, deepened faith, and tangible climate action across Uganda and East Africa.



Tangible Action: Tree Planting, Climate-Smart Agriculture, and Community Resilience

At the heart of LYI’s work are the grassroots initiatives undertaken by its network of clubs — the Laudato Si’ Clubs (LSiC), active in schools, parishes, dioceses, and local communities.

The “One Million Tree Planting Drive” advanced significantly in 2025. Fruit-bearing and indigenous tree species were planted to re-

store degraded land, safeguard biodiversity, and provide food security, a living and long-term expression of ecological restoration and hope.

In regions like Fort Portal, climate-smart agriculture initiatives trained smallholder farmers in sustainable farming techniques, from organic fertilizers to drought-resistant crops and water-saving and building resilience in food systems and livelihoods.

Community-based adaptation (CBA) efforts have been scaled up, addressing urgent environmental challenges: erratic rainfall, drought, floods, soil degradation, and water scarcity. Through LSiCs, Laudato Youths are mobilizing local knowledge, ecological practices, and innovation to foster resilience

Education, Faith & Digital Advocacy — Shaping Mindsets, Mobilizing Hearts



Beyond tree-planting and farming, 2025 saw LYI deepen leadership formation, awareness, and advocacy:



in grassroots communities, schools and parishes.

These projects highlight a key principle for LYI: ecological care is not optional — it is a spiritual and communal responsibility rooted in faith, service, and solidarity.

Through seminars, workshops, and community dialogues, young people are being equipped with ecological knowledge, sustainable living practices, and climate justice perspectives — all grounded in the teachings of *Laudato Si'* and Catholic Social Doctrine.

Digital storytelling, social-media campaigns, podcasts, and youth-led media are giving voice to environmental concerns, bridging faith with ecology in a context familiar to Africa's youthful population. This media-driven approach has helped extend reach beyond physical clubs, nurturing a culture of ecological conversion rooted in both tradition and innovation.

At the same time, LYI's engagement with clean-energy awareness (solar, clean technology) and waste management reflects a holistic understanding of climate action — integrating spiritual conviction, everyday living, and long-term sustainability.

THE BIRTH OF A CONSORTIUM FOR ECOLOGICAL FAITH

In May 2025, as the world commemorated 10 years since the publication of *Laudato Si'*, LYI helped convene youth leaders, faith communities, and environmental organizations at the sacred grounds of Uganda Martyrs Shrine, Munyonyo. The gathering culminated in the formation of the Uganda *Laudato Si'* Consortium — a historic coalition of 17 faith-based and civil-society actors united around ecological justice, sustainable stewardship, and faith-rooted climate action.

The Consortium represents a turning point: ecological conversion is no longer the work of isolated groups, but a shared calling across generations, dioceses, and communities. As LYI's director put it, what began as a dream is now a collective mission committed to "faith, ecology, unity and action."

Challenges, Gaps

While the Jubilee Year has been marked by hope and achievement, LYI recognizes the limits and challenges ahead:

Ensuring long-term sustainability for planted trees, gardens, and green zones, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas.

Bridging the gap between awareness and practical implementation, especially where technical resources — solar energy systems, waste-management infrastructure, climate-resilient water systems — remain scarce.



A photograph of two young people, seen from behind, looking towards a dense forest. They are wearing bright green t-shirts. The person on the right has the words 'PROTECT WETLANDS' visible on their shirt. The background is a lush green forest with sunlight filtering through the leaves.

Scaling up community-based adaptation (CBA) and climate-smart agriculture across vulnerable regions demands partnerships, funding, and coordination, including support from governments, NGOs, and international actors.

LYI welcomes such collaboration. Its call is clear: caring for creation is not a fringe activity — it is, as Pope Francis envisioned, a shared moral, spiritual, and social responsibility that requires unity, creativity, and sustained action.

Looking Forward — A Jubilee Rooted in Hope, Growing in Action

As 2025 draws to a close, the “Pilgrims of Green Hope” stand at a new beginning. The formation of Laudato Si Clubs a stronger platform to scale up climate action, and ecological spirituality

“ We envision resilient communities where churches, schools, families, and youth walk together to restore soils, plant trees, protect rivers, adopt clean energy, embed sustainability and build bridges of peace in daily life. ”
Uniting people for Climate Action - An approach to integral ecology

— LYI ADMIN





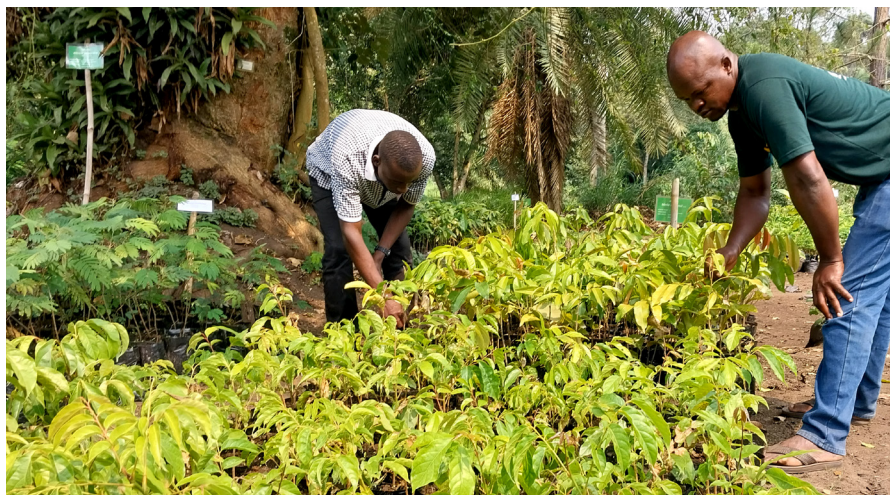
Laudato Youth Initiative's One Million Tree Planting Drive

As part of its commitment to ecological stewardship and climate action, Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) launched an ambitious One Million Tree Planting Drive across Uganda — a campaign rooted in faith, community build, forest restoration, enhancing food security and long-term sustainability.

What is the Drive — and Why It Matters

The drive invites Schools, Universities, Parishes, Dioceses, communities, and individuals to plant and nurture both indigenous and fruit trees. The goals are multiple: restoring degraded lands, supporting biodiversity, improving food security, and reducing carbon footprint — all anchored in the spiritual and ecological vision of the campaign.

Indigenous trees are emphasized because they are adapted to local soils and climate, require less maintenance, and support native flora and fauna. Fruit trees add value in terms of food security and nutrition while offering environmental benefits such as soil stabilization, shade, carbon sequestration, and habitat for wildlife.



Progress and Numbers — What Has Been Achieved So Far

According to LYI's own reporting, the counter on their campaign page shows progress toward their goal.

As of one recent update, more than 210,400 trees have already been planted under the campaign.

During a major event — the Laudato Si Green Festival held in Jinja on July 19 — about 3,500 trees were distributed to participants for planting.

These numbers illustrate tangible movement and community participation, showing the campaign is no longer just aspirational — it's delivering real, on-the-ground results

Building Community Engagement and Ownership

A core strength of LYI's approach is decentralization: tree planting is carried out by grassroots groups — the Laudato Si' Clubs (LSiC) — embedded within schools, parishes, dioceses, universities, and communities across Uganda. This ensures that planting is tied to education, spiritual formation, and local ownership.

Every tree is "adopted" by a member of the club or community, which ensures responsibility for watering, protection, and — when necessary — replacement. This stewardship model increases the chances of survival and long-term impact, rather than planting without follow-up.

A Vision for the Future — Trees, Restoration, and Hope

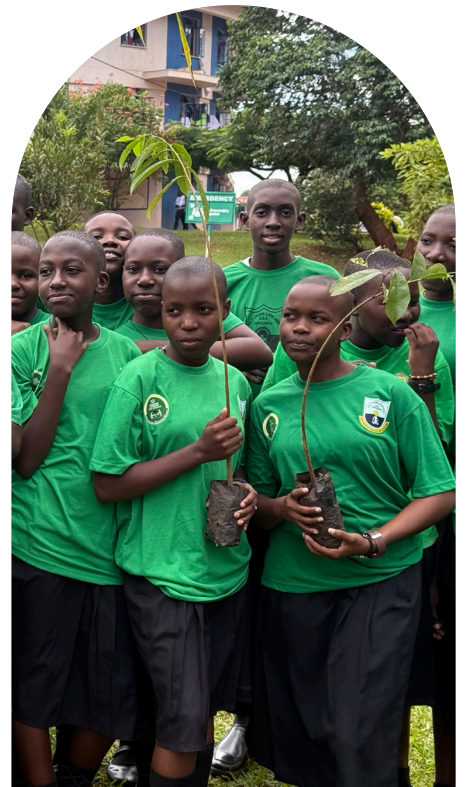
By aiming to plant one million trees, LYI is not just planting saplings — it is planting hope, life, and a healthier future for communities. The drive aligns ecological restoration with food security, community resilience, and spiritual renewal.

Moreover, demonstrating that young people — especially guided by faith and communal values — can lead substantial environmental change challenges the notion that ecological care is only for experts or governments. Instead, LYI shows that every tree, every person, every community can contribute to a greener, more sustainable Uganda.

1 MILLION TREES

ONE MILLION TREE

PLANTING DRIVE Activities



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Second National Wetlands Dialogue with NRDI

The Laudato Si Club at Nyakasura School partners with the Natural Resources Defence Initiative (NRDI) to equip youth with in-demand skills for green jobs, including compound design, animal feed production, biodegradable bag production, and tree nursery management.

This year, we worked together to amplify youth voices for wetlands at the second National Wetland Dialogue.

Before the dialogue, our Laudato Si Club of Nyakasura School partnered with NRDI to share reflections through postcards and drawings, highlighting concerns and hopes for wetland conservation.



These were displayed at the event, reminding attendees that wetland degradation impacts future generations. Our youth also participated in a Voice of Tooro radio program with NRDI, discussing “Wetlands for Climate Action” to raise awareness and promote water resilience in Fort Portal. We appreciate NRDI, Mr. Benon, and Mr. Dan Rusahura, our club Patron, for their collaboration on this initiative.


These programs are expanding across our Laudato Si Clubs, promoting STEM education and fostering innovation. We are committed to mentoring Uganda’s youth in creative thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills.

We know “Wetlands are the superheroes among all ecosystems. They manage too much, too little, and too dirty water...if they are healthy.” - Kim Vercruyse,

Combating Climate Change through Action



LAUDATO SI CLUBS ACTIVITIES

A photograph of two young women with long braids, wearing yellow and green school uniforms, looking down at a large, textured rock outdoors. The background is a lush green forest. A semi-transparent white box with rounded corners is overlaid on the image, containing text.

The Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) operates by establishing Laudato Si' Clubs (LSiC) within schools, parishes, universities, dioceses, and community settings. united young people to care for God's creation.

**Laudato Si
Clubs / Parishes
Dioceses**



**Laudato Si Clubs
Schools**



**Laudato Si Clubs
Communities**



CULTIVATING HOPE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Laudato Si Club of St Adolf Holy Cross Parish Kanyabachope

The Laudato Si Club of St Adolf Holy Cross Parish, Kanyabachope, inspired by the Laudato Youth Initiative and grounded in the teachings of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), has ignited hope and eco-spirituality within Small Christian Communities in our parish. As the Holy Father reminds us, "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience" (Francis, 2015, para. 217). The Club encourages all to faithfully 'till the Earth' (Genesis 2:15) and care for our common home. This initiative has offered hope amid environmental challenges, demonstrating that collective action, rooted in faith, can indeed effect meaningful transformation. From peacebuilding in homes to unity in small Christian communities. Our parish's Laudato Si team is taking bold steps towards building family unity, social economic transformation, uniting men, women and children in faith and climate action to combat hunger and improve sanitation.



The Club has launched a monthly cultivation project to maintain the grounds around the nine churches and care for animals such as pigs, goats, and cows. Animal waste is recycled as organic manure, enhancing soil fertility and supporting sustainable agriculture. Such integral ecology aligns with the Church's call to "hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (Francis, 2015, para. 49), exemplifying a holistic approach to stewardship. This model of dedicated collaboration offers a valuable path for other parishes and communities.

The Laudato Si Club intentionally weaves environmental conservation with spiritual formation. Recognizing the profound interconnectedness of all creation (Francis, 2015, para. 70), the group seeks to deepen our relationship with God through our relationship with the Earth. Prayer, reflection, and communal action foster an eco-spirituality that is both contemplative and active. Drawing inspiration from the Uganda Martyrs and the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Club seeks to honor the Creator by reverently caring for creation. This spiritual grounding is the wellspring of their ongoing commitment to sustainability.



I invite you, to join in the sacred task of caring for creation and faithfully 'tilling the Earth' (Genesis 2:15). Collectively, we can cultivate hope, sustainability, and a future marked by justice and peace. Mother Church teaches us, through *Laudato Si*, that "The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion" (Francis, 2015, para. 219). Whether you are a farmer, teacher, student, or simply a lover of God's handiwork, your participation is important. May we be faithful stewards of the Earth, guided by God's love, family, and respect for creation, so that people and planet may flourish together. May the Uganda Martyrs and Mary, Mother of the Church, intercede for us, guiding us on this journey of environmental stewardship and spiritual growth. Amen.

By Rev. Fr. Dr. Ronald Kawooya, C.S.C.
Parish Priest, St Adolf Holy Cross Parish,
Kanyabachope.



Awakened by the Silent Drum

A Season of Creation with the Laudato Si Club of St Andre Bessette Holy Cross Parish Koch Goma - Gulu

The Laudato Si Club of St Andre Bessette Holy Cross Parish is making waves in environmental conservation, inspiring a new generation of eco-conscious individuals to take action. Inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical, the club is nurturing an eco-spiritual dimension among christians in the heart of Koch Goma.

The club's activities kicked off with the opening of a Club at Goma Central Primary School, where over 500 pupils were enrolled. The team explained the meaning of Laudato Si, the summary of the papal encyclical, and the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the Laudato Youth Initiative. The pupils were eager to learn and showed great enthusiasm for environmental conservation, asking insightful questions and sharing their own experiences.

As part of their Season of Creation celebrations, the club visited the homes of two fallen environmental heroes, Mr John Odaki and Mr Thomas Kidega, who were buried weeks prior. The team paid tribute to these passionate conservationists, planting memorial trees and reflecting on their legacy. At Mr Odaki's home, they planted three avocado fruit trees and discussed healthy farm practices, deforestation, and changes in weather patterns.



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The visit to Mr Kidega's home was particularly inspiring, with his mother, Doreen Anek, sharing her own passion for environmental conservation. At 80 years old, she is an example of dedication and commitment to caring for the Earth.

■ Her forest of over 350 maliner trees, which she has nurtured and cared for, is a testament to her love for nature. The club also visited Mr Kidega's grave, praying for the peaceful repose of his soul and reflecting on the impact of his life's work.

The day's activities culminated in a forest walk and Mass at the home of Mr John Bosco Okulo, Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council.

■ Mass

The Eucharistic celebration, held beneath a living stream, emphasized the importance of co-creation with God and caring for the Earth. The club members were filled with a sense of awe and wonder as they walked through the forest, taking in the sights and sounds of nature.





The homily by Fr Berry Apire C.S.C. highlighted the significance of environmental stewardship as a spiritual journey, reminding the club members that their actions have a direct impact on the world around them.

As one club member noted, **"The silence of the drums of nature seen in the death of John and Thomas was replaced with the grand awakening of the Season of Creation."** The club's solidarity with the families of these environmental heroes has restored hope and inspired a new era of environmental enthusiasts. The Laudato Si Club is a testament to the power of community and collective action, demonstrating that together, we can make a difference.

As Mr John Bosco Okulo urged, **"Take on the mantle, be the next generation of co-creators with God, and be the change makers on conservation through action."** The drums are loud again, and the club is ready to lead the way. With their passion, dedication, and commitment to environmental conservation, the Laudato Si Club is a shining example of what can be achieved when individuals come together to care for our common home.

As we reflected on the journey of our two fallen heroes, we were reminded that our individual actions are threads in a larger tapestry of togetherness. Together, we can weave a brighter future for our planet, a future where humans and nature thrive in harmony. Let us continue to walk together hand in hand, and heart to heart, as we care for our common home and work towards a sustainable tomorrow. For it is in togetherness that we find hope and it is in our collective action that we will create a better world for generations to come.



Laudato Si Club Fort-portal Diocese at the National Youth Conference in Gulu



As thousands of young Catholics gathered for the National Youth Conference in Gulu, the spirit of faith, hope, and responsible stewardship was alive through the Laudato Si Club of Fort portal Diocese which was among the most active groups on the ground taking a leading role in ensuring that the

conference environment remained clean, orderly, and reflective of the Church's call to care for our common home.

Laudato Youth Witnessing Through Action

The conference theme, "You also are my witnesses" (John 15:27), has taken on deep meaning as our Laudato Si club members from across Uganda put their faith into concrete

practice. For the Laudato Youth, witnessing to Christ includes witnessing to His creation as well because caring for the earth as a gift entrusted to all. Their work—sorting waste, cleaning spaces, guiding disposal, and modeling eco-friendly habits shows what Laudato Si' calls "ecological citizenship" (LS 211).



A Living Expression of The Eco-Witness of the Laudato Si' Youth

Pope Francis reminds us that caring for creation is not optional but an essential act of faith: "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue." (Laudato Si', 217) This vision is evident now in Gulu, where our Laudato Si' Clubs are uniting for climate action away to express their concern for our common home and taking on their ecological responsibility as steward of today and the future. Their coordinated efforts promote a clean, respectful environment for all at the conference.

Throughout the conference, Laudato Youth teams are actively sorting different types of waste, encouraging recycling among attendees, keeping communal spaces such as gathering areas and prayer sites clean, educating fellow youths on environmental care by leading discussions and distributing information on sustainability, sharing personal stories about changing their habits for the environment, and guiding their peers in taking daily steps to protect nature. Their dedication offers a modern interpretation of

the conference theme: young Catholics witnessing in deeds that honor God and the earth.

Hope Rising in Northern Uganda

In Gulu and northern Uganda, youth leadership in creation care inspires hope, unity, reconciliation and responsibility in a region once disrupted. At the conference, Mr. Daniel, Laudato Si Club leader, said, "Restored peace reveals how environment, peace, and faith are deeply connected." He added, "Caring for our environment keeps our hearts open to God."



EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION



NATURE WALK

**Laudato Youth at Nyakasura School
Leading the Way in Integral Ecology**

WATER SOURCES



The Laudato Youth at Nyakasura School are making a difference in promoting integral ecology through their innovative Green Nature Walks. These walks, inspired by Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*, aim to educate students about local ecosystems, biodiversity, and environmental stewardship.

The Green Nature Walks align with Pope Francis' emphasis on caring for our common home and fostering a deeper interconnectedness with the environment. By participating in these walks, students

Key Objectives

Environmental Awareness: Educate students about the importance of caring for our common home and fostering a deeper interconnectedness with the environment.

Personal Connection: Foster a sense of responsibility and respect for the earth through direct experience with nature.

Community Engagement: Encourage students to take action in their communities and promote sustainability.

Activities

Guided Exploration: Students participated in guided nature walks, explored local ecosystems and learnt about biodiversity.

Interactive Talks: Laudato Youth engaged in interactive talks, shared insights and experiences.

Reflection Sessions: Students reflected on their experiences, shared thoughts and ideas. The Laudato Si Club at Nyakasura School is shaping a generation of environmentally conscious individuals who understand the importance of integral ecology. By participating in Green Nature Walks, students are gaining knowledge, inspiration, and a sense of purpose.

Impact Empowered Stewards: Students

became empowered stewards of the earth, promoting sustainability and environmental care.

Community Leaders: Laudato Youth inspire others to take action, creating a ripple effect of positive change.

The Laudato Youth at Nyakasura School exemplify how education and direct engagement with Mother Nature can shape the future of integral ecology. Through Nature walks, students have been empowered to be stewards of the Earth, ensuring a healthier planet for generations to come.

MR. RUSAHURA DANIEL

PATRON, LAUDATO Si CLUB OF NYAKASURA SCHOOL

From Harmony to Heartbreak: Man's Betrayal to Nature

Once upon a time, man and the environment were lovers in perfect harmony. The rivers sang lullabies to the forests, the winds whispered secrets to the mountains, and man walked gently upon the earth, grateful for her gifts. It was a relationship built on mutual respect, care, and balance. The environment gave freely - clean air, fertile soil, fresh water, and abundant life - and man, in return, protected her, revered her, and lived within her rhythms.

But as time passed and the world spun forward, something changed. Man's heart grew restless; the simple joys of harmony no longer satisfied him. He began to crave more - more land, more wealth, more power. The environment, ever patient and ever giving, continued to provide her bounty, hoping man would remember this sacred bond.

But man's love turned into lust. He:

- Cut down the forests, not for shelter, but for profit
- Mined the earth, not for survival, but for greed
- Polluted rivers, not by accident, but by negligence
- Filled the skies with smoke, chasing progress without pause

The environment wept in silence. Her glaciers melted like tears, her animals vanished like forgotten memories, and her seasons grew erratic, as if her heart was breaking.

Despite the abuse, the environment never stopped loving man. She continued to give sunlight to warm him, rain to nourish his crops, and beauty to inspire his soul. She waited, hoping he would notice her pain, hoping he would remember the love they once shared.

But man was distracted, his eyes on screens, his hands on machines, and his mind on conquest. He mistook convenience for happiness and consumption for fulfillment. The relationship had become one-sided, the environment still loved man, but man had forgotten how to love her back.

Yet all is not lost. Love, even when wounded, can be healed. Man can still restore the broken bond. This can happen by:

- Relearning

Reverence; teaching children to love the earth, not just as a resource, but as a living, breathing partner. Let them grow up knowing the names of the trees, the songs of birds, and the stories of rivers.

- Living Lightly; embracing simplicity, reducing waste, reusing what we can, and recycling what we must. Choosing sustainability over convenience.

- Protecting what remains; defending forests, wetlands, oceans, and wildlife. Supporting policies and leaders that prioritize environmental protection.

- Giving Back; planting trees, cleaning rivers, restoring habitats. Letting our hands heal what we have harmed.





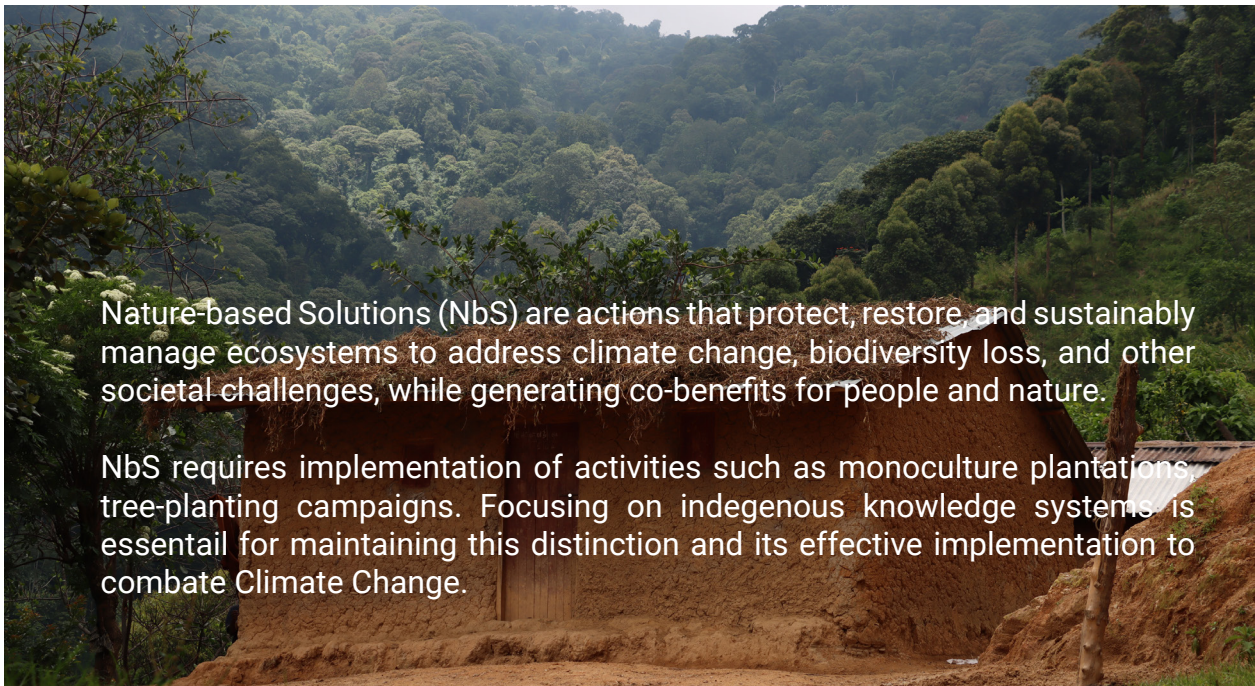
- Listening; paying attention to the signs, the rising temperatures, the dying species, and the extreme weather. The environment is speaking; it's time we listened.

The environment has never stopped loving us. She still offers us life, beauty, and wonder. But love cannot survive if it is not returned. It is time for man to remember the vows we made - to cherish, to protect, and to live in harmony.

Let us not be the generation that breaks her heart beyond repair. Let us be the ones who say "I am sorry" and mean it. Let us be the ones who love her back.

Because, in the end, saving the environment isn't just about survival; it's about rekindling a love story that was always meant to last forever.

By Kansiime Rosette Hannah
Laudato Si club of Nyakasura



Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are actions that protect, restore, and sustainably manage ecosystems to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and other societal challenges, while generating co-benefits for people and nature.

NbS requires implementation of activities such as monoculture plantations, tree-planting campaigns. Focusing on indigenous knowledge systems is essential for maintaining this distinction and its effective implementation to combat Climate Change.

Rekindling our Love for Mother Nature: A Call to Action

As we reflect on our relationship with the natural world, it's clear that we've strayed from our roots. In ancient years, nature was our song, our sight, and our everything. We revered Mother Nature, recognizing her as our best friend and doing everything to maintain her beauty. However, in recent years, our attention has shifted to industrialization, structural development, and other pursuits, often at the expense of the environment.

The consequences of our actions are evident: climate change, global warming, desertification, drought, loss of biodiversity, and pollution. These issues affect not only our planet but also our health, economy, and future. The destruction of wetlands and forests, for instance, has led to the loss of habitats for various animals, impacting our sources of protein and the beauty of nature.

But there's hope. We, the current generation, have the power to restore balance with nature. By working together, we can revive Mother Nature's vitality and ensure a sustainable future.

Here are some steps we can take: **Practice afforestation and reforestation to restore ecosystems and reduce air pollution.**

- Promote sustainable practices and eco-friendly technologies to minimize our carbon footprint
- Support climate education and awareness to inspire others to join the cause
- Advocate for policies that prioritize environmental conservation

In Uganda, we have a unique opportunity to lead the way in environmental conservation. We can harness the power of our youth, our communities, and our leaders to create a sustainable future. Let's work together to protect our national parks, forests, and wetlands. Let's promote eco-tourism and sustainable agriculture practices. Let's ensure that our children inherit a healthy, thriving planet.

Join this us by;

- Planting a tree today and watching it grow
- Reducing your carbon footprint and inspiring others to do the same
- Supporting organizations working towards environmental conservation
- Advocating for policies that prioritize the environment.

Let's rise to the challenge! Let's make Uganda a shining example of environmental conservation and sustainability. We can start by making conscious choices in our daily lives. We can reduce, reuse, and recycle. We can use public transport or walk/bike whenever possible.

We can also support local initiatives that promote environmental conservation. We can join community groups that plant trees, clean up parks, and promote sustainable practices. We can participate in environmental campaigns and advocate for policies that prioritize the environment.

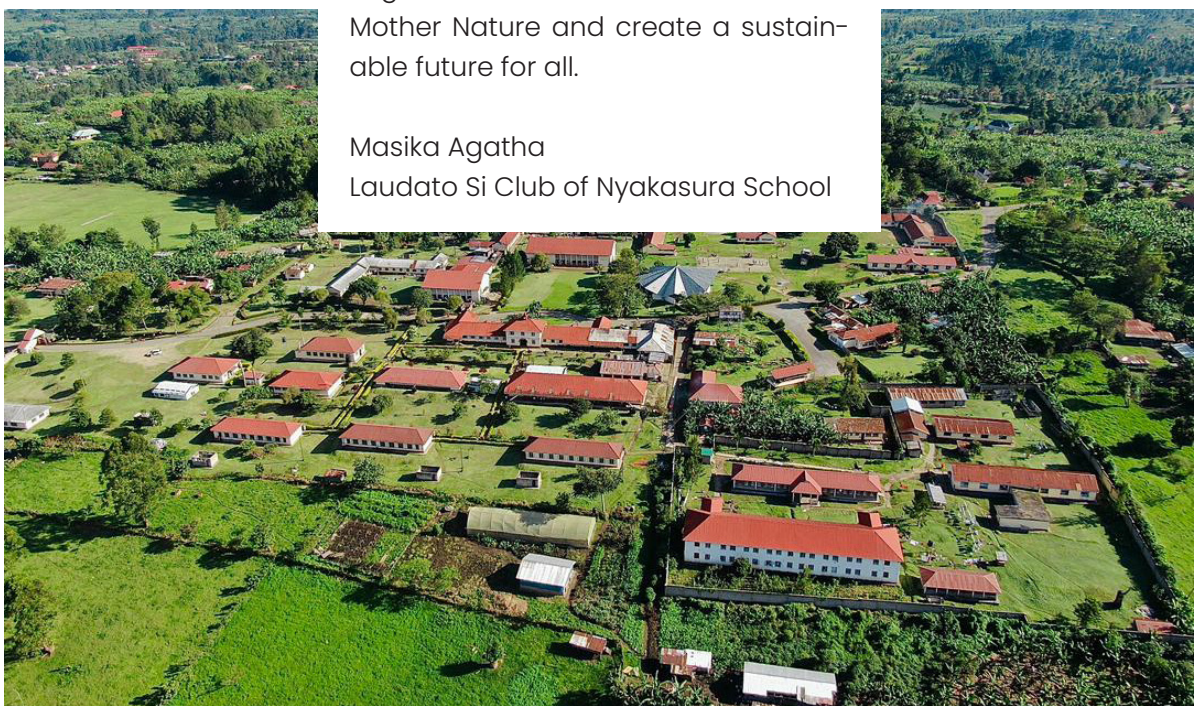


The time for action is now

Let's unite for climate action and restore the beauty of our planet. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and future generations.

Together, we can rekindle our love for Mother Nature and create a sustainable future for all.

Masika Agatha
Laudato Si Club of Nyakasura School



“

As sunset's warmth dissolves the day's last light,
The waves send a cool breeze down the shore's de-
light,
It's simply breathtaking, a treasure to behold,
All I want to do is stare at this beautiful moment, un-
fold.

And allow myself to get lost in its beauty's sway,
The trees' shadow shape dance upon the lake's face,
Ripples whisper secrets as the sun's last ray escapes,
In this peaceful haven, time stands still, a gentle
pace.

My heart finds solace, my soul's gentle will,
The stars begin to twinkle in the evening sky,
A reflection of peace, as the world says goodbye,
In the day's chaos, and hello to the night's sweet sigh.

SUNSET

OVER A SERENE LAKE

In this serene moment, everything feels
just right, The world slows down, and my
heart takes flight, The lake's calm sur-
face, a mirror to the soul, Reflecting the
beauty, making me whole.

The colors blend, a kaleidoscope of hue,
A peaceful symphony, a moment anew,
The sunset's warmth, a gentle, loving
touch, A reminder to breathe, to let go,
to be in touch.

In this tranquil scene, I find my peaceful
place, A sense of calm, a sense of space,
Where the world's noise fades, and my
heart can rest, In the stillness, I find my
soul's best.

The stars shine bright, a celestial show,

A reflection of wonder, as the night un-
folds, In this serene moment, I am free
to roam, In the beauty of nature, I find
my peaceful home.

Karungi Joyline
Laudato Si club of Nyakasura School



You have suffocated me with your wastes,
From factories and industries, a toxic, deadly haze,
My kidneys are weak and can no longer filter the water,
A vital resource, now a poisoned, deadly slaughter.

You have decided to dump your home sewage in my mouth,
A vile, filthy habit, without shame or doubt,
You have infected me with cancer, a deadly, spreading stain,
That no one can now drink my water without treatment's pain.

I have no more skin to protect myself,
Because all my vegetation has been cut,
leaving me exposed and helpless,
I have no more breath,
my lungs are filled with plastics' choking grasp,
I can feel my death is close, rampaging through my veins like a
deadly, crushing clasp.

You people have succeeded in murdering me,
A slow, agonizing death, a tragedy of epic proportions,
a crime against humanity,
But you can still rescue me, I can still get an operation,
A chance to heal, a chance to live, a second chance to thrive,
a new creation.

Plant trees, protect them, recycle plastics or reuse them,
A simple, yet vital, plea, a call to action, a message to
humanity's conscience, a wake-up call to dream,
Protect wetlands, treat wastes before depositing them
into water bodies,

“ *A collective responsibility, a
shared future, a chance to re-
deem, a chance to be set free.* ”

And we shall all prosper together,
in harmony, hand in hand,
A symphony of life, a dance of joy,
a celebration of nature's grand plan,
The earth shall heal, the waters shall flow,
And all shall be made new,
in a world where nature's beauty shall glow.

By Patience Kasemiire
Laudato Si club of Nyakasura School

THE PAIN OF NATURE



EARTH'S LULLABY

The trees stand tall, a verdant hue,
A haven for life, both old and new,
Their leaves rustling, a gentle whispering,
A soothing serendipity that calms the heart's stirring.

The rivers flow, a gentle song,
A melody that echoes all day long,
Their waters are pure, a reflection of the sky,
A mirror to the soul, where love and hope reside.

The creatures roam, wild and free,
A testament to nature's glee,
Their songs a chorus, a symphony so grand,
A celebration of life, in this verdant land.

But human hands they shape the fate,
Of this earth, our home, our state,
A fragile balance, we must maintain,
Lest we forget the beauty that's gained.

Let's plant a seed, let's nurture the earth,
Let's preserve the beauty of rebirth,
For future generations to see,

A world where nature's harmony is key.
Let's join hands, let's make a change,
Let's heal the earth, let's rearrange,
Our priorities, our values, our way,
To live in sync with nature's sway.

Let's cherish the earth, our home so dear,
Let's protect her, year by year,
For she's the cradle of life and love,
Our Mother Earth, sent from above.

Let's sing a lullaby, to the earth,
A song of hope, a song of rebirth,
Let's rock her gently, back to sleep,
And wake her up, to a world, where love
and peace do creep.

Let's plant a tree, let's clean the air,
Let's bring back the bees, let's show we care,
Let's make a difference, one step at a time,
Let's leave a legacy, that's truly divine.

For the earth is our home, our haven, our nest,
Let's protect her, let's do our best,
For future generations, let's make it right,
Let's leave a world, where love shines bright.

By Ategeka Leslie
Laudato Si club of Nyakasura school



THE WOUNDED EARTH

Beneath the sky once blue and wide, earth
now weeps with wounded pride, the rivers
choke on plastic breath,
Its forests fall to silent death.

Where songbirds once sang sweet delight,
Echoes haunt the airless spring's pale light,
The soil, once rich with life and vibrant pace,
Now wears a cracked and barren, empty space.

Man came with fire, steel, and greedy might,
To take far more than he would give or fight,
He paved the fields, he drained the seas,
He felled the ancient, sacred trees.

The air is thick with toxic, poisonous sighs,
The oceans rise, the planet Earth cries,
Yet still we build, consume, and ignore,
As nature begs from every shore.

She pleads not for gold, nor coin, nor fame,
But just to live, to heal, to reclaim,
To breathe again, to bloom, to glow,
A chance to cleanse the scars we sow.

O reckless hand, O blinded eye,
Will you not see before we die,
The earth is poor, not by her hand,
But by the greed of modern man?

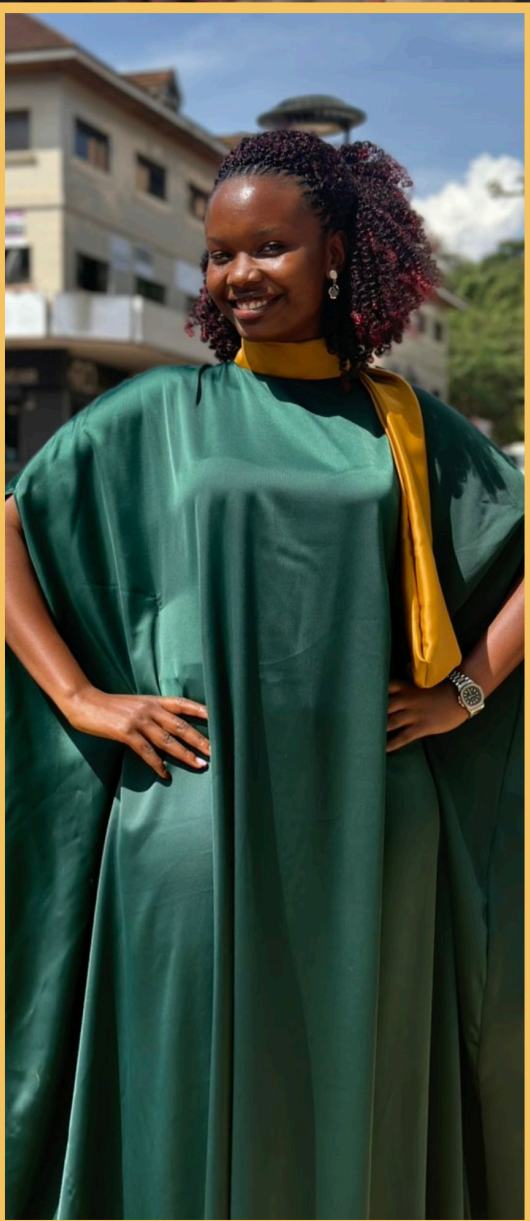
Let not her poverty be our shame,
But fuel to spark a kinder, wilder flame,
Restore her wealth, her song, her vibrant hue,
The future lies in what we do.

Kansiime Rosette Hannah
Laudato Si club of Nyakasura School



Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View S.S.S

Nurturing Ecological Citizens with the Language of Hands, Heart, and Talents





Nurturing Ecological Citizens: The Language of Hands, Heart, and Talents at Holy Cross Lake ViewSSS

At Holy Cross, we are committed to educating the whole person - mind, hands, and heart - to foster a generation of ecological citizens who are passionate about caring for our common home. Our Laudato

Si journey is rooted in the belief that environmental stewardship is not just a moral obligation, but a spiritual calling.

The Language of the Hands: Uniting for Climate Action

The hands symbolize action - *the practical side of care for creation.*

Through activities such as tree planting, maintaining water channels, creating eco-art, and managing waste, our Laudato Youth model the way and learn that real ecological citizenship is practiced, not just talked about. These hands-on activities cultivate re-

sponsibility, stewardship, and a genuine love for the Earth.

As the Chancellor of Jinja Diocese noted during our Laudato Si Green Festival, "Caring for creation is not just an environmental issue, but a human issue. It's about recognizing the intrinsic value of every human being and our responsibility to protect the planet for future generations."

The Language of the Heart: Valuing Creation

The heart represents the values and spirituality that inspire our creation care. Through Laudato Si Masses, reflection, prayer, and storytelling, students come to see environmental care as both a spiritual and moral calling. They



learn that caring for creation bears fruit in peace, gratitude, and a sense of belonging within the web of life.

The Language of Talents: Communicating Conservation

Our Laudato Youth express their ecological commitment through their talents and gifts in poetry, drama, music, and art. They communicate the urgency of environmental conservation, inspiring others to live sustainably. As Dr. [Guest Speaker] noted, "The creative expressions of our young people are a powerful reminder that we are all connected and that our actions have an impact on the world around us."

Ecological Conversion and Empowerment

Through this holistic approach, our students experience ecological conversion - a transformation in both attitude and lifestyle. They are empowered to become responsible stewards in their schools, homes, and communities, linking personal habits with communal responsibility, such as reducing waste, addressing mental health issues related to the environment, and conserving resources.

Faith, Science, and Action in Harmony

In living out Pope Francis' call to "care for our common home," our Laudato Si Club promotes harmony between people and planet, faith and science. Our recent Laudato Si Festival showcased projects that demonstrated the intersection of faith and science, including eco-science exhibitions and community environmental campaigns for example the Smart Dustbin, Regenerative Greenhouse and a smart water pump.

As we reflect on our Laudato Si journey, we are reminded that "the heart inspires purpose, and the hands bring it to life." We are committed to continuing to nurture ecological citizens who will be the leaders of a more sustainable and just future.

What we do is to;

1. Integrate environmental education into all aspects of school life
2. Provide opportunities for students to engage in hands-on environmental activities
3. Foster a sense of community and shared responsibility for environmental care
4. Encourage students to express their ecological passion through creative expression, innovations etc

Ms Immaculate Kisembo
Patron Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross
Lake View SSS



STANDING TOGETHER

Saving Mother Earth, One Tree at a Time

As I reflect on my experience with the Laudato Si club at Holy Cross Lake View SSS, I'm reminded of the power of collective action in making a difference. Our mission is simple: to save Mother Earth in the simplest ways possible. We've been diligently managing plastic waste, cleaning our school, and planting trees – one tree at a time. However, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and alone in our efforts, especially when faced with the daunting task of combating environmental degradation.

That was until we attended the National Tree Planting Day at Busoga College Mwiri on October 10th, 2025. The theme, "Save Mother Earth Through Planting More Indigenous Trees," resonated deeply with me.



We met students from other schools, like Viva College and Wanyange Girls, who shared our passion for environmental conservation. Their dedication and enthusiasm were inspiring, and it reignited the spark within me.



With over 300 trees to plant, including mango, guava, and jackfruit, we knew we were part of something bigger than ourselves. The event was sponsored by organizations like Absa, Stanbic Bank, NEMA, and NFA – proof that we're not alone in this fight. These organizations recognize the importance of environmental conservation and are committed to supporting efforts like ours.

JOIN US TO PLANT 40 million trees each year



The day was a resounding success, with students and guests coming together to make a difference. We planted trees, shared ideas, and forged new friendships. It was a powerful reminder that every small action counts, and that together, we can create a ripple effect that will echo for generations to come.

Therefore no matter how small our actions may seem, we're not alone. There are others out there planting trees, reducing waste, and making a difference. That one tree you plant can help save Mother Earth, even if it's just by 0.0000001%. You're not alone in this race – we're standing together, and together, we can make a difference.



As I look back on that day, I'm filled with hope and determination. I urge you to join the movement. Let's keep spreading the word and inspiring others to take action. Every small action counts, and together, we can create a brighter, more sustainable future for our planet.

United For Climate Action
Kyoyagala Alison (S3)
Laudato Si Club of Holy
Cross Lake View SSS



LSiC HCLV

The Environment: Our Only Hope

I'm inspired by the Laudato Si Club at Holy Cross Lake View for its work in environmental conservation and sustainability. It's encouraging to see students lead this vital movement. The club's actions, from planting trees to cutting waste, show that small steps can produce big results.

The Swedish Embassy's support for green schools exemplifies global cooperation and commitment to environmental stewardship. Their projects—debates and crafting with recycled materials—promote sustainability while empowering students with creative, practical skills.

A big shoutout to Madam Immaculate Kisembo, the club's patron, for her dedication and hard work. Her guidance has clearly shaped the students, and it's heartening to see them thrive under her leadership.

Saving the environment is a shared responsibility and requires both action and a shift in everyday habits. As the saying goes, "Today's small seed will be tomorrow's shade and fruits,"

reminding us that individual efforts collectively create a greener, more sustainable world.

Let's focus on simple, effective actions: reduce, reuse, recycle, and inspire others to join in. Every effort counts, and together, we can create a ripple effect for generations to come.

By Birungi Sophie S3
Secretary, Laudato Si
Club of Holy Cross
Lake View SSS



Seeds of Green Hope: Growing a Brighter Future for Our Planet

Environment. Each seed is more than just a plant; it stands for action, care, and belief in a cleaner, healthier Earth.

Every small effort matters, whether it's planting a tree at school, starting a community garden in the city, or teaching a child to grow vegetables at home. These small seeds of hope come together to build a greener future, full of life, beauty, and balance.

Nature can heal itself, but it needs our support. Forests clean the air, plants help cool the earth, and green spaces bring people together. When we plant and protect nature, we are also planting hope for clean air, safe water, and a stable climate.

Everyday people are becoming green heroes and making a difference in their communities. From Kenya's Green Belt Movement to schoolchildren in India planting trees, these stories prove that anyone can plant a seed of hope.

You don't need a big garden or a lot of money to join a green initiative if you truly care about making a difference. We started simple and are making progress. Here's how you can start too: plant something, even if it's just a small plant in a pot; learn about nature and share what you know; reduce waste and recycle; join clean-up drives at your school or in your community; and support local farmers and eco-friendly products.

The Earth does not belong only to us; it also belongs to future generations. By planting seeds of green hope today, we help create a world full of life, beauty, and balance. Let's be the change, one seed at a time.

By Ayikoru Hope Elizabeth
President, Laudato Si Club and Head Girl, Holy Cross Lake View SSS

With pollution, deforestation, and climate change all around us, it can feel overwhelming to think about our planet's future. Still, even in tough times, there is hope, and it often starts with something as simple as a seed.

All over the world, people are planting seeds of green hope. These small actions can grow into big changes for the environment. Each seed is more than just a plant; it stands for action, care, and belief in a cleaner, healthier Earth.

Every small effort matters, whether it's planting a tree at school, starting a community garden in the city, or teaching a child to grow vegetables at home. These small seeds of hope come together to build a greener future, full of life, beauty, and balance.

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All over the world, people are planting seeds of green hope. These small actions can grow into big changes for the envi-



National

Tree

National Tree Planting Day at Busoga College Mwiri Aday of Environmental Awareness

On October 10th, students and environmental enthusiasts came together at Busoga College Mwiri for National Tree Planting Day. Schools from across the region joined in to support environmental conservation. Participants learned about various tree species, including Eucalyptus, Musizi, Musambya, and Acacia.

The activities highlighted the crucial role of tree planting in protecting nature and encouraged everyone to take action for

Planting

a sustainable future. Environmental clubs from Iganga SSS, Viva College, Wanyange Girls, and other schools clearly demonstrated their collective commitment to conservation and showed the positive impact of working together.

A special moment was when Talia Birungi Kandole, the young 2nd Queen Little Miss Wildlife 2024/2025, joined in and showed true care for the environment by helping plant trees. The event facilitated the sharing of

planting techniques and conservation experiences, enabling students to develop action plans for environmental clubs in their own schools.

Dr. Alfred Okit Okidi emphasized that young people play a key role in building a sustainable future through environmental conservation. National Tree Planting Day at Busoga College Mwiri inspired participants to make a lasting difference for the environment and themselves.

Laker Maria Pauline S.1
Vice President, Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View SSS

Making the Earth a better home ... for everyone

The earth's cry, once ignored, now echoes back, a haunting re- minder of the pain it has endured. Rising temperatures, plastic waste, and toxic gases have taken a toll on our planet. For too long, we've lived in ignorance, fearing the guilt of our actions. But it's time to acknowl- edge the harm we've caused and work together to heal Mother Earth.

The consequences of our actions are evident: floods, droughts, and a planet in distress. But there's hope. By planting trees, conserving resources, and reducing waste, we can restore balance to our ecosystem. The beauty and fulfillment that come with nurturing Mother Earth are rewards we must strive for.

We are the builders of a nation where Earth thrives, where her smile heals, and her mercy yields. As advocates of Mother Nature, we hold the keys to climate change. We're the ones she needs to make a difference.

Let's join forces to make this world a better place for ev- eryone. Let's plant trees and restore forests, reduce plastic waste and pollution, conserve water and energy, support sustainable practices, and spread awareness and in- spire change.

Together, we can create a brighter future for our planet. We can make Earth a better home for everyone . We are the change Mother Earth needs. Let's act now!
United for Climate Action

SUUBI FAITH ELEANOR S.3C
Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross
Lake View SSS



POEMS

The Cry of the Earth: A Call to Action
The earth cries, a desperate plea,
A cry that echoes, wild and free.
The earth groans, a painful sigh,
A heart that aches, a soul that cries.

Are we too deaf to hear its cry?
Are we too numb to feel its pain?
Are our hands too weak to preserve?
The environment, our common home, is in vain.
Let us arise, let us unite,
To preserve, protect, and care for the earth tonight.
If not you, who will?
If not now, when will it be?
If not us, who will conserve our motherland, wild and free?

As we hear the cry of the earth,
Let us arise, let us take a stand,
To conserve our land,
As we, the pilgrims of green hope, strive to make a change .

The earth's cry is getting louder, we must listen,
We must act now, with urgency and compassion.
We must be the change we want to see,
A world that's green, a world that's free .

Let us join hands, let us unite,
To protect our planet, day and night.
Let us be the heroes the earth needs,
To heal the wounds, to mend the seams .
The earth needs us, and we need the earth,
Let's act now, before it's too late, let's give it our all.
Let's be the generation that makes a difference,
A generation that's green, a generation that's bold.

Be a pilgrim of green hope,
Join the fight against climate change,
Together, we can make a difference,
A difference that's green, a difference that's free.

Nakimbugwe Christine Witney S1A
Laudato Si Club of Holy Cross Lake View SSS



Who will Hear Her Cry?

Who Will Hear Her Cry?

The trees, once vibrant, now fall to the ground,
Their beauty lost, their lives unbound.
The water's edge, once pure and clean,
Now choked with waste, a dying scene.

The air, once fresh, now thick with smoke,
A toxic haze, our future's broke.
Mother Nature cries, her voice so faint,
Who will hear her plea, her desperate plaint?

In days of old, she thrived and grew,
In harmony with humans, her children are true.
But now, our progress comes at a cost,
Her pain and suffering, we've largely lost.

Industries rise, a ceaseless tide,
Polluting the air, our future is denied.
Trees fall, a victim of our greed,
Our water bodies, a dying breed.

The fish swim dead, the plants decay,
Our Mother's pain, we cannot slay.
Her cry echoes, a desperate plea,
Who will hear her voice, and set her free?

Let us stand, united, and strong,
For climate action, our voices are long.
Laudato Si, a call to rise,
To save our Mother, before it's too late, and she dies.

Let us plant trees, and clean the air,
And work together, to show we care.
For Mother Nature, our home, our nest,
Let us save her, and give her rest.



**Kyoyagala Alyson Laudato Si
Club of Holy Cross Lake View
S.S.S - Jinja**

Ways the Laudato Youth Initiative Is Nurturing Ecological Citizens

When Pope Francis released *Laudato Si'* in 2015, he was not simply calling the world to protect the environment. He was inviting humanity to a profound conversion — a transformation of how we see God, ourselves, and creation. For Catholic educators, the encyclical has become a blueprint for forming young people who are not only academically skilled, but spiritually grounded and socially responsible stewards of the Earth.

Today, initiatives like the Laudato Youth Initiative (LYI) are translating this vision into vibrant realities, shaping a new generation of ecological citizens throughout East Africa and beyond.



1. A New Mission for Catholic Education

Catholic education has always aimed to integrate faith, reason, and service. *Laudato Si'* deepens this mission by illuminating the spiritual and moral dimensions of ecological care. In the encyclical, Pope Francis urges educators to develop in students:

- An ecological spirituality rooted in gratitude and awe
- A sense of moral responsibility for creation and the poor
- A critical understanding of environmental systems and global inequalities
- Habits of simplicity, solidarity, and sustainable living

This means Catholic schools can no longer treat ecology as a topic reserved for science class. Instead, environmental stewardship becomes a thread woven through religious education, ethics, social studies, leadership formation, and community service.

2. From Knowledge to Conversion: The Heart of Ecological Education

Laudato Si' emphasizes that environmental crises cannot be solved by science alone; what is needed is “ecological conversion.” For students, this conversion happens when: Knowledge becomes shared value, religious and cultural values become a road map and Climate Action becomes a lifestyle

Catholic education is uniquely equipped to nurture this process because it shapes the whole person — mind, heart, and spirit. Through prayer, reflection, and community life, learners discover that caring for creation is not an optional extra, but an essential expression of Christian discipleship.

FAITH AND ACTION

3. The Laudato Youth Initiative: A Model for Ecological Citizenship

The Laudato Youth Initiative is one of the most dynamic youth-driven responses to Laudato Si' in the region. It empowers young people to become leaders in creation care through:

a. Eco-Formation Programs

Workshops, school talks, and eco-spirituality retreats help students understand climate change, environmental ethics, and Catholic social teaching. These programs foster a "Laudato mindset" — an attitude that links faith to ecological responsibility.

b. Practical Environmental Action

LYI through its clubs emphasises

- Tree-planting campaigns
- Waste-management drives
- Clean-up initiatives
- Renewable-energy awareness
- School eco-clubs

Through these hands-on activities, young people learn that stewardship is lived through concrete choices and communal effort.

c. Leadership for Social and Ecological Justice

Young members of LYI are trained not in values. In this way, ecology becomes inseparable from the Church's broader mission of defending human dignity.

d. Building a Culture of Hope

Perhaps the most important contribution of LYI is cultivating hope and purpose. In a world troubled by climate anxiety, Laudato youth are encouraged to see themselves as instruments of God's healing — a vital message for today's generation.

4. Catholic Schools as Seeds of Ecological Culture

For Laudato Si' to truly shape Catholic education, schools must become laboratories of ecological living. This involves:

- Greening the campus environment
- Integrating eco-themes into curricula
- Encouraging sustainable lifestyles
- Practicing responsible consumption
- Forming students through service and community involvement

When schools model what they teach, young people learn that care for creation is not theory but culture.

5. Toward an Ecological Civilization

The future outlined by Laudato Si' is not merely one of cleaner environments, but of renewed relationships: with God, with nature, and with one another. Through initiatives like the Laudato Youth Initiative, Catholic education can raise a generation ready to build this future — not through fear, but through courage, faith, and love.

As Pope Francis reminds us, "Hope would have us recognize that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps." The Laudato youth are choosing that path today, inviting all of us to join the journey.

Laudato Youth Integrate Environmental Science

assess ecosystem health and understand the human influences that threaten delicate aquatic systems.

Learners also studied aquatic macroinvertebrates, discovering how the abundance and diversity of these small organisms reveal the condition of wetland habitats. By connecting biological observation to chemical analysis, students practiced authentic scientific inquiry in real-world contexts.

**F a i t h ,
Science, and
Stewardship**

Action

“We study science not only to understand nature, but to protect it.” A Laudato Youth participant. In harmony with Pope Francis’ call to “care for our common home,” the Laudato Si’ Club of Nyakasura School embarked on an Ecological Walk of Nature to Karangura Hills and the River Mpanga source Wetland Sanctuary. The experience fused exploration of environmental science with faith-based action reflecting aligning with Uganda’s new learner-centered curriculum that promotes curiosity, collaboration, and hands-on learning.

Exploring the Living Classroom

(Students testing water quality at the Wetland Sanctuary). The field activity, themed “Laudato Youth Integrate Environmental Science,” transformed the wetlands into a living laboratory. Students, guided by their mentors, conducted water quality tests at two sampling sites measuring dissolved oxygen, nutrient levels, pH, and turbidity. These indicators helped them as-

Guided by Experts in Inspired by Nature (Photo caption placeholder: UWL naturalist explaining wetland vegetation).

The exploration was enriched by Uganda Wildlife (UWL) naturalists who illustrated how wetlands function as natural buffers absorbing floodwaters, filtering pollutants, and nurturing biodiversity. Students observed how agricultural practices and settlement patterns affect the resilience of these vital ecosystems, deepening their understanding of sustainability and ecosystem services.



Faith in Action: The Laudato Youth Vision

“Caring for creation is both a scientific task and a spiritual calling.” After the fieldwork, students reflected on how scientific knowledge complements faith-driven responsibility. Drawing inspiration from Laudato Si’, they reaffirmed their commitment to ecological stewardship pledging to promote wetland protection, waste management, and sustainable water use within their school and community. Their reflections echoed the spirit of the Laudato Youth Initiative, showing how faith and science together can cultivate a culture of ecological conversion and active citizenship.

**B r i d g i n g
S T E M
and**

**B y
engaging in
inquiry-based field
research, students
strengthened scientific
literacy, critical thinking,
and moral responsibility.
key pillars of Uganda’s
competency-based
education.**

Ultimately, the walk to the wetlands was more than an academic exercise; it was a transformative encounter with creation. It reminded every participant that caring for the environment begins with curiosity, gratitude, and the courage to act.

About the Laudato Si’ Club of Nyakasura School

(Photo caption placeholder: Club members planting trees on campus). The Laudato Si’ Club of Nyakasura School is a student-led initiative inspired by Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home. The club brings together young environmental leaders dedicated to stewardship,

The Laudato Youth Integrate in other schools like Holy Cross re taking on robotic innovations designs with new problem solving skills, Creativity and Innovation. From the recent Laudato Si Ai, to Automated Solar sysytemes that generate more clean energy to water filtration process all point to the reality that Environmental Science initiatives



that Laudato Youth can lead in technological engineering for sainability and through tree-planting drives, ecological walks, waste-management projects, and science-based research, the club empowers students to integrate faith, science, and service becoming advocates for ecological transformation in Uganda.

Biocultural Well-Being

Lessons From Katangura Hill and Forest Nature Walk



In Western Uganda, the landscapes of Katangura Hill and its surrounding forest hold more than ecological beauty—they embody deep-rooted Indigenous values that have shaped conservation practices for generations. During a recent eco-visit to the area, students from Nyakasura School explored how these communities interact with their environment. Their findings reveal an important truth: biocultural well-being where cultural identity and ecological stewardship reinforce one another is still thriving in many Indigenous settings.

Indigenous Values as Foundations for Conservation

Although many grassroots communities are unfamiliar with the formal language of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 2 on zero hunger, their everyday practices align strongly with global conservation and sustainability principles.

Communities continue to:

1. Maintain traditional granaries and local food preservation methods
2. Practice sustainable coexistence with wildlife
3. Value forests as sources of water, medicine, and cultural identity
4. Promote intergenerational knowledge-sharing rooted in respect for nature

Threats From External Pressures

One community elder explained that the safest way to live in the forest is simple:

“Be good to the animals and plants. Do not kill them, and do not cut trees carelessly. They are our water and our ecosystem.”

Such wisdom reflects the longstanding principles of balance, reciprocity, and collective responsibility.

These disruptions weaken the social-ecological systems that Indigenous communities depend on.

In addition, shifting weather patterns from erratic rainfall to prolonged dry spells are undermining food security. Farmers are witnessing reduced yields, with climate change threatening their sustainable practices and traditional seed systems.

A Holistic Concept of Well-Being

Indigenous communities around Katangura share a worldview in which well-being is attained only when harmony exists between: *the human world, the wild world, and the sacred world.*

This holistic perspective mirrors many Indigenous cultures globally, where balance, solidarity, reciprocity, and collective stewardship guide daily life. Yet these values are weakening in communities closer to towns and trading centers where unplanned development and urbanization are on the rise.

The Case for a Biocultural Conservation Approach

The findings suggest that biocultural territories landscapes managed through Indigenous cultural values can significantly strengthen community resilience. Scaling up this approach would: Support climate adaptation among grassroots communities

1. *Promote eco-friendly income sources such as nature-based tourism, eco-product enterprises, and cultural experiences*
2. *Strengthen food systems rooted in Indigenous farming practices*
3. *Enhance national conservation strategies with Indigenous knowledge*

Greater sensitization is needed to ensure that elders' knowledge is documented, respected, and integrated into policymaking. These knowledge systems are not historical relics—they are living tools for a sustainable future.

A Call to Leadership

Institutions such as the Kingdom of Tooro, religious leaders, and political representatives have a key role to play.

They can champion nature and religious tourism, create platforms to market eco-products, and ensure that conservation efforts also uplift local households.

Investment in schools, eco-education centers, health facilities, and community-based tourism infrastructure can further enhance the well-being of local residents while preserving the forest.

A New Value Identified by Youth: “Under Nature”

From conversations with young people during the eco-visit, we observed an emerging, sixth value relating to human-nature relationships: “under nature.”

This concept reflects the belief that humans are not masters of nature but are governed by it guided, protected, and limited by natural laws. It is a humble but powerful worldview that recognizes ecological dependence and respect for Earth's boundaries.

The eco-visit to Katangura Hill and Forest underscores the importance of biocultural systems integrated frameworks that connect ecological health with cultural identity. These systems are not only part of Indigenous heritage but also a blueprint for a sustainable future. By protecting biocultural territories, strengthening Indigenous knowledge, and investing in community-driven conservation, Uganda can safeguard both its natural treasures and the cultural wisdom that sustains them.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health, Faith and the Environment

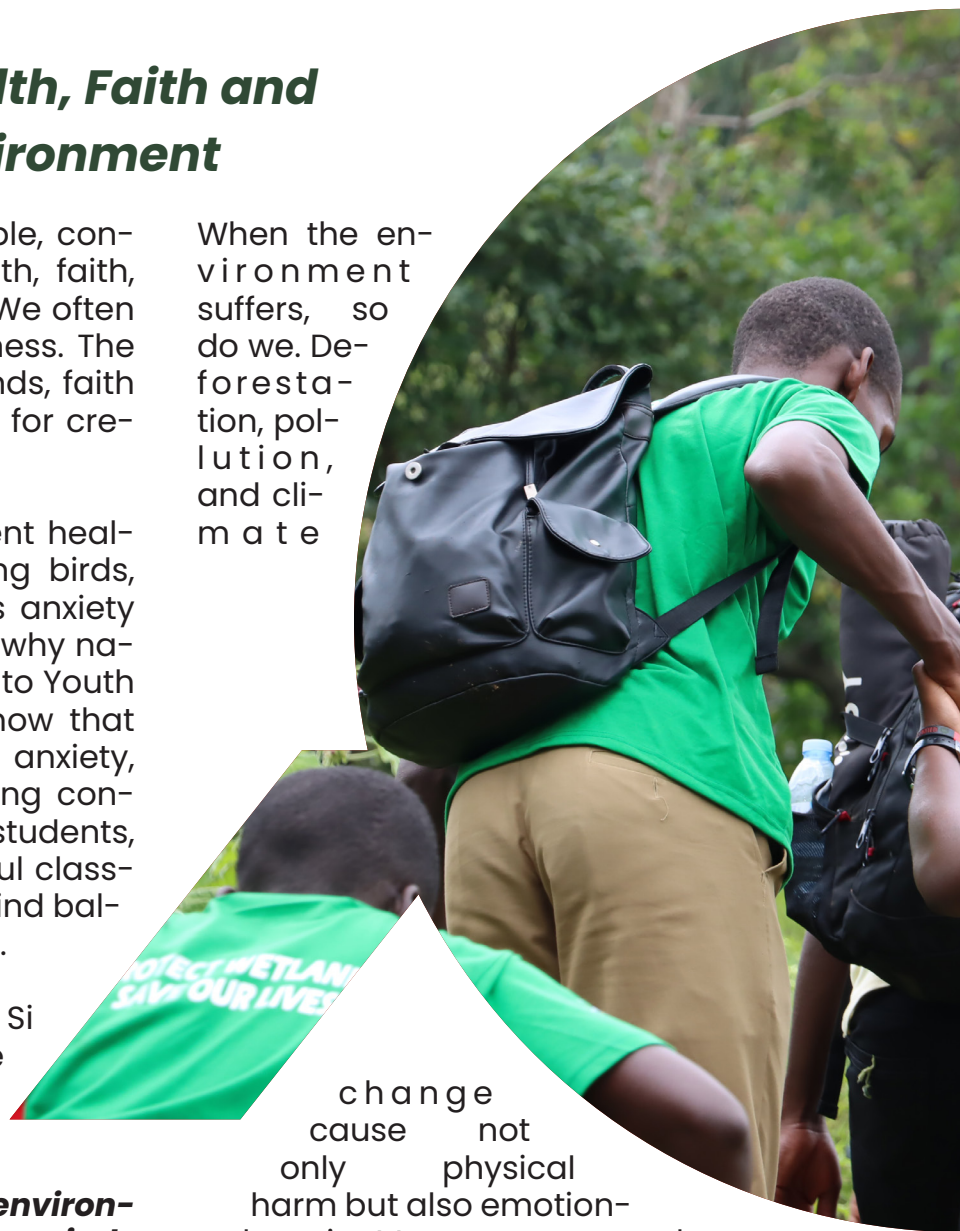
When talking with young people, conversations about mental health, faith, and the environment are key. We often overlook their interconnectedness. The planet's health affects our minds, faith shapes our hearts, and caring for creation nurtures inner peace.

Nature has always been a silent healer. Walking in a forest, hearing birds, or seeing flowing water calms anxiety and refreshes the mind. That's why nature walks are central to Laudato Youth Initiative programs. Studies show that time in nature reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, while improving concentration and creativity. For students, green spaces become peaceful classrooms to breathe, reflect, and find balance amid academic pressure.

I recently joined our Laudato Si Club of Nyakasura for a nature walk. Along the way, I spoke with several participating Laudato Youth. One student said, ***"Being in a natural environment makes me feel alive. It reminds me that there's beauty in the world, even when things seem tough."*** Another added, "I feel more connected to the earth and to myself when I'm surrounded by nature."

When the environment suffers, so do we. Deforestation, pollution, and climate

change cause not only physical harm but also emotional strain. Many young people feel eco-anxiety, deep worry for the planet's future. It's essential to turn that concern into positive action and community involvement.



At Laudato Youth, we empower young people to be part of the solution. Caring for creation is eco-therapy, healing both minds and hearts. Planting trees, tending climate-smart gardens, cleaning up, and recycling are not just environmental acts; they are healing practices.

Caring for creation in this sense becomes a form of eco-therapy, a way to heal our minds and hearts. Many students say that when they engage in conversations during nature walks—laughing,

smiling,

shouting, and hearing their echo—

they feel relaxed. When participating in activities like planting trees, tending school gardens, cleaning up, or recycling, these are not just environmental acts; they are healing practices.

Through these small gestures, they rediscover hope, purpose, and connection.

Laudato Si activities continually amaze me as we engage Laudato Youth in caring for creation. I witness joy, teamwork, and helping hands, which reminds me of our motto: “United for Climate Action.” I am especially glad we integrate health awareness and talks into Laudato Si club programs. Mental health and environmental education must be integrated across disciplines. Programs such as reflection moments, mindfulness walks, storytelling, and Laudato Si Masses help students link emotional well-being with ecological responsibility.

One touching story was from an elder whose well-preserved home we passed by in the forest. For him, the message is clear: grassroots communities value emphasizing that cultural/ traditional communities teach ecological values.

Pope Francis reminds us in Laudato Si that “everything is connected.” Caring for our common home protects both

By working together, we can create a brighter future for all – a future where the health of our planet and the health of our minds are prioritized.

Ayebale Fred
LY Media



Mental Health

Physical Health

Take Care of Your Mental and Physical Health as a Way of Caring for God's Creation

Dear young people, you are essential to our future. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, reminds us that "our bodies are gifts from God, and caring for them is an essential part of caring for creation." This message is especially important during the holidays, when increased free time and less structure can bring new challenges. I would like to share some ways you can care for your mental and physical health as part of caring for God's creation, starting with yourselves.

1. Your Body Is God's Creation: Protect It

Our bodies are not accidents; they are masterpieces created by God. St. Paul teaches, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19). Caring for your physical health is not only a personal choice but also a responsibility.

Healthy Choices Youth Should Prioritise During Holidays

- Eat balanced meals instead of relying on junk food.

Caring for God's Creation



- Engage in sports, exercise, or community work to stay active.
- Ensure sufficient sleep and rest for proper physical development.
- Stay hydrated, especially in the upcoming hot tropical climate.
- Avoid drugs, alcohol, and smoking. These harm your body, weaken your mental health, and jeopardize your future.

2. Mental Health Matters: Care for Your Inner Self Too

Many young people face depression, anxiety, peer and family pressure, environmental stress, and sometimes trauma. These mental health challenges can impact education, relationships, and self-esteem.

Taking care of your mental health is important because your mind is also part of God's creation.

Practical ways to protect your mental health as a young person

- Surround yourself with positive, supportive friends.
- Limit social media consumption, which often brings comparison and pressure.
- Talk to a trusted adult, counsellor, religious leader, or mentor when stressed.
- Practise prayer, meditation, journaling, and mindfulness.
- Participate in youth groups such as Laudato Youth and church programs that offer peer support and build resilience.
- Avoid toxic relationships and harmful peer influence.

Neglecting your mental health can lead to risky behaviours, including substance abuse, early pregnancy, violence, truancy, and crime.



3. Avoid Harmful Behaviour: It Hurts You and Those Around You

The holidays can expose young people to activities that harm both themselves and the wider community:

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Early sexual activity and teenage pregnancies
- Gambling and betting addictions
- Violence, crime, theft, and vandalism
- Excessive partying or night outings

These actions harm your body and mind, hurt families, damage communities, and undermine societal values.

Young people are called to bring hope, not fall into harmful influences.

4. Caring for Yourself Is Part of Caring for Creation

When the Church speaks of caring for creation, it refers not only to rivers, forests, and animals. Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, are the most precious part of creation.

A young person who is physically healthy, mentally balanced, and spiritually grounded can contribute meaningfully to society and help protect the environment.

How Personal Health Connects to Environmental Care

A healthy mind makes responsible choices about waste, resources, and nature

Healthy young people are more likely to participate in community cleanups, tree planting, and environmental projects.

- Personal discipline encourages responsible care for God's creation.

You cannot care for the Earth if you ignore the health of your own body and mind.





Choose God, Choose Life, Choose Health

To all young people reading this, you have the power to change your world and our country, but it begins with taking responsibility for yourself. Caring for your physical and mental health is not only wise; it is a sacred duty and a way to protect God's creation, starting with you.

As the holidays begin, choose God rather than neglecting your faith, choose health over harm, purpose over mere pleasure, and discipline over destruction. Your life is a gift. Protect it, care for it, and use it to honor God and serve others.

5. Use Holidays for Growth, Not Harmful Behaviours

The holiday period is an opportunity to:

- Learning new skills (farming, ICT, innovation, crafts).
- Reading books and broadening knowledge.
- Volunteering in church, parish groups, or community projects.
- Helping parents with chores and responsibilities.
- Strengthening spiritual life by attending Mass, retreats, and prayer gatherings.
- Participate in youth programs such as Laudato Youth Initiative, Youth Alive, or Scouts.

Every good choice helps build a better future.

Many Cancers, One Race: The Rotary Cancer Run 2025

On August 31, 2025, I laced up my shoes as a proud Rotaracter from the Rotaract Club of Makindye and joined thousands from Uganda and beyond for the 14th annual Rotary Cancer Run, united under the banner **“Many Cancers, One Race.”** My motivation ran deeper than club spirit; I was moved by **the mental health struggles faced by cancer patients and their caregivers.** This event became more than a race—it was a heartfelt gathering to reflect, connect, and stand shoulder to shoulder with those who need us most. Witnessing the generosity of individuals and organizations alike, I was reminded that every act of kindness, no matter its size, truly matters.

Rotary’s Cancer Initiative of Hope

The Rotary International organization is making significant strides in improving access to cancer care and treatment in Uganda. With the Nsambya Hospital cancer center nearing completion, Rotary plans to establish regional cancer centers across the country, increasing access to life-saving treatment for thousands of Ugandans.

The Rotary-Centenary Bank Cancer Ward at Nsambya Hospital is almost complete, with over UGX 13 billion needed to finish the construction of bunkers and wards for modern cancer treatment machines. This project supported by various partners, call for more generosity to save lives. We young people can do something in our means. The annual Rotary Cancer Run has been instrumental in raising

awareness and funds for cancer care. With over 250,000 runners participating in the events, the program has mobilized approximately UGX 5 billion to support cancer care and treatment. The cancer run has also expanded bed capacity to 36, offering greater comfort and care for cancer patients.

Rotary’s plan to establish regional cancer centers will help reduce congestion at national facilities and ensure patients receive timely treatment. This initiative will bring cancer care closer to rural areas, improving access to quality healthcare for thousands of Ugandans.

Thinking about Mental Health and Environmental Responsibility

Though the Cancer Run focuses on fighting physical illness, it also highlights the often-overlooked importance of mental health.



From diagnosis through treatment and survivorship, individuals and their families face significant psychological strain, including fear, anxiety, depression, and isolation.

Each stride we take, and every story we share, is a show of solidarity with those fighting silent battles. Running becomes a symbol of resilience, and together, we send a powerful message: no one faces this journey alone.

My journey with the Laudato Youth Initiative revealed that true health goes beyond the absence of illness—it means nurturing well-being, building strong community bonds, and caring for a thriving environment. Inspired by Pope Francis’s message in *Laudato Si’*, I learned that the well-being of people and planet are inseparable, and that our mission must embrace both: healing lives and healing the Earth as one.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Action

The 2025 Cancer Run received strong support from Uganda’s corporate sector, reinforcing the importance of corporate social responsibility in advancing public health.

* Centenary Bank contributed UGX 500 million as a platinum sponsor (Ug Bulletin, 2025).

* Krystal Water returned for a third consecutive year, donating UGX 550 million (Hariss International, 2025).

* USAID pledged \$756,000 over three years to support cancer screenings for 216,000 people across 40 districts (Nile Post, 2025).

* UETCL contributed UGX 8.75 million, joining other organizations in acknowledging that fighting cancer is

everyone’s race (CSN Uganda, 2025).

This wave of support from corporate organizations shows how powerful collective action can be in advancing health equity, nurturing mental wellness, and caring for our environment as shared responsibilities worldwide.

A Call to Holistic Action: One Race, Infinite Impact

The theme “Many Cancers, One Race” calls us to unite, no matter the form cancer takes. Fighting cancer is a responsibility we all share, whether we walk, run, donate, or spread the word.

When we run for life, we run for one another, for our communities, and for the Earth itself. The race does not end at the finish line—it marks the beginning of a lasting promise to protect our environment, support mental health, and care for our communities. At every step, we build a culture rooted in compassion and shared responsibility, transforming how we live and care for each other.

One step. One voice. One race for everyone. Together, we ignite change for both body and mind. Let us lace up, open our hearts, and run toward a future where every person is seen, supported, and uplifted—a future where no one is left behind.

Kisembo Immaculate
(LYI Program Manager)



Laudato Voices "Akili" (Wisdom)

Q1: What is "Dilexi Te: I Have Loved You" about?

ANS 1: It's a document from Pope Leo XIV that encourages the Church and its members to care for the poor, inspired by Jesus' love and example. It connects faith with action, showing that helping the poor is essential to being Christian.

Q2: Why did Pope Leo XIV write this document?

ANS 2: He wanted to continue Pope Francis' focus on caring for the poor and to address growing indifference toward the poor in society and even in the Church. The document is both a sign of continuity and a call to action.

Q3: What is the main message of the document?

ANS 3: The main message is that caring for the poor is at the heart of Christianity. The document reminds us that Jesus himself was poor and identified with the poor, so helping them is a way of loving and serving Christ.

Q4: How does the document say the Church should respond to poverty?

ANS 4: The Church should not only help the poor through charity but also work to change unjust systems that cause poverty. This means both immediate help and working for long-term social justice.

Q5: WHY DOES THE DOCUMENT MENTION THE "PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR"?

ANS 5: This means that the Church should give special attention and priority to the needs of the poor, just as Jesus did. It's a call to put the most vulnerable at the centre of our actions and decisions.



Special Feature - "Dilexi Te: I Have Loved You"

Q6: What does the document say about attitudes toward the poor?

ANS 6: It warns against blaming the poor for their situation or ignoring them. It also criticizes the idea that helping the poor is only the government's job or that church charity is outdated.

Q7: How does "Dilexi Te" connect faith and action?

ANS 7: It teaches that faith in Christ must be expressed through caring actions for those in need. Praying and believing are not enough—real love means concrete help and solidarity.

Q8: What is the "polyhedron" model mentioned in the document?

ANS 8: The polyhedron is an image that represents a united community made up of diverse, unique people. The document says a just society includes everyone—especially the poor—and values their unique contributions.

Q9: What role do faith-based initiatives like LYI play, according to the document?

ANS 9: Even if they are no longer leaders of social change, their presence among and solidarity with the poor is a powerful witness to the Gospel. They are called to learn from the poor and share in their struggles.

Q10: How does caring for the poor transform us?

ANS 10: The document says that serving and learning from the poor changes us, deepens our faith, and helps us better understand God's love. It's not just about giving, but about mutual transformation and learning.



A Commitment to Creation

*Mr. Adolf Basaija,
Laudato Si' Club Leader
St. Adolf Holy Cross
Parish Kanyabacope*

In creation's embrace, our earth stands profound,
Mountains and rivers in harmony bound.
As stewards of nature, we honour our role—
To guard and preserve, our one common goal.

Our choices define us, each action we take,
In nurturing the planet for future's sake.
We stand for justice for all living things,
Embracing the wisdom sustainability brings.

In solidarity, let our voices unite,
Striving for balance with courage and light.
Guided by truth, we labour to restore
The beauty of nature we're called to explore.

Let us be agents of change—purposeful, wise—
Caring for creation where our shared duty lies.
Together we build a tomorrow that thrives,
In harmony with nature, where all life survives.



Pope's theme for 2026 World Day of Peace: 'Peace be with you all'

"Peace be with you all: Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace" is the theme for the annual celebration dedicated to universal peace, held on January 1, the liturgical Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.

The theme, , "invites humanity to reject the logic of violence and war, and to embrace an authentic peace based on love and justice."

"The greeting of the Risen Christ, 'Peace be with you' (Jn 20:19), is an invitation addressed to everyone—believers, non-believers, political leaders and citizens—to build the Kingdom of God and to work together to build a humane and peaceful future," concluded the statement.



We pray for peace in the world, we
also pray for a peaceful 2026
general election in Uganda.



Mass in the held in the
RECONCILAITION GARDENS
of St. Adolf Parish

PEACE BE WITH YOU ALL

The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development released a statement offering details about Pope Leo XIV's chosen theme for the 2026 World Day of Peace.

"Peace be with you all: Towards an 'unarmed and disarming' peace" is the theme for the annual celebration dedicated to universal peace, held on January 1, the liturgical Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.

The theme, noted the press release, **"invites humanity to reject the logic of violence and war, and to embrace an authentic peace based on love and justice."**

This peace must be unarmed, **"And it must be disarming, capable of resolving conflicts, opening hearts and generating mutual trust, empathy and hope."**

This doubles as a powerful message for us as we approach the general elections. We are invited to reflect deeply on our actions and take cautious steps as ambassadors of peace and, more so, to protect young people from toxic politics that may endanger their future and lives.

"It is not enough to call for peace," The Pope's Message revealed. "We must embody it in a way of life that rejects every form of violence, whether it be visible or systemic."

CELEBRATING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: DR. DESIGNATUS BR. BENARD OMUKUYIA, C.S.C.



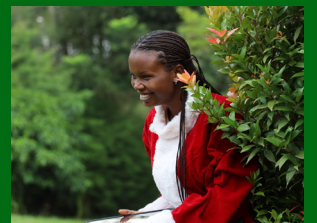
We congratulate Dr. Designatus Br. Benard Omukuyia, C.S.C., our Research Advisor, whose work was defended his thesis and was recognized for his outstanding academic contribution through his research topic. The Dialectic of Coercion and Freedom: Friedrich von Hayek and Michael Oakeshott on Good Governance and the Overcoming of Corruption.

Br. Benard's research offers a compelling analysis of East African political culture. The study demonstrates that traditional societies practiced participatory leadership grounded in cultural values, integrity, and community wisdom, in contrast to the contemporary reliance on coercion and material incentives that perpetuate corruption.

Br. Benard's achievement is recognized with pride and gratitude, with confidence that his work will continue to inspire young people in Uganda and beyond.



Merry Christmass



**MAY OUR EFFORTS TO CARE FOR GOD'S
CREATION BE INSPIRED BY FAITH AND
ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION OF THE
HEART THIS FESTIVE SEASON.**

Try to avoid single-use plastics, bring your locally made shopping bag, and plant trees or flowers during the Christmas break. Instead of cutting trees just for short-term decorations, look for other ways to celebrate.



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