

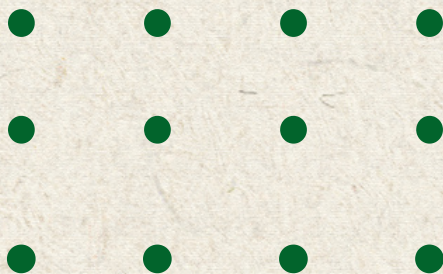



focolare
movement
—
ECOPLAN



EcoPlan

Listening to the Cry of the Earth, the Cry of the Poor, and the Cry of the New Generations





EcoPlan

Listening to the Cry of the Earth, the Cry of the Poor, and the Cry of the New Generations

“The health of the Mystical Body, of humanity, is peace. And the health of the cosmos is ecology. I have the impression that in the future there will be a great ecological development in our Movement because we have to save the natural environment. In the same way that one has to be alive and not dead in order to work at becoming a saint, so too must the planet be alive in order to provide a home for humanity. (...) Our planet is essential for life to exist. Therefore, a healthy ecology is the foundation of peace. We can only build peace and brotherhood on a planet that exists.”

Chiara Lubich, Rocca di Papa, June 25, 1991.

“Let’s do what plants do. They absorb from the earth only the water, nutrients and other things they need, and not more. So each of us must have what we need and everything else be given away and shared with others.”

Chiara Lubich



The climate and ecological crisis represent one of the most critical and urgent problems of our times. A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns of “code red for humanity” showing that “climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our wellbeing and a healthy planet.”¹

In the face of this unprecedented emergency, individuals and communities are urged to take ambitious climate action at all levels.

The commitment for creation care has significantly marked the journey of faith communities worldwide over the last decades. In the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis with the encyclical letter *Laudato Sì* urgently appeals “for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet,” and to open “a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”²

In Christianity, particularly relevant is the role that His All Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew has played in this context by underlining the profound theological value of nature, while in the Anglican Communion 'care for creation' represents one of its Five Marks of Mission.

Worldwide, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews and Muslims are engaging to bring about change for people and planet, motivating ecological action moving from spiritual values embedded in their traditions.

More recently, in the run-up to COP26 United Nations climate summit, all major faith leaders,³ including Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, issued a pre-COP26 appeal on climate change, making a public commitment for their communities to create plans for the environment.

The pledge for the environment was formalized on October 04, 2021 with the launch of the *Faith Plans for People and Planet* Programme, representing the most prominent and boldest environmental initiative to date by the global faith community.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/2022/02/28/pr-wgii-ar6/>

² *Laudato Sì*, 14

³ <https://unfccc.int/news/world-religious-leaders-and-scientists-make-pre-cop26-appeal>

⁴ <https://www.faithplans.org/>

THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT TOO DESIRES TO COMMIT TO SUCH AN AMBITIOUS PLAN.

During its last General Assembly (January-February 2021), the Movement identified care for creation as one of its top priorities. In particular, the assembly pledged to “review the lifestyles of its members and as a whole and to verify the ecological sustainability of its structures and activities.”

In order to achieve these ambitious environmental objectives, the Focolare Movement has strengthened strategic partnerships with other organizations such as the Laudato Sì Movement⁵ and FaithInvest.⁶

In particular, stimulated by the partnership with FaithInvest and in co-leadership with EcoOne,⁷ members of the Focolare Movement have worked to amplify, connect and expand the environmental work that already exists within the Movement.

In this context, an international task-force of members of the Focolare Movement has reflected on the specific contribution that the charism of unity brings to the creation of a strategic ecological plan for the Movement to be implemented at local and national levels.

With a Focolare EcoPlan we wish to:

1. Inspire members and communities in the Focolare Movement to re-examine their lifestyles in relation to safeguarding people and the planet through the various aspects of our spirituality.
2. Raise awareness that the climate crisis threatens both human well-being and our planet, and that with immediate action, the most catastrophic impacts can still be prevented.
3. Make a public statement about our commitment as an organization to our neighbors and to the planet according to the guiding principles of integral ecology.
4. Express the spiritual roots of our ecological commitment, emphasizing in particular its strong ecumenical and interreligious dimension.

⁵ <https://laudatosimovement.org/>

⁶ an international non-profit organisation that helps faith communities develop medium to long-term strategic ecological plans
<https://www.faithinvest.org/>

⁷ <http://www.ecoone.org/en>

5. Encourage local Focolare communities and realities such as “little cities,” Mariapolis Centers, etc. to develop their own local/national ecological plans in line with these general orientations and with the support of a network of experts.

The Focolare EcoPlan also acts as a public statement of the ecological commitment of our communities. It will be presented at the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in June 2022 in Stockholm together with other similar plans from other organizations within the Faith Plans for People and Planet framework which also includes the plans that the Laudato Si Action Platform⁸ has collected over the past year.

We believe that the charism of unity lived in the local communities of the Focolare can inspire people to give their unique and important contributions to this shared project of care for people and planet.

What motivates our action for the environment is deeply embedded in our spiritual vision of the natural world and its relational character, and calls upon our vocation to build bridges and foster dialogue at all levels for both humans and planet to thrive.

OUR SPIRITUAL MOTIVATION

The Focolare Movement is a complex reality. Considering that its members come from different walks of life and engage in a variety of activities, it is difficult to suggest a set of overarching ecological guidelines for all.

Therefore we suggest that local communities take inspiration from the seven aspects of the spirituality of unity to develop their own plan for ecological action.

Work and Sharing

- Review our energy consumption and, wherever possible, choose a renewable energy supplier. Minimize heat loss from houses and centers, lighting and water consumption by adjusting our habits and adopting energy saving measures, such as improving insulation, switching to LED light bulbs, etc.
- Revitalize our communion of goods (“fagotto” / “bundles”) as a way to promote solidarity and combat consumerism and the culture of waste.

⁸ An online, digital space launched in November 2021 by the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development that offers planning guides and resources, a planning process, and a place for connecting to others taking action (<https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>).

- Choose to divest financial assets from fossil-fuel based economy. Check our banks' ethical credentials and switch to an alternative if its investment practices are harmful to the environment.
- Ethical purchasing: choose products and suppliers whose practices are not harmful for the planet.

Outreach and Witness

- Engage and mobilize local communities in concrete ecological activities in collaboration with others.
- In our ecological action leverage our existing strong ecumenical, interreligious and civic organization contacts.
- Ensure a preferential option for the youth, immigrants, poor and marginalized communities, as they represent those who will pay the highest price in this climate emergency.

Spirituality and Prayer

- Pray for creation, individually and as community. Get involved in prayer services during Laudato Si' Week and the Season of Creation or other similar religious initiatives.
- Visit and make known sacred spaces around the local community to reconnect with nature and historical heritage.
- Celebrate the beauty and bounty of creation.

Nature and Health

- Reduce food waste by setting correct portion sizes and using leftovers in other meals.
- Connect, value and promote local green spaces around local community.
- Prefer local and organic produce wherever budget allows.
- Reduce plastics by buying products that are not packaged in plastic and especially avoid single-use plastic items.

Beauty and Harmony

- Choose clothes ethically. Cheap goods often involve exploitation of people and the environment.
- Adopt moderation as a lifestyle. Learn how reducing, reusing and recycling can help you, your community, and the environment by saving money, energy, and natural resources.
- Showcase and protect the beauty of nature around you.

Wisdom and Study

- Educate ourselves more about the environment and its socio-economic relevance.
- Consider starting a local group to monitor the response of the local community to pressing challenges of climate change.
- Reach out to EcoOne and the Focolare EcoPlan Team to learn more about good ecological practices for local communities.

Communications and Media

- Consider our travel choices. Prefer public transport over driving a car where possible. Choose walking or cycling for short distances.
- Fly less and look into offsetting the carbon emissions of air travel. Discern our need to travel for in-person meetings.
- Use social media to share good practices. Promote the Focolare EcoPlan in your local community.

A CALL FOR ACTION

We invite local Focolare communities all over the world to engage with the following steps:

- *Create a local/national team* to raise awareness and inspire people in the local community about care for creation and environmental action.
- *Reflect together* on how to review lifestyles locally based on the aspects of our spirituality seen through the lens of integral ecology.
- *Identify key local partners* to amplify action.
- *Develop a local/national EcoPlan*, possibly inspired by the seven aspects (see above) and set goals for short and long-term changes.
- *Share and celebrate* accomplishments in becoming a more sustainable community.

An international team of experts in collaboration with EcoOne is available to support local and concrete ecological action with resources and guidelines: [**ecoplan@focolare.org**](mailto:ecoplan@focolare.org)

ABOUT THE ECOPLAN TASK-FORCE

The international task-force is composed of: Juliette Amidi (*Lebanon*), Yob Doronila (*Australia*), Thalassia Giaccone (*Italy*), Ana Clara Giovani (*Brazil*), Catalina Hinojosa (*Ecuador*), Tom McGlynn (*USA*), John Mundell (*USA*), Sarah Mundell (*USA*), Elisabeth Ohlbock (*Ireland*), Stefania Papa (*EcoOne central coordinator, Italy*), Nino Puglisi (*Austria*), Alexander Simoen (*Belgium*). The work of the taskforce is accompanied by Kenfack Etienne and Margarite Gomez (*central councillors for the aspect of the "Natural World and Physical Life"*), Roberto Signor (*Center for Interreligious Dialogue*) and Lorna Gold (*member of the Focolare, chair of the Laudato Sì Movement and Director of Movement Building at FaithInvest*).