

“Long before creation, when all was dark and void, our loving God envisioned us and all that was meant to be.”¹

By Patricia Cushing, CSJ



So much has happened since Pope Francis published *Laudato Si'*, reminding us that earth, our common home, is our sister with whom we share our God-given life. [LS 1] He pointed out the urgency of our environmental challenges, reminding us of our interconnected relationship with the earth, each other, and God.

But our increased relativism, greed, irresponsible misuse of the land and its resources have brought us to a dangerous place. Our negligence has damaged the very soul of who we are called to be. [LS 123] We have seen the negative impact of global warming, such as frequent major storms that devastate the land, infrastructures, human and animal life.



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Suddenly, the mysterious COVID-19, invisible and deadly, caught humanity off guard. Some countries sprang into action, while fear, suspicion, denial and politics made others slower to respond. The 24/7 newsfeed exposed numerous issues connected to the pandemic, including that the poor, people of color and indigenous peoples are being disproportionately affected, in health and economically.

At the same time, people are voicing appreciation and support for “essential workers” in this deadly battle. State governments, private researchers and business corporations are stepping up to provide the ‘weapons’ to fight this war, from proper protective clothing to future vaccines. Ordinary citizens share time, talent and treasure to support the ‘warriors’ and find solutions to immediate problems.

Those “at home” are learning that TIME is a gift to be savored and used wisely – connecting remotely with family and friends, or in prayer. May all the good deeds, cooperation and kindness we experience help us regain the essence of who we are called to be: kind, caring, inclusive people. Pope Francis says: “God, who calls us to generous commitment ... offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life... is always present. He does not abandon us... for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!” [LS 245]

How can we embrace the future with courage, becoming the change we want to be?

¹ *Dare to Dream* – P Cushing