1. I would like to begin the presentation today with an Opening Prayer by American poet ee cummings
2. During this presentation I am going to begin with a short refresher on Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si’. Then I will explain about the Laudato Si’ animator’s course that I am enrolled in. Finally, we will end in prayer with the Laudato Si’ chaplet.

I won’t be spending a great deal of time on the Laudato Si’ document, so on the next seven slides I have presented the headings from each chapter. I will let you read them as I give a very brief account of the chapter. If you haven’t had the time to read the document, I highly recommend it as it is very timely and an often time neglected teaching of the Church.

In May 2015 Pope Francis released his encyclical letter, “Laudato Si’”, On Care for Our Common Home.

This was the first time an encyclical was addressed to the whole human family. In it, Pope Francis challenges us all to protect our common home and to seek sustainable and integral development in the world (LS 13).

He urgently appeals for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.

This Encyclical has the same authority as Pope Paul VI’s “Humanae Vitae”, yet it seems as though more people know about that document than “Laudato Si’”.

To aid me in my presentation, I have used a wonderful resource from the Canadian Conference for Catholic Bishops entitled “Living Out Laudato Si’”, which can be found on their website. This document centres the conversation around Laudato Si’ particularly to our country.

1. Introduction – We know that Scripture tells us that God created the natural world and saw that it was good. We all have a responsibility to live respectfully together on this planet and to care for our common home, yet that doesn’t seem to be what is happening. Pope Francis uses the example of St. Francis of Assisi to help us understand a better way.
2. Chapter 1 – exposes the suffering of our Earth especially in these various topics. Pope Francis explains that there is a connection between morality and ecology: when our human relationships suffer, our environment suffers and where the environment is wounded, human life is diminished. He also points out that the poor and the marginalized, especially in the global south, are disproportionately affected by these circumstances.

One thing in this chapter that really made me think that there must be a better way to do things was in paragraph 22, where it says that in our industrial system, the end of the its cycle is production and consumption, we have not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. For me it seems logical that it does not follow God’s plan in the circle of life. In the natural world the end of a life creates the possibility of new life, but in many cases, we just produce waste that does not decompose or that takes a very long time to decompose.

1. Chapter 2 – Drawing on both scripture and tradition, Pope Francis expresses confidence in the faithful to make fruitful contributions to the dialogue about how to care for our common home. He corrects the erroneous understanding that pervades around Genesis 1:28 which says that human beings will have dominion over other creatures. He reminds us that this dominion must reflect God’s care for creation, not an unbridled exploitation of creation.
2. Chapter 3 – In this chapter, Pope Francis acknowledges the benefits that our technological advances have brought to society, while reminding us that technology must not advance independently of ethical considerations. We may through these achievements begin to feel like we are masters of the world, which leads us to devalue other forms of life, even human life.

He speaks also of our growing dependence on technology. He says it has become countercultural to choose a lifestyle whose goals are even partly independent of technology, of its cost and its power to globalize and make us all the same (par 108).

1. Chapter 4 – This encyclical while being the first to address all of humanity, is also the first Papal document to address our responsibility to care for the world for future generations. Pope Francis in paragraph 160 challenges us, “What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?” Other Popes have spoken about “human ecology” or the relationship between **humans** and their natural, social, and built environments, now Pope Francis broadens that vision in an integral ecology, which looks at the whole web of human relationships: with ourselves, with others, with creation and with God. This ecology is “inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics” (LS 156).
2. Chapter 5 – This chapter is a call to action for everyone. We have to work harder to care for people and the planet. Pope Francis pushes us to search for solutions that reflect a global perspective, one world with a common plan. He especially implores politicians to dialogue and work towards the common good and the long-term health of the earth.

This summer along with the animator’s course that I will tell you about later, I also took a course on indigenous studies offered online by the U of A. It was interesting to learn more about the indigenous way of life and it mirrored so well with the Laudato Si’ program. Pope Francis encourages us to learn from our indigenous sisters and brothers in section 2 of this chapter. He says that they instil a great sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a have a deep love for the land.

1. Chapter 6 – This chapter is also about change. The earth cannot sustain our current habits. We are called to change our heart, mind and actions to reflect a love for all creation. Our Christian traditions and practices direct us to be stewards of all creation, so now we must begin to live as true stewards by living simply, praying for and loving others and creation. This chapter ends with two prayers – one of which we will use in our prayer service later.
2. In order to understand the Pope’s message and directions clearer, I enrolled in Laudato Si’ Animators Course offered by the Global Catholic Climate Movement. I took this program virtually this summer, with people from all over the world. There were 6000 animators enrolled in my cohort. In our breakout rooms, I had conversations with people from the United States, Australia, and Africa. This presentation is actually my final project for the course. Each participant was asked to do a project and they come in a variety of forms. Some of them being as simple as family prayer time and outdoor hikes, but there are also people organizing national marches, and forming local Laudato Si’ groups.
3. See, Judge, Act – This course was set up in the catholic social justice organization of see, judge, act. In the See portion, we seek to find information, look at how things affect people and world and consider how we are connected to the situation. In Judge, we determine who is affected, how and why and what our faith says about these kinds of situations. Then in Act, we plan and carry out actions in light of our faith, to promote change in the situation and to build the kingdom of God here on earth.
4. Week 1 – In this first week, Dr. Umunay spoke about the major causes and impacts of climate change. We also heard from Joanna Sustento – a survivor of the impacts of climate change through a major hurricane in the Philippines where she lost many family members.

I feel blessed to have been with my own father this June when he lost his life to a hard-fought cancer battle, but I cannot imagine what it would have been like to watch my father lose his life by being torn from his hold on a tree to be whipped away in the wind. Or to watch waves wash bodies out to sea. It was an incredible story and gave the effects of climate change a face for me.

We were also asked to read a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. One of the things that struck me was the devastation that just a 1.5 degree rise in global temperature would make.

Along with the academic portion, each week we were asked to say a special prayer. This week was Lectio Divina with Creation. (read nature, notice something, speak to God, rest)

1. Week 2 and 3 – These weeks we focused on what our faith says about climate change and learning about how we can commit to personal ecological change both personally and communally. Much of what we learned was also looked at in the new light of the current pandemic, which is creating more space for marginalizing those on the fringes of society.
2. Week 4 and 5 – We were encouraged in week 4 to begin to live Laudato Si’ through our prayer life, lifestyle choices and bold advocacy. And then in week 5 we focused on possible projects that we might do to complete our course.
3. Ecological Conversion – This is my personal story.

While studying at Newman Theological College, I was asked to take a pastoral ministry evaluation. I scored exceptionally low, for a Catholic, in the area of Social Justice. I could explain it away as being a convert to the faith, but in truth I had never honestly considered the subject before and if I had, it was selfishly on that level of how situations and others affected my personal space. This low score was the beginning of my wake-up call.

As part of my degree, I was required to take a course on Catholic Social Justice. It was in this class that I first read Pope Francis’ encyclical, *Laudato Si’.* I have lived in the prairie provinces in Canada most of my life and as most of you know one of the main industries in this area is oil. My husband has been employed in the oil industry for the majority of his employment history. Now in this encyclical, I was being told that we need to immediately look for alternatives to fossil fuels because this industry is very harmful to our world. Going back to how social justice areas affect my personal space, this one hit hard and very close to home.

I can honestly say that at the time I first read Laudato Si’, I was not prepared to do anything about it, but God had different plans.

I accepted an appointment to the role of Spiritual Development on our Diocesan Catholic Women’s League at a time when our national theme became Care for Our Common home. I was responsible for creating and presenting spiritual programs on this subject, which of course meant that I had to reread Pope Francis’ encyclical. Once again environmental change became a central subject for me to contemplate and to share.

In my personal life, I have a sister who actively promotes conscious lifestyle choices that encourage better care for our world. Things like buying locally or ethically sourced items, less use of plastic, greater use of public transit or alternative forms of transportation like bicycles, and advocating for government involvement to develop greener, sustainable energy. Her example has encouraged me to look more closely at the practices I have at home that can be changed to be more environmentally friendly and do them.

My ecological conversion story is not an overnight story. I am constantly being converted one small step at a time and sometimes I revert to old ways. It is similar to my faith conversion story, in that is more of a spiral than a straight line. I struggle with how to voice my concerns about fossil fuels in oil country, yet I keep seeking for the courage and the opportunities to spread the word.

1. Season of Creation – This is an ecumenical website that has been created to honour the season of Creation that runs from Sept. 1 to Oct. 4 this year. Many of the projects that I was speaking about earlier have been listed here along with links to their sites. There are also other resources that we can use for education and prayer services.
2. Chaplet – I found this prayer service on that website, under the resource heading and then the catholic link……

Now I’d like us to take a moment to center ourselves in preparation for prayer.

1. Taize opening centering song – I invite you to close your eyes if you are comfortable and to picture the many beautiful places that you have visited in our world.
2. Opening prayer
3. Prayer verses – Air – is the most essential of all elements, it gives us life. At Pentecost when everyone was gathered the spirit came from heaven with a noise like a violent rushing wind. Think of a time when you were really aware of the air around you…… Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Air. 10 X

Water – we cannot live without quenching our thirst. In Canada, we are blessed to have an abundance of fresh water. Our thirst is quenched by it and it is a part of many of our recreational activities. Water also brings to mind our baptism into the family of God. Think of a time when your thirst was quenched either physically or spiritually by water…… Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water. 10X

Fire – has the ability to destroy as well as to warm and sustain life. In Canada, with our cold climate, we are especially thankful for its warming qualities for ourselves and for our food. It would be difficult to eat frozen food without fire. Think of a time when you drew warmth from a fire…… Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire. 10X

Earth – “The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” (Gen 2:15) Many of my friends find comfort in gardening. They find that they are more connected to God when they have their hands in the soil. How do you connect to the earth?.... Praised be you, my Lord, through sister Mother Earth.” 10 x

1. Let’s take a moment to think about nature and the world around us. What can you do to be a better steward of the Earth. Moment of Silence – 1 minute
2. Closing prayer from the Encyclical Laudato Si’
3. An invitation – this is my invitation to you. If you would like to make this more formal, I invite you to go to the Global Catholic Climate Movement website and sign your name to this pledge.