

# Care for Our Common Home

**POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL "LAUDATO SI" IS A BEAUTIFUL** encouragement to expand our sacramental understanding of Creation and our planet as carriers of the mystery of God's presence and love. Created in God's own image, we are privileged to have a conscious choice in how we relate as stewards with others, both human and non-human, and ultimately with God!

Our own age has made us aware of our alienation from our fellow creatures and from one another. The governments of the nations met in Paris a few years ago in an attempt to take responsibility and action in the face of the damage, massive extinctions, and climate change we humans are inflicting on our common home.

After our own country had already signed and committed ourselves to this Paris Agreement in 2015, we are in the process of unilaterally withdrawing from it. It is now up to us as Christian communities in North America to offer a prophetic response to this evasion of responsibility and relinquishment of our call to stewardship.

During our festivities around the Feast of Saint Benedict we had a public showing of the documentary *From Paris to Pittsburgh* that celebrates how Americans are demanding and developing real solutions in the face of climate change. It begins with president Trump disowning the agreement arguing that he has the interests of Pittsburgh, not Paris, to defend. Immediately the mayor of Pittsburgh responded exposing the inaccuracies of the presidential statement. The documentary encourages a conscious concern among the general public.

For us brothers, our response has emerged through the example of some neighbors and under the guidance of *Same Sun of Vermont, Inc.*, to install an array of photovoltaic solar panels. They are already generating enough electricity to address our needs in the monastery, workshops, guest-houses, and even to share some electric power with others. Similarly, through the offer of substantial economic incentives we have purchased a fully electric car that provides a wonderful option for doing the community's errands. A time of crisis has become an opening for new beginnings, and we look to the future, like Pope Francis, with hope! ■

