



# “Everything is Connected”

(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*)

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By: Salena Ibrahim

*(Assisi, Italy)*

**“There is a communion with God, and  
a communion with the Earth, and a  
communion with God through the  
Earth”**

**-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**





*(Costa Rica)*

I can still feel the wind caressing my cheeks as Your gentle Spirit plays with the tree tops. Nothing can mask the beautiful singing of the native birds, not even the sound of the waterfall. Each distinctive crash of water is like a sudden awakening in my soul. The world is alive with Your creative presence, continually calling me to pay attention. “Deep calls unto deep” you say. Yet here, I feel it.

(Psalm 42:7)



*(Niagara Falls, Canada)*

All around me, people are seeking the best spots to take photos. Many stop in the middle of the street with selfie sticks and exclamations of “Wait! I don’t look good in that picture!” Eyes glued to screens, thumbs uploading content to social media, and ears that don’t seem to hear Your promise. “Turn around!” You say. “Look! Just there!” For a second, I am pulled away from the monotony of adhering to endless social constructs. Ah! How rare it is to see a full rainbow! I am momentarily awed before raising the phone to capture the scene. Your sigh

reverberates down the river.



*(San Francisco, CA)*

During moments of desolation, it is difficult to see Your goodness. Yet, You etch the words: "This is holy ground" into the grooves and ridges that comprise the hills. *This is holy ground.* (Exodus 3:5). "I, your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labours and sufferings of the world" (Teilhard). You remind me to take a deep breath as my heart calls out, "Lord my God, when your love spilled over into creation, you thought of me. I am From Love, Of Love, For Love" (St. Ignatius Loyola, trans. Bergan & Schwan).





*(Chicago, IL)*

There is something to be said about a sunrise. The beauty of it often catches me off guard. I am reminded that the rising of the sun, the dawn of a new day, is no small feat. “Once again, beneath this moving sheet of fire, the living surface of the earth wakes and trembles, and once again begins its fearful travail” (Teilhard). Only the intricate patterns of the universe can work together for our good. Yet, how often do I take this fact for granted? “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue...” (*Laudato*

*Sy*). Your Presence permeates all.



*(St. Louis, MO)*

*Who am I?* A daughter? A friend? Sister, student, teacher? Or am I dependable? Trustworthy? Funny? Like a tree whose roots run deep, I am all of these things and none of them at all. A tree's branches twist and turn in different directions in the same way each unique person is known by many complex traits. But, a tree is only known by one name. *Who am I?* "Look at a tree, a flower, a plant. Let your awareness rest upon it. How still they are, how deeply rooted in 'just being'"

(Eckhart Tolle).

I AM.



*(Loyola, Chicago)*

“Shh! Listen!” Despite the frigid chill of winter, I stop rubbing my hands together and allow my breathing to slow. I gently close my eyes as the swirling thoughts in my mind begin to clear. Oh, how I wish my mind would quiet as quickly as it takes to flip a light switch! It takes several breaths, but I’m eventually able to feel my feet on the frozen, snowy ground. The light breeze plays with my hair. I open my eyes and smile. Your “still small voice” whispers: “That is the sound of silence” (1

Kings 19:11).

How beautiful it is!

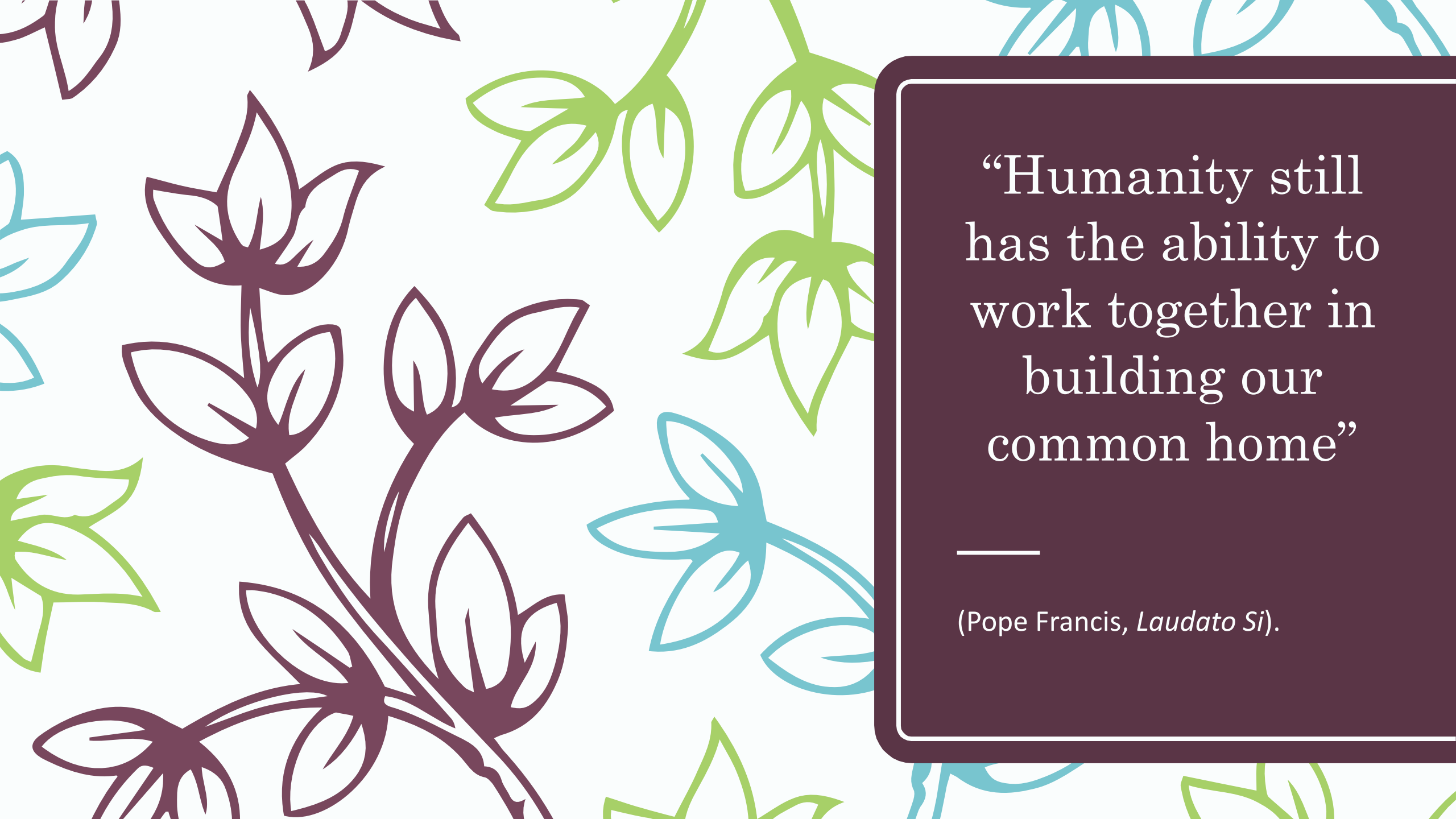


*(Loyola, Chicago)*

“Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire” (Teilhard). You show us the power of being in relationship with all created things. Unless I also learn to search for You in the Other, I can't be in communion with You, nor can I recognize your presence within the earth. Despite our insistence on monopolizing the earth's resources, Your presence continues to surround us at every moment. But, it is

*Your love only that sustains the earth and all in it.*





“Humanity still  
has the ability to  
work together in  
building our  
common home”

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(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*).