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For Immediate Release

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FRANCISCAN FRIARS ENERGIZED BY POPE'S ENCYCLICAL

Holy Name Province grateful for Pope Francis' attention to poverty, environment

NEW YORK — June 18, 2015 — Following the release of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si'," the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province, based in New York City, are grateful and energized by the pope's call for immediate, inclusive dialogue and action to address the related challenges of poverty and global climate change.

The encyclical's title, "Laudato Si'" or "Praised Be," is drawn from a prayer attributed to the friars' founder, St. Francis of Assisi, that praises God as He is witnessed through creation. While the prayer can be seen as a romantic portrayal of creation, it reminds people that the environment and humanity, as a special element of the eco-system, are inherently intertwined.

Pope Francis has stated, "The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation." (Paragraph 48) In the encyclical, the pope analyzes the cause of this common deterioration. He places the root of the decline squarely on the disordered way that too many people hold technology, consumption and individualism as guiding principles. While technology, consumption and individualism are not inherently harmful, when they are lived in an unbalanced way, they lead to the destruction that we witness today.

Pope Francis' solution is to turn to an "integral ecology," a new paradigm of justice which makes clear that "the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts." Solutions must be based on "a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters." This new paradigm requires inclusive and honest dialogue that takes into account all, especially those who are on the margins of society.

When reflecting on the encyclical, Fr. Kevin Mullen, OFM, provincial minister, or CEO, of Holy Name Province said, "Pope Francis' analysis of the current world situation, one marked by great poverty and inequality, and global climate change, gives us a great deal to think about and a way to focus our work. As a Franciscan, I am energized by his use of St. Francis as a model for all of us to follow. The encyclical has put me and my fellow Franciscans on special notice. It compels us to take the pope's message to heart. What an incredible gift from our Holy Father."

He continued, "The call to dialogue and action gives renewed encouragement for the many initiatives being carried out in the ministries of Holy Name Province in support of the poor and the environment.

Our ministries do a lot of good work. This call just highlights the importance of this particular focus and, hopefully, will inspire our friars and lay partners-in-ministry with whom we serve to do even more.”

Russ Testa, director of the Province’s Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, said, “Over the next several years, the discussion and use of the encyclical will play a significant role in the planning and work of Holy Name Province and the ministries that it serves. This is very exciting.”

The pursuit of justice, peace and preserving the integrity of creation has been a longstanding priority for Holy Name Province. Ongoing initiatives include care for creation, care for the poor, climate change, peacemaking and immigration reform.

About Holy Name Province

Holy Name Province is the largest of seven provinces in the United States that belong to the Order of Friars Minor. With ministries in 12 states along the East Coast, its more than 300 Catholic priests and brothers serve in colleges, parishes, urban ministry centers and a wide variety of social ministries, as well as in overseas missions.

The Order, founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi, commemorated its 800th anniversary in 2009. Today, St. Francis, whose feast day is Oct. 4, remains one of the most widely known saints, revered for his affection for nature and care for creation.

Information about Holy Name Province can be found on www.hnp.org. News about the friars and their ministries can be found on the [Facebook page](#) of the Franciscan Friars of Holy Name Province.

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