**Another world is needed. Together it is possible!**

by Andrew Conradi, ofs

**On *Laudato Si’* (*LS*) calling us to action: fifth in a series on the 2016 World Social Forum (WSF) held in Montreal**

After the WSF, the Franciscan delegation reaffirmed their focus on lifestyle, extractivism, climate and agroecology. Each local entity must “think globally, act locally” and decide what to do based on their local situation and priorities. What does that mean for Canadians and especially western Canadians?

Franciscans, following their founder and others, e.g. St Bonaventure, Bartholomew the Englishman and Roger Bacon, believe that understanding nature is inherently good because through it we can come to greater knowledge and love of God. Knowledge leads to understanding but is lifeless unless it leads to an active spirituality; otherwise it is mere curiosity which St Francis condemned.

This was echoed by Pope Francis in *LS* : “Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening in the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. (19)”

Naomi Klein wrote about climate change that: “This changes everything.” Many think that for Catholics, and not just Catholics, *LS* also changes everything. This was re-affirmed in the Franciscan review of the WSF, as Moema Miranda, ofs said: “ *LS* changes everything. We now have a mandate but it is not as well known as it needs to be and working with *LS* makes it necessary to improve the work we’re already doing.” How do we do that?

In *A Church Seeking Justice:**The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada,* The Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops(2015) asks us a number of questions including #27: “How can we effect change and make a difference, as individuals, in families and communities, and in government policy?”

As to the first step, I am reminded of something an indigenous Argentinian Mapuche said recently: “I invite you to emerge from ignorance” (Facundo Francisco Jones Huala). This applies to us all, myself included. We need first to become aware; that is the first step in the *see, judge, act* model of Catholic action.

 *All of us have a duty to make our voice heard and vote*

The Catholic Church has long realized that unrestricted capitalism has lead us into the present critical situation. It does not work and we need a new approach. Obviously then we need to change. This can be a daunting challenge: “A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.” (*LS*, 202)

In *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, the Church told us that "a merely individualistic morality" (30) will not suffice, and that Christians must "give an example by their sense of responsibility and their service of the common good." (75) "Christians who take an active part in present day socio-economic development and fight for justice and charity should be convinced that they can make a great contribution to the prosperity of mankind and to the peace of the world". (72)

The Church has long told us to become involved politically. As the Bishops of Ontario (1998) stated: “Our first concern is to remind all Roman Catholics of their duty to become informed, to vote and to be involved politically, at the very least in the sense of knowing the issues and the policies of the parties with regard to them. … Pope Pius XI spoke of "political charity" as one of the highest forms of the virtue of charity.”

*Fifth in a series of articles by Andrew Conradi, ofs on the 2016 World Social Forum. The first was a general introduction and touched on lifestyle and values, the second with mining, the third with climate change, the fourth with agroecology. The final articles will deal with suggestions on what we can do to help bring about the necessary changes to implement Laudato Si’.*