News
EarthBeat



The skyline of Omaha, Neb., is pictured in a file photo at dusk. Archbishop George J. Lucas of Omaha hosted a diverse group of leaders from government, business, education, nonprofit, agriculture and religious organizations from across northeast Nebraska for a day of reflection Aug. 17, 2024, on how to care for our common home. (OSV News/franckreporter)

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Omaha, Neb. — August 29, 2024
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Archbishop George J. Lucas of Omaha hosted a diverse group of leaders from government, business, education, nonprofit, agriculture and religious organizations from across northeast Nebraska for a day of reflection on how to care for our common home.

The leaders discussed the environmental challenges they face in their communities and the world at large. They also explored ways to collaborate to address those challenges.

The Aug. 17 meeting was inspired by Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*', On Care for Our Common Home, which focuses on care for the natural environment and all people, as well as broader questions of the relationship between God, humans and the Earth.

"In recent years Pope Francis has built on decades of church teaching and expressed concern for our common home in his documents *Laudato Si*' and *Laudate Deum*'" Lucas said. "The Holy Father has appealed for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet, which addresses the urgent environmental threats our world is facing."

The Archdiocese of Omaha is one of more than 20 dioceses throughout the United States developing an action plan on the Laudato Si' Action Platform — laudatosiactionplatform.org — a free initiative of the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. This shared space creates a bold and active response to the ecological crisis. It equips individuals, parishes, educational institutions, health care organizations and others to establish a flexible action plan to care for the environment and our world.

In *Laudato Si*', Francis invites individuals and organizations to discover what they can do to build a better future together. The local leaders hosted by Lucas reflected on how their values connect with the goals of *Laudato Si*' and made plans for concrete action in the next year.

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At the heart of those plans is a commitment to "hearing the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor," said Andy Dejka, a member of the archdiocese's Parish Support Team who helped to organize the day of reflection.

"As an archdiocese, we are committed to responding to the cry of the Earth and the poor," Dejka told the Catholic Voice, Omaha's archdiocesan news outlet. "It aligns with our vision and priorities, especially our commitment to living mercy."

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation will be celebrated Sept. 1. It marks the start of the ecumenical Season of Creation, which concludes Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology.

The theme for 2024 is "Hope and Act with Creation," based on St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (8:19-25), in which the apostle considers the destiny of the created world as it shares in the penalty of corruption brought about by sin, concluding that creation will share in the benefits of redemption and future glory that comprise the ultimate liberation of God's people.

This story appears in the **Laudato Si' Action Platform** feature series. View the full series.