

'Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor'  
Sirach 28:7

In August, I took an on-line course to become a Laudato Si animator.

"Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home" is Pope Francis' encyclical [teaching document] on the urgency of caring for creation. One of the many fine speakers was Fr. Jostrum Isaac Kureethdam from the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. Getting down to biblical basics, he said that stewardship of the earthly garden, its' keeping, is the first primary task entrusted to Adam. Then, he repeated the same sentiment three times to really sink in: "Caring for our common home is our original vocation; it is the first commandment given to humanity; it is our original job description in the Bible." He then went on to note the story of Cain killing his brother, Abel, and that when God asks Cain where his brother is, Cain replies, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Fr. Kureethdam states that keeping and keeper is the same word and that "in caring for our common home and for the weaker members of our common household, we are imitating God's own loving, tender care" and that "we will be called into account by the Creator for what has been entrusted to our care." How are we doing at our original jobs?

Pope Francis states in Laudato Si that "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience"

(217). In this document, Pope Francis asks us to hear the cry of the earth AND the cry of the poor and we must ask ourselves, "How have I kept the earth and how have I been a keeper of my fellow human being's well-being?" 'Hate not your neighbor," Sirach states. And that neighbor is Sister, Mother Earth, as well as our human sister and brother.