



Loyola Marymount University

The Transformative Path of Creation Care

Rooted in our Jesuit and Marymount traditions, Loyola Marymount University (LMU) strives to be a place where faith does justice, creativity is boundless, and compassion is cultivated. For over a century, we've empowered leaders in their pursuit to secure a brighter world for all. In light of today's ecological crisis, we are asked to continue these pursuits with a new lens; one that heeds Pope Francis's call for transformative action and comprehensive 'ecological conversion' in response to the cries of the earth and of the poor (Laudato Si' §93, §139, §220). Central to this call for transformation is the cultivation of integral ecology. Integral ecology recognizes that our interactions with the environment are woven into the fabric of economic, political, social, cultural, and ethical dimensions. In the words of Pope Francis, "Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live" (§139).

LMU's particular contributions to the solution:

Integral education. Every undergraduate in LMU's more than 50 majors/areas of study participate in a shared core curriculum, which emphasizes the formation of students as whole persons, integrated in thinking, feeling, and action. Regardless of major or degree, students study ethical theories and moral development, through which they come to recognize the value of acting rightly and using knowledge mindfully in the promotion of justice. Rooted in our Jesuit and Marymount traditions, LMU's curriculum seeks to foster 'a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness' for all creation (§220).

Restorative Operations. LMU has had a commitment to operational sustainability since 1990, with a number of environmental initiatives that would later evolve into a sustainability office. Both offices for Sustainability and the University Treasurer at LMU dedicate resources to innovation in environmental operations, endowment investment, sourcing, technology and business solutions that further the goals of integral ecology. In this period of institutional discernment, we are poised to take the next step towards a truly restorative model of operations animated by sound ecological virtues that seeks the common good of all creation (§202-215).

Collaborative action. It cannot be emphasized enough how everything [in creation] is interconnected (§138). LMU understands its commitment to integral ecology as a requirement of its mission. Thus, institutional coordination of LSAP rests in the Office of the President, under the purview of the Vice President for Mission and Ministry. This prevents the "silo effect" in which the work of integral ecology is taken up by a singular unit and becomes "siloed" from other sectors of the university, a common problem in most institutions of higher learning.

Community engagement. As Laudato Si' reminds us, lasting solutions can only be found in community networks and not simply in the sum of individual good deeds (§219). LMU has a number of units dedicated to research, learning and community engagement in integral ecology in the humanities, arts, and sciences. These various centers, clinics, and programs provide hours of research, undergraduate and postgraduate education, and hours of service to and partnership with the greater community. We are uniquely positioned as one of the largest metropolitan regions and the largest archdiocese in the United States, which provides us an arena to respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, modeling real and substantive solutions for ecological renewal.