

LAUDATO SI
A SUMMARY

These pages follow *laudato si* step by step and help give an initial idea of overall content. The

Encyclical, some principal concepts are continually taken up and enriched:

- the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet,
- the conviction that everything in the world is connected,
- the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology,
- the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress,
- the value proper to each creature,
- the human meaning of ecology,
- the need for forthright and honest debate,
- the serious responsibility of international and local public
- the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new life style (16).

The dialogue that Pope Francis proposes as a method for addressing and resolving the environmental problems is followed throughout the Encyclical. It refers to contributions by philosophers and theologians, not only Catholic but also Orthodox (the already cited Patriarch Bartholomew) and Protestant (the French thinker

- III. LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY [32-42]
- IV. DECLINE IN THE QUALITY OF HUMAN LIFE AND THE BREAKDOWN OF SOCIETY [43 -47]
- V. GLOBAL INEQUALITY [48 -52]
- VI. WEAK RESPONSES [53-59]
- VII. A VARIETY OF OPINIONS [60 -61]

Pollution, waste and the throwaway culture Pollution affects the daily life of people with serious consequences to their health, so much so that it causes millions of premature deaths (20). While earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of (21). At the root of this situation we find the throwaway culture, which we have to oppose by introducing models of production based on reuse and recycling and limiting the use of non-renewable resources. Unfortunately, only limited progress has been made in this regard (22).

Climate as a common good Climate change is a global problem with serious implications, environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods (23). Climate changes afflict entire populations and are among the causes of migration movements, but many of those who possess more resources and economic or political power seem mostly to be concerned with masking the problems or concealing their symptoms (24). At the same time our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded (25). To preserve the climate represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our (25).

The issue of water Entire populations, and especially children, get sick and die because of contaminated water, while aquifers continue to be polluted by discharges from factories and cities. The Pope clearly states that access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights (30). To deprive the poor of access to water means they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity (30).

Loss of biodiversity Extinction of plant and animal species caused by humanity changes the ecosystem and future consequences cannot be predicted. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever (33). The diverse species are not just an exploitable resource: they have a value in and of themselves, which is not in function of human beings. All creatures are connected, for all of us, as living creatures, are dependent on one another (34). The care of richly diverse areas is necessary for ensuring the equilibrium of the ecosystem and therefore of life. Often transnational economic interests obstruct this protection (38).

Decline in the quality of human life and the breakdown of society The current model of development adversely affects the quality of life of most of humanity, showing that the growth of the past two centuries has not always led to integral development (46). Many cities are huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water (44), becoming unlivable from a health point of view, while contact with nature is limited, except for areas reserved for a privileged few (45).

Global inequality: The deterioration of the environment and of society affect the most vulnerable people on the planet (48), the greater part of the world population. In international economic political debates, they are considered merely as collateral damage (49). Instead a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (49). The solution is not reducing the birth rate, but countering extreme and selective consumerism of a small part of the world population (50).

Weak responses. Aware of major differences over these issues Pope Francis shows himself to be deeply affected by the weak responses in the face of the tragedies of many people and populations. Even though there is no lack of positive examples (58), there is complacency and a cheerful wrecklessness (59). Culture and adequate leadership are lacking as well as the willingness to change life style, production and consumption (59), while urging establishment of a legal framework which ... can ensure the protection of ecosystems (58).

II. THE GOSPEL OF CREATION (62 - 100)

To face the problems illustrated in the previous chapter, Pope Francis returns to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The Biblical accounts offer a comprehensive view that expresses the tremendous responsibility (90) of humankind for creation, the intimate connection among all creatures and the fact that the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone (95).

- I. THE LIGHT OFFERED BY FAITH [63 -64]
- II. THE WISDOM OF THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS [65 -75]
- III. THE MYSTERY OF THE UNIVERSE [76 -83]
- IV. THE MESSAGE OF EACH CREATURE IN THE HARMONY OF CREATION [84 -88]
- V. A UNIVERSAL COMMUNION [89 -92]
- VI. THE COMMON DESTINATION OF GOODS [93 -95]
- VII. THE GAZE OF JESUS [96-100]

1. The light offered by faith The complexity of the ecological crisis calls for a multicultural and multidisciplinary dialogue that includes spirituality and religion. Faith offers a simple motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters (64); responsibility for nature is part of Christian faith.

2. The wisdom of the biblical accounts the Bible, the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected (73). The story of creation is key for reflecting on the relationship between human beings and other creatures and how sin breaks the equilibrium of creation in its entirety. These accounts suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within. This rupture is sin (66).

The earth is a gift, not a possession; it was given to us to administer, not to destroy. Hence, we must respect the laws of nature, as all of creation has its own goodness. The psalms with their invitation to praise the Creator prayerfully remind us of this. A spirituality which fails to recognize Almighty God as Creator will provide no support as we end up worshipping other powers, usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample his creation underfoot (75).

we can say that alongside revelation properly called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night (65). Throughout the universe and in its complementarity, the inexhaustible richness of God is expressed; it is the place of his presence and it invites us to adoration.

5. A universal communion. Called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect

3. The crisis and effects of modern anthropocentrism
Putting technical reasoning above reality,
modern anthropocentrism no longer recognizes nature as

- III. ECOLOGY OF DAILY LIFE [147 -155]
- IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE COMMON GOOD [156 -158]
- V.

- I. DIALOGUE ON THE ENVIRONMENT
IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY [164 -175]
- II.

dialogue among the sciences helps to overcome disciplinary isolation. An open and respectful dialogue is also needed between the various ecological movements. Dialogue requires patience, self-discipline and generosity.

VI. ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SPIRITUALITY (202 - 246)

The final chapter goes to the heart of ecological conversion, which the Encyclical invites everyone. The roots of the cultural crisis are deep and it is not easy to reshape habits and behaviour. Education and training are key. Change is impossible without motivation and a process of education (15). All educational sectors are involved, primarily school, in families, in the media, in catechesis (213).

- I. TOWARDS A NEW LIFESTYLE [203 -208]
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1. Towards a new lifestyle Despite practical relativiss6.0847(gi)17.8762(ca)-12.pTm [(I)8.9388 Tm [(Tov

good by preserving the natural and urban environments.

6. Sacramental signs and the celebration of: We encounter God not only in intimacy, but also in the contemplation of creation which bears a sign of his mystery. The Sacraments show, in a privileged way how nature was assumed by God. Christianity does not reject matter and body, but fully values them. In particular, the Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation (236).

7. The Trinity and relationships between creatures: For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion, suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation (239). The human person is also called to assume the trinitarian dynamism, going out of oneself in communion with God, with others and with all creatures (240).

8. Queen of all creation: Mary, who cares for Jesus, now lives with him and is Mother and Queen of all creation. All creatures sing of her fairness (241). At her side, Joseph appears in the Gospel as a just man and worker, full of the tenderness of one who is truly strong. Both can teach and motivate us to protect this world that God has given us.

9. Beyond the sun: In the end we find ourselves before the infinite beauty of God. Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all (243). Our struggles and concerns do not take away the joy of hope, because the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present (245) and his love always compels us to search for new ways to raise us to him.

At the conclusion of this lengthy reflection which has been both joyful and troubling (246), the Holy Father proposes that we offer two prayers: A prayer for our earth and a Christian prayer in union with creation (246).

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A prayer for our earth

A Christian prayer in union with creation