



ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

LAUDATO SI'

“Praise be to you, my Lord.”

This series of bulletin inserts will focus on the SUNDAY SCRIPTURES in light of LAUDATO SI'

This “General Summary” of Laudato Si’ concludes the SUMMERTIME BULLETIN INSERT SERIES. Each of the twelve inserts continues to be available on the Laudato Si’ page on the parish website: blessedtrinitymissoula.org

Pope Francis’ Encyclical Laudato Si (“Praise be to you”) is a worldwide wake up call to help humanity understand the destruction that people are rendering to the environment and our fellow human beings. While addressing the environment directly, the document’s scope is broader in many ways as it looks at not only humanity’s effect on the environment, but also the many philosophical, theological, and cultural causes that threaten humanity’s relationships to nature and to each other in various circumstances. This document is in many ways the epitome of Pope Francis. It is an unexpected topic. It presents Gospel truths. And, it provides a challenge for every believer (and non-believers too). From the outset, Pope Francis states the goal of the document: “In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home” (#3). Normally, papal documents are addressed to the bishops of the Church or the lay faithful. But, similar to Pope Saint John XXIII’s *Pacem in Terris*, Pope Francis address his message to all people. The goal of the dialogue: “I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (#14). The above is at the heart of the document, but Pope Francis also has a very striking call to conversion for those in the Church as well.

“The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. 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)



CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND QUOTES

CHAPTER ONE – WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR COMMON HOME

Goal: “Theological and philosophical reflections on the situation of humanity and the world can sound tiresome and abstract, unless they are grounded in a fresh analysis of our present situation, which is in many ways unprecedented in the history of humanity. So, before considering how faith brings new incentives and requirements with regard to the world of which we are a part, I will briefly turn to what is happening to our common home” (#17).

Message: “But a sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly. We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty with something which we have created ourselves” (#34).

CHAPTER TWO – THE GOSPEL OF CREATION



Goal: “Why should this document, addressed to all people of good will, include a chapter dealing with the convictions of believers? I am well aware that in the areas of politics and philosophy there are those who firmly reject the idea of a Creator, or consider it irrelevant... Nonetheless, science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both” (#62).

Message: “We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us.... Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in

God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations” (#67)

CHAPTER THREE – THE HUMAN ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Goal: “It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us. Should we not pause and consider this? At this stage, I propose that we focus on the dominant technocratic (efficiency, production, and wealth accumulation) paradigm and the place of human beings and of human action in the world” (#101).



Message: “It can be said that many problems of today’s world stem from the tendency, at times unconscious, to make the method and aims of science and technology an epistemological paradigm which shapes the lives of individuals and the workings of society. The effects of imposing this model on reality as a whole, human and social, are seen in the deterioration of the environment, but this is just one sign of a reductionism which affects every aspect of human and social life. We have to accept that technological products are not neutral, for they create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups” (#107).

CHAPTER FOUR – INTEGRAL ECOLOGY



Goal: “Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions” (#137).

Message: “We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision. Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment” (#141).

CHAPTER FIVE – LINES OF APPROACH AND ACTION

Goal: “So far I have attempted to take stock of our present situation, pointing to the cracks in the planet that we inhabit as well as to the profoundly human causes of environmental degradation. Although the contemplation of this reality in itself has already shown the need for a change of direction and other courses of action, now we shall try to outline the major paths of dialogue which can help us escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us” (#163).

Message: “Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan. Yet the same ingenuity which has brought about enormous technological progress has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries.” (#164)

CHAPTER SIX – ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Goal: “Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal” (#202).

Message: “In calling to mind the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, we come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change” (#218).

Source: catholicclimatemovement.global

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts of those
who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH is from Pope Francis encyclical, *Laudato Si'*,
and is a call for greater care of the Earth and of each other.



FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO blessedtrinitymissoula.org (Click on the LAUDATO Si page). The complete text of the encyclical is available there, as well as other information and videos.

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[Laudato Si](#) page >>>

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and the Common
Good.

