

Laudato Si'





LAUDATO SI'

Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical "On Care for Our Common Home"

An encyclical – an open letter by the Pope addressed to the entire world on a matter of serious concern

This concern is **most** serious: the devastation of the environment, threatening all life on earth.



LAUDATO SI

Encyclicals are usually referred to by their opening Latin words.

This one is different, by design:

“Laudato Si’, mi’ Signore” – “Praised be you, my Lord”

The opening words are in *Italian*, intentionally quoting St. Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of the Sun*, which praises God for the wonders of creation.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER
LAUDATO SI'
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS
ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME



1. "*LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore*" – "Praise be to you, my Lord". In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. "Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs".^[1]

2. This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (*Rom* 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. *Gen* 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.

Nothing in this world is indifferent to us

3. More than fifty years ago, with the world teetering on the brink of nuclear crisis, [Pope Saint John XXIII](#) wrote an [Encyclical](#) which not only rejected war but offered a proposal for peace. He addressed his message [Pacem in Terris](#) to the entire "Catholic world" and indeed "to all men and women of good will". Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet. In my Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium](#), I wrote to all the members of the Church with the aim of encouraging ongoing missionary renewal. In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.



THEO-logic

Original text in Umbrian dialect:

Altissimu, omnipotente bon Signore,
Tue so le laude, la gloria e l'honore et onne benedictione.

Ad Te solo, Altissimo, se konfano,
et nullu homo ène dignu te mentouare.

Laudato sie, mi Signore cum tucte le Tue creature,
spetialmente messor lo frate Sole,
lo qual è iorno, et allumini noi per lui.
Et ellu è bellu e radiante cum grande splendore:
de Te, Altissimo, porta significatione.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora Luna e le stelle:
in celu l'ài formate clarite et pretiose et belle.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per frate Uento
et per aere et nubilo et sereno et onne tempo,
per lo quale, a le Tue creature dàì sustentamento.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sor'Acqua,
la quale è multo utile et humile et pretiosa et casta.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per frate Focu,
per lo quale ennallumini la nocte:
ed ello è bello et iucundo et robustoso et forte.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per sora nostra matre Terra,
la quale ne sustenta et gouerna,
et produce diuersi fructi con coloriti fior et herba.

Laudato si, mi Signore, per quelli ke perdonano per lo Tuo amore

English Translation:

Most High, all powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, the honour, and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no man is worthy to mention Your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun,
who brings the day; and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,
in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather through which
You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you light the night and he is beautiful
and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains us and governs us and who produces
varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

EVERYTHING IS RELATED

Everything is brother and sister, because everything is deeply RELATED in God's plan of goodness.

RELATEDNESS is a primary theme of Laudato Si


Pope Francis: "Everything is connected."



Deeply serious ethical issue: not only are the earth and its creatures being destroyed, but human beings themselves are critically at risk if the earth on which they depend for life is damaged beyond repair. The poor are affected more seriously by ecological damage because they do not have the resources to avoid the consequences. Thus, care of the earth is not only an eco-justice issue, but a social justice issue. The Pope urges everyone to work together to address the problems, because **EVERYONE** has a stake in what happens to the earth!



“Nothing in this world
is indifferent to us.”



“We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (14).

Chapter One


What Is Happening to Our Common Home

- Pollution: Toxic substances, toxic waste; a “throwaway culture”
- Climate Change: Climate is a common good, but is threatened by global warming
- Depletion of natural resources, especially water
- Water: Universal human right
- Loss of Biodiversity: All creatures and ecosystems are interrelated
- Decline in Quality of Human Life and Breakdown of Society: The systems needed for our survival are imperiled.
- Global Inequality: The excluded are the majority of the world’s population



We “must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (49).





Chapter Two

The Gospel of Creation

The Wisdom of the Biblical Accounts:
The Goodness of Creation
The Dignity of the Human Person
Responsibility to Care for
Creation, use its gifts wisely

“Other living beings have a value of their own in God’s eyes” (69).

The Mystery of the Universe

The love of God at the heart of all things is so immense, so awesome, so astounding, that we cannot wrap our minds around it.

- All things are INTENTIONALLY created by God, out of goodness and love
- Everything serves a purpose in God's plan – and on the most fundamental level, that purpose is to be LOVED BY GOD.
- All things are necessarily related in complex webs of interconnection.
- “In this universe, shaped by open and intercommunicating systems, we can discern countless forms of relationship and participation” (79).



“The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator” (83).





The Message of Each Creature in the Harmony of Creation: “Each creature has its own purpose” and is indwelt by the Spirit of Life.

A Universal Communion: Our relation to God is lived out through our relation to the creation that God loves, particularly our human sisters and brothers.

The Common Destination of Goods: In spite of “enormous inequalities,” “the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone. . . . since God created the world for everyone” (93).



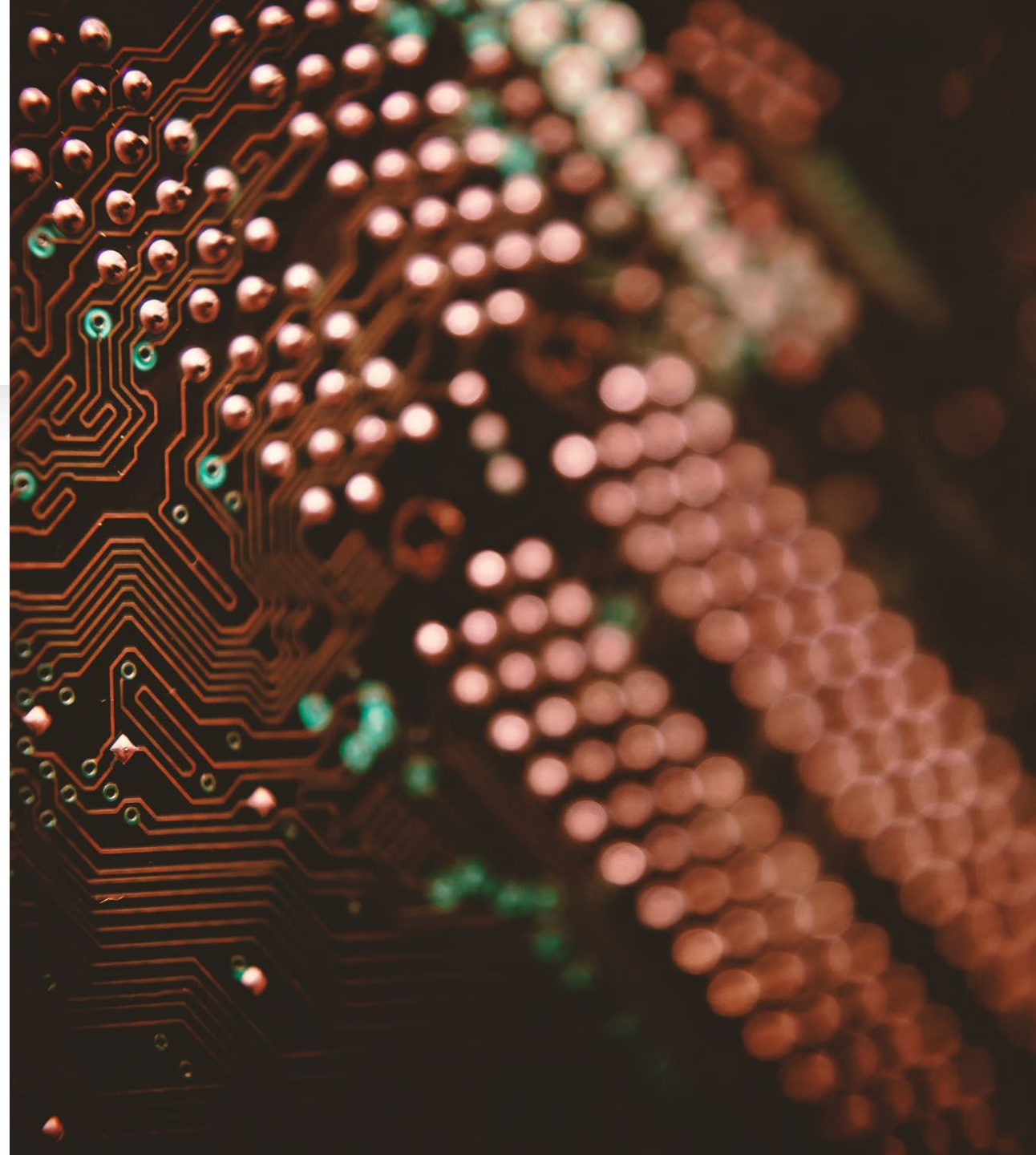
The Gaze of Jesus

All of creation itself is bound up with the mystery Christ from its very beginning. All things have been created through and for Christ (Col 1:16), implying that all creation is ordered toward him. In the Incarnation, the Second Person of the Trinity entered fully into the created world, taking everything that it means to be part of that world to himself – even death. His work continues in this world as he draws all things into reconciliation and union (Col) in preparation for handing them over to his Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Cor 15).

Chapter Three

The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis

- **Technology: Creativity and Power:** Science and technology bring many benefits, but their power has deadly potential when not used for good.
- **The Globalization of the Technocratic Paradigm:** Seeing technology only as a tool of human control and power, to be used for our own gratification and selfish purposes.
- **The Crisis and Effects of Modern Anthropocentrism:** The assumption that humans are the center, and everything revolves around us.



Anthropocentrism

“When human beings place themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative. Hence we should not be surprised to find, in conjunction with the omnipresent technocratic paradigm and the cult of unlimited human power, the rise of a relativism which sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one’s own immediate interests” (122). This affects our treatment not only of the environment, but also of other people.

We are called to work toward an economy that serves people, that provides for the rights of others, including their right to work and make a living. We need to use new technologies ethically, in ways that reverence life and God's creation.





Chapter Four

Integral Ecology

“Everything is closely interrelated” (137).

All dimensions of our life in this world need to work together, because everything affects everything else.

Environmental, Economic and Social Ecology: We need to address ALL the interacting systems by which our world functions; that is, we cannot address ecological issues without also attending to economic and social ones. “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature” (139).



Integral Ecology

Cultural Ecology: The rich diversity of human cultures, particularly indigenous ones, is also under threat from a globalized consumeristic exploitation of the world's natural resources. Along with their livelihoods, people's cultures and ways of life are erased when their lands are destroyed.

Integral Ecology

Ecology of Daily Life: The settings in which we live affect our well-being and that of other creatures. (Housing, transportation, urban and rural life)

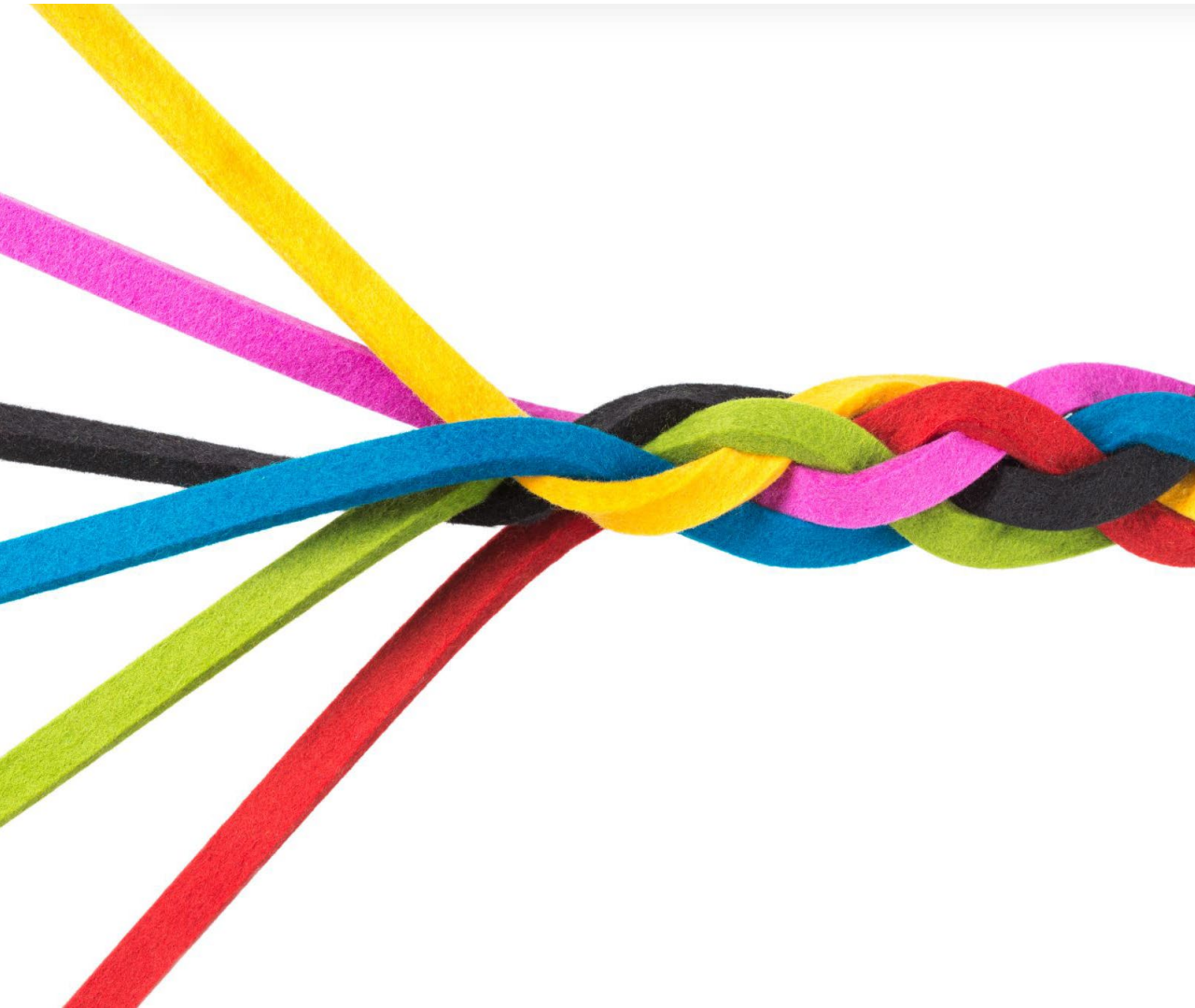
Principle of the Common Good: All persons and all social institutions are responsible for working toward the conditions necessary for everyone to achieve basic human fulfillment.

Justice between the Generations: Care for the Common Good includes those who will come after us – the world belongs to them, too. Its gifts are on loan to us.



Chapter Five

Lines of Approach and Action



Action is needed, requiring
working together, calling for:

DIALOGUE

Not just talking, but **LISTENING**

Enacting Respect

Dialogue

- Dialogue in the International Community: A global crisis
- Dialogue for New National and Local Policies
- Dialogue and Transparency in Decision Making
- Politics and Economy in Dialogue for Human Fulfillment
- Religions in Dialogue with Science



Chapter Six

Ecological Education and Spirituality

- Towards a New Lifestyle: Intentional stepping back from consumer mentality and choosing modest lifestyles that care for our relationships with others and the earth
- Educating for the Covenant between Humanity and the Environment: Building up the world one relationship at a time
- Ecological Conversion: fostering awareness of our universal communion with all beings
- Joy and Peace: A sober lifestyle lived in awareness and gratitude
- Civic and Political Love: Living our shared responsibility for others





Ecological Spirituality

- Sacramental Signs and the Celebration of Rest: Everything reflects God back to us
- Sacraments: mediate God – open up the experience of the meaning of all things in the love of God
- Eucharist: Joining of God with creation. “Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love . . . The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God’s hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration” (236).
- Sunday: stepping back; appreciating; healing relationships

Ecological Spirituality

The Trinity and the Relationship between Creatures: God's reality is relational: a union of loving Persons in relation with one another

All things exist relationally

Human beings, in the image of God, are essentially relational and essentially in relation with God, other persons, the world

Everything is in relationship with everything else, including God





Ecological Spirituality

The trinitarian dynamism was imprinted by God in human beings when they were created. “The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures” (240).



Ecological Spirituality

Beyond the Sun: Together with all creation we are on a journey “towards our common home in heaven” (243), meanwhile having been entrusted with caring for our home here and now.

“In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. Praise be to him!” (245).