

The Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*

ON CARE FOR OUR
COMMON
HOME



POPE FRANCIS

The flavour of *Laudato Si*

- *Laudato Si* is St Francis' hymn to God as manifest through God's Creation, with all its abundance and diversity.
- The encyclical nevertheless makes a case to which all people can respond, recognising contribution of science and technology
- So *Laudato Si* is addressed to all people of good will – not just Christians

'Our common home'

- But Christian perception should be different - deeper.

Some Key Themes

- Not only about the environment, also about social justice.
- Poor and most vulnerable people are the most affected by environmental degradation.
- So: there is *one complex crisis both environmental and social*.
- *Integrated ecology* – everything connects. We must hear:
both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (49)

*Human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships:
with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself. (LS 66)*

- We live by a throwaway culture of unnecessary material consumption
- The *'myth of progress'*

Theology of *Laudato Si*: God's love for Creation

'God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good'
(Gen 1:31)

- As Christians we should think of the created world as a gift - contrasts with seeing 'nature' as a system.
- Creation is awesome – in its abundance and its diversity, from the millions of stars in the cosmos, to the 400,00 species of beetles!

Hope

- Hope – one of the three cardinal virtues. Not the same as optimism
- Hope is joyful!
- Ultimately based on God's and Jesus' promises – to be with us until the end of time.

Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are Anger and Courage. Anger at the way things are and Courage to see that they do not remain as they are. (Augustine of Hippo)

Christianity is at heart, uniquely among religions, a practice of constant indignation.... This is the protest of God against death and sin, the protest of the Cross. Carmody Grey, The Tablet March 2017

How should we respond?

- We cannot rely on purely technical solutions to environmental degradation – *‘technocratic paradigm’*.

Today, in view of the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life. (189)

- *A new lifestyle (203) – less consumerist, simpler*
Together with a capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life. (225)
- Small individual acts are worthwhile:
They benefit society, often unbeknown to us, for they call forth a goodness which, albeit unseen, inevitably tends to spread. (212)

Anger and Courage



Greta Thunberg, a fifteen year old Swedish schoolgirl, who has Asperges syndrome, started protesting last summer outside the Swedish Parliament.

'Let us sing as we go'

*In the meantime we come together to take charge of this home which has been entrusted to us, knowing that all the good which exists here will be taken up into the heavenly feast. In union with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for 'if the world has a beginning and if it has been created, we must enquire who gave it this beginning, and who was its Creator' (Basil the Great). Let us sing as we go. **May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. (244)***



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<https://catholic.lu/outreach/laudato-si-group/>

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