



This document highlights elements of *Laudato Si*, or Praised Be, Pope Francis's encyclical letter on ecology. Following are excerpts from the encyclical, arranged by topic. Citations are included for your reference.

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## **The Problem**

The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor (2)

The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (21)

Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. (53)

Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. The pace of consumption, waste and environmental change has so stretched the planet's capacity that our contemporary lifestyle, unsustainable as it is, can only precipitate catastrophes, such as those which even now periodically occur in different areas of the world. (161)

## **Policy and Political Leadership**

There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. (26)

International negotiations cannot make significant progress due to positions taken by countries which place their national interests above the global common good. Those who will have to suffer the consequences of what we are trying to hide will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility. (169)

True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. (178)

## **Reality of the Problem and Necessity to Act**

Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. (14)



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)

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. (217)

## **Your Action Matters**

Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. (13)

Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded. (13)

Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening in the world into our own personal suffering and thus discover what each of us can do about it. (19)

Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most. (169)

Truly, much can be done! (180)

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)

## **Climate Change**

The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. (23)

A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming



or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it. (23)

If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. (24)

Climate change is a global problem with serious implications, environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. (25)

The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming. (51)

## **Acting More Sustainably**

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. (211)

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions (211)

Along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society. (231)

## **The Faith Perspective**

Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures. (68)

Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by a love which calls us together into universal communion. (76)



Creation is of the order of love. (77)

A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing, and limiting our power. (78)

The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains – everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (84)

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. (89)

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (92)

Encountering God does not mean fleeing from this world or turning our back on nature. (235)

## **Ecology and Social Justice**

We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it 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)

Every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged. (93)

We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the underprivileged, and at the same time protecting nature. (139)

## **Consumerism**

The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. (204)



Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. (205)

Many people know that our current progress and the mere amassing of things and pleasures are not enough to give meaning and joy to the human heart, yet they feel unable to give up what the market sets before them. (209)

### **Sustainable Business**

The lessons of the global financial crisis have not been assimilated, and we are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration. (109)

The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very nature of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is shown about whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment; as long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. In a word, businesses profit by calculating and paying only a fraction of the costs involved. (195)

### **Future Generations**

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)

Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us. (159)