INTERDICASTERIAL WORKING GROUP
OF THE HOLY SEE ON INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

JOURNEYING TOWARDS CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

Five Years After *Laudato Si'*

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Five Years after *Laudato Si'*

Celebration of the Fifth Anniversary
of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*

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"The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change… It is my hope that this Encyclical Letter… can help us to acknowledge the appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge we face".

POPE FRANCIS, *Laudato Si'*, 13, 15

The present text is being published on 31 May 2020, the Solemnity of Pentecost, the liturgical feast on which, five years earlier, on 24 May 2015, the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of the Holy Father Pope Francis on care for our common home was published.

The present document was prepared by institutions belonging to the Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology, established in 2015 for the promotion and implementation of integral ecology. The Working Group brings together the institutions associated with the Holy See that are most involved in this area, as well as several Episcopal Conferences and Catholic organizations which contributed significantly to the preparation of the present text.

INTRODUCTION

"The time is running out" (*1 Cor* 7:29). This exhortation addressed by the Apostle Paul to the inhabitants of Corinth, today sounds as urgent as ever.

The world has been shaken by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a virus that has taken tens of thousands of victims and is changing our lifestyle by endangering the economic systems of our society. The health emergency, and the loneliness and isolation resulting from the measures adopted to prevent the spread of this infection, have suddenly led us all to realize how fragile we are as human creatures and to discover or rediscover what is really essential in our lives. Pope Francis, during the extraordinary prayer service held in Saint Peter's Square on 27 March 2020 to implore the end of the pandemic, urged us "to seize this time of trial as *a time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement [Lord], but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives." [1]

[1] FRANCIS, *Meditation during the Extraordinary Prayer Service in Time of Epidemic,* 27 March 2020.

In this difficult time, which will definitively change the society in which we live, we are called to care for one another, to avoid shielding ourselves in selfishness, to promote and defend human life from conception until its natural end, to offer adequate medical care for all, to foster international solidarity, to combat the throwaway culture, to study, to build together new and fairer economic and financial systems, and to commit ourselves to dialogue, peace, rejection of violence and war. The crisis we are experiencing shows the undeniable importance, some five years after its publication, of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (LS), which Pope Francis wrote on *care for our common home,* teaching us how everything is connected.

We can no longer be indifferent to the sufferings of the poorest and to the exploitation of our common home. This is a point clearly made in the Encyclical: "These situations have caused sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it, and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness" (LS 53). An exciting mission!

In this context, the so-called *ecological crisis* becomes a propitious moment for *conversion* and for *concrete decisions that can no longer be postponed.* It summons us to an interdisciplinary and operational

dialogue at every level, from the local to the international. It calls for an educational process aimed at an integral formation of conscience.

At the root of the ecological crisis there is in fact a profound moral and cultural crisis affecting our societies, characterized by an exaggerated individualistic anthropocentrism that has led, among other factors, to altering the relationship between human beings and nature, with consequences now apparent to all: "We have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste… we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick".[2] We have come to realize that "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (LS 139) that is exemplified in the *throwaway culture* repeatedly denounced in the magisterium of Pope Francis.

It must, however, be noted that, "we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice towards coming generations" (LS 53).

[2] *Ibid.*

In order to seriously confront the root causes of this crisis, we need a real *"change of course"* based on the awareness that everything is intimately related, as well as a *"spiritual conversion"* (cf. LS 202-221) capable of leading to a new consciousness of our relationship with ourselves, with others, with society, with creation and with God.

Ecological conversion requires people to let "the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them" (LS 217); it is a process with roots that are transcendent even before being social or political. "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" (LS 217). Ecological conversion is a real conversion to Christ which takes place when we interpret the events of our time in the light of the Gospel and of the encounter with Jesus.

In recent years, there have been many situations in which Christians have chosen to defend our common home, even to the point of laying down their lives. Women and men, religious and lay, they realized that the defence of creation is an indispensable requirement of Christian life, even before this became a conviction shared by the majority of believers.

The idea that *"everything is connected"* (LS 91; 240) is inherent in the guiding principle of the Encyclical: that of an *integral ecology,* understood as a complex and multidimensional reality calling for long-

term vision.[3] Integral ecology is not just about the environment; it involves an integral vision of life that can inspire better policies, indicators, research and development processes and criteria for evaluation, while avoiding distorted concepts of development and growth. For the risk of reductionism is always present.

By proposing an integral ecology, *the Pope wishes to point to a new vision of the world*.[4] A vision

[3] The statement "everything is connected" can be traced back to the Fathers of the Church and to spiritual teachers such as Saint Irenaeus, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Hildegard of Bingen and Saint Bonaventure; the concept has biblical, liturgical, dogmatic, anthropological and moral foundations that offer various points of spiritual and pastoral conversion. In the light of the New Testament, there is only one bond connecting everything, and that is love. While ecology appeals to science, its full meaning can be understood only in the light of charity, that is, the total gift that Christ makes of his own life and the communion that derives from it. For believers, integral ecology must be lived as a response to the vocation received in baptism, which, through the gift of self, combined with Christ's gift of himself, is a source of life for all creation.

[4] A vision that is anchored in the etymology of the word "eco-logy", which derives from the Greek words "οικος" and "λογος", holistic study and reflection on our home, on our common home. Putting this new paradigm of integral ecology into practice is a complex operation based on the interaction of the various dimensions of ecology: environmental design (analysis of the natural ecosystem) with economic ecology (analysis of the productive/distributive system), with socio-cultural ecology (analysis of the institutional system governing human relations on the basis of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity), with human ecology (the centrality of human dignity), in order to adopt a "more integral and integrating vision" (LS 141).

that intends to offer a comprehensive framework for understanding and responding to today's great challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the other environmental, human and socio-economic challenges of our time.

Our world today has "too many means and only a few insubstantial ends" (LS 203). In a context where it is often difficult to find lofty ideals capable of mobilizing hands, hearts and minds, *Laudato Si'* offers a "broad vision" (n. 197), rich in the hope born of the conviction that "*things can change*" (n. 13).

In order to meet this challenge, the Encyclical proposes an approach that:

highlights *the inseparability* of "*concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace*" (LS 10);

"restores the *various levels of ecological equilibrium*, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God" (LS 210);

makes each of us *aware of our responsibility as human being*s, towards ourselves, towards our neighbour, towards creation and towards the Creator.

"The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work which might be called 'rapidification'. Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are

not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity" (LS 18).

If we reflect carefully on these words of the Holy Father, we will come to realize that we are living in *a historical period marked by urgent challenges* that stimulate us to *build a new civilization*. Pope Francis is clearly aware that "we have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral" (LS 112). This calls for a long-term approach implemented in the places and spaces where education and culture are cultivated and handed down, where awareness is fostered, where political, scientific and economic responsibility is formed, and, in general, responsible actions are carried out.

The Church does not have a ready-made list of solutions to provide, much less to impose. Rather, she offers her experience over the centuries and in various geographic contexts, a body of social teachings, contents and principles worked out over time, and a methodology for reflecting together on these solutions: the methodology of *dialogue*. Genuine willingness to dialogue requires that, without losing their own specific identity, individuals do not insist blindly on their own point of view, no matter how positive or constructive it may be. It is necessary to enter into a conversation with all those men and women, or-

ganizations and institutions that share responsibility for the care of our common home, blending different and complementary perspectives: the richness of faith and spiritual traditions, the demands of scientific research, activism and concrete efforts to achieve a fair and sustainable integral human development. A particular effort must be made to ensure that this dialogue includes the poorest and the marginalized, so that their point of view also becomes part of decision-making processes.[5] A dialogue is not limited merely to the exchange of ideas, but involves, on the practical level, "working together" and, on the synodal level, "walking together". Such dialogue will also be an occasion for proclamation and for opening paths to the rediscovery of spirituality and to conversion, starting with our commitment to our common home.

Pope Francis himself, from the very first lines of *Laudato Si'*, expresses the desire "to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home" (n. 3), while recognizing that "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" (n. 14).

We need to beware of falling into the following four false and, at times, perverse attitudes that are not constructive for honest efforts and sincere and fruitful dialogue aimed at shaping the future of our planet:

[5] Cf. Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), 26-27.

denial, indifference, resignation and misplaced confidence in certain solutions that, without thorough reflection, risk being partial if not completely counterproductive.[6]

An interdependent world obliges us to think in terms of *one world* with a *common project* (cf. LS 164). We cannot act in isolation from others, the commitment of each of us is crucial. For believers this commitment must also be seen as a requirement of the evangelization to which the Church is called.[7] "We require a new and universal solidarity" (LS 14); "we need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family. There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference" (LS 52). This has been made abundantly clear by the current "Covid-19 emergency, which knows no frontiers… The joint commitment against the pandemic [can only] lead all of us to recognize our need to strengthen our fraternal bonds as members of one single family" and to renew our commitment to overcome every form of rivalry.[8] "We have realized that we are all on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of

[6] Cf. Francis, *Message to the 23rd Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 7 November 2017.

[7] Cf. Id., Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), Chapters II and IV.

[8] Id., *Angelus*, 29 March 2020.

comforting the other… we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this".[9]

Indeed, the appeal for a commitment to integral ecology has spiritual motives; it is grounded in compelling responsibilities, and is not merely a response to generic and at times rhetorical demands. In Abu Dhabi, Pope Francis, together with Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, stated that believers must commit to "human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need".[10]

In this regard, constant efforts are needed for the dissemination, the detailed study and the implementation of *Laudato Si'.* Hence the idea of the current volume, which looks to present reflections on some operational proposals of the Encyclical through an action-oriented text addressed to the local Churches, to their communities, to political leaders and to all people of good will.

The Encyclical presents an innovative approach for encouraging commitment on the part of all members of society, based on care for our *common home* and on the promotion of an *integral ecology.* In this regard, it is essential to discern and set forth the central teachings of *Laudato Si'*, thereby offering

[9] Id., *Meditation during the Extraordinary Moment of Prayer in Time of Epidemic*, 27 March 2020.

[10] Cf. *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, 4 February 2019.

Catholics (and others) an orientation for concrete action in secular life, while at the same time challenging all Christians to examine their usual behaviour and to recognize that "a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion" (LS 218) and indeed of ecclesial conversion.

The starting point is found in what Pope Francis indicates as the recurring themes of the Encyclical Letter: "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 policy, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle" (LS 16).

On the basis of these recurring themes, an effort has been made to identify and to propose some lines of action, always bearing in mind that the concrete contribution the Church can offer is educational, pastoral and cultural rather than technical and scientific.

This document was drafted for the most part prior to the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic; consequently it does not contain points for reflection and action directly linked to the new emergencies that have arisen. Even so, the teachings contained in the Encyclical and in the Church's social doctrine offer a timely and hope-filled impetus to our efforts

to work together in shaping a future that can see us united in protecting the life that God has given us and in cultivating the creation that he has entrusted to us, in order to make it bear good fruit without ignoring or excluding any of our brothers and sisters.

A GUIDE TO READING THIS DOCUMENT

The idea of preparing this text was encouraged by the Holy Father and stemmed from the desire to help implement *Laudato Si'*, in light of the great interest with which it was received within the Church and in the larger community. The many discussions that have already taken place in various interdisciplinary settings for the purpose of studying its rich scientific, economic, political, social and ethical implications, have been a clear sign of that interest.

Laudato Si', as one of the *social encyclicals* of the Popes, addresses critical contemporary issues in continuity with the *Church's social doctrine*, and offers principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and directives for action through a moral and pastoral discernment of the complex events that characterize our times. As such, it is a guide meant to inspire, at the individual and collective levels, decisions and actions that can help us look to the future with confidence and hope.[11]

[11] Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004, 7-10.

The Church's social doctrine offers an attentive reflection on various situations of human life in the light of divine revelation, natural law and Christian theological anthropology, grounded in the dignity of the person as an intelligent being endowed with free will, and as the subject of rights and obligations, called to self-mastery and the responsible exercise of our primacy over other creatures. This vision demands a profound analysis of human beings in their entirety, in relation with themselves, with others, with society, with the cosmos and with God, as well as a careful discernment of the signs of the times in our constantly changing world. In this regard, the social doctrine of the Church proves a valuable *means of education and action* in the service of building a better world.

In light of the Church's social doctrine and specifically that of *Laudato Si'*, the following pages will present various *operational proposals*, with *the aim of inspiring action* on the part of Church institutions, believers and all people of good will.

As the Holy Father has repeatedly pointed out, what is needed is more than a merely economic and technological approach: a key role is also played by the ethical-social approach involved in the concept of integral ecology: "We should not think that political efforts or the force of law will be sufficient to prevent actions which affect the environment because, when the culture itself is corrupt and objective truth and universally valid principles are no longer upheld, then laws can only be seen as arbitrary impositions or obstacles to be avoided" (LS 123).

It is a matter, then, of envisioning the evolution of society along two fundamental and interconnected axes: *technical, economic and financial* on the one hand, and *ethical, social and educational* on the other. Both need to be strengthened in equal measure, since the weakness of one will adversely affect the other, and society as a whole.

Consequently, it was decided to divide these *operational proposals* into two parts. The first relates to *spiritual conversion* and *education*, while the second concerns *the promotion of integral human development from the standpoint of integral ecology*. Each part focuses on *twelve areas of interest*, all treated in the same way: first, a quote from *Laudato Si'* relevant to the subject, then an introduction, contextualization and reference to the more pertinent papal documents. The text then proposes some *good practices* and, to conclude, some lines of action.

At this point, in order to avoid misunderstandings and repetitions, three preliminary remarks should be made about each of the arguments treated in this document:

1. The recognition that "everything is connected", runs like a thread through the Encyclical. To counter any possible risk of reductionism, these lines of action, or "operational proposals", should be understood in a comprehensive and integrated way: to act only on some aspects while ignoring others will not lead to a lasting solution to the problems presented.

2. These operational proposals should be adopted, adapted and interpreted in the light of the

principle of subsidiarity, whereby all societies at the higher level should provide help (*subsidium*) in the form of support, promotion, development to those on a lower level.[12] From time to time, then, we will consider the responsibilities proper to individuals, the family, community or local authorities, economic actors, intermediate bodies, the State, regional authorities and, finally, the community of nations. Many of these are also applicable to the Church in her different articulations and levels (from the local to the universal).

3. These operational proposals also have a significant and inescapable *educational aspect* which, above all, involves parents, responsibly assisted by other family members (including the younger generation as an active part of the educational process), followed by the network of schools and associations inspired by the highest principles of rectitude and morality, as well as by religious institutions, the world of culture and the world of communications.

[12] Cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 185-188. This approach is clearly emphasized in Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931): "just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them" (n. 80).

Chapter I

EDUCATION AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

1.

Integral ecology and spiritual conversion

"What [some Christians] need is an «ecological conversion», whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them… The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion"
(LS 217, 219)

Introduction and contextualization

What is *conversion?* It "must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin and source of all life".[13] The sixth chapter of *Laudato Si'*, which deals with education and spirituality (nos. 202-246), speaks of the typical dilemma of modern and post-modern culture. On one hand, there is the disturbing obsession with *consumerism* on the part of men and women who, as producers and consumers, are never sated. They end up as victims of their own violence against a world viewed as an assortment of usable objects, and prove incapa-

[13] Cf. Francis, *Message for the 2020 World Day of Peace. Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion*, 1 January 2020.

ble of stopping and letting themselves be amazed at God's creative work.[14] On the other hand, there is our desire and ability as human beings to "go out of ourselves towards the other" (LS 208) in *justice, compassion and solidarity*, and to recognize God's handiwork in every creature.

Conversion is thus *a change in mentality and way of seeing things*: from the constant will to dominate and subdue, to openness in encountering others and accepting the gift of creation; from a manipulative to a contemplative approach. Education in integral ecology can contribute to this conversion if it includes an initiation to contemplation and care for every life and all creation, and accepts the necessity of broadening our horizons in order to recognize the profound connection between various emerging problems. "Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society" (LS 91).

This in turn will give rise to "adequate motivations" (LS 211) and point out "a new way to dwell in our common home, to accept our differences, to respect and celebrate the life that we have received and we share, and to seek living conditions and models of society that favour the continued flourishing of life and the development of the common good of the

[14] Cf. Francis, *Message for Lent 2019*, 4 October 2018, 2 and 3.

entire human family".[15] This conversion has its roots in our filial relationship with the Father who, in Christ and in the Holy Spirit, calls every person to holiness and every creature to its fulfilment.[16] Conversion requires Christians to allow "the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ to become evident in their relationship with the world around them" (LS 217). It is thus marked by these three aspects:

- "a recognition that the world is God's loving gift" (LS 220);
- "a splendid universal communion" among all men and women, in Christ (LS 220);
- "a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little" (LS 222), attentive to the Spirit who frees us from all vain attempts to hoard resources and introduces us instead to the joy of sharing what is essential and what is beautiful.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, *Address to Lay Spiritual Movements*, 18 April 1980.

Id., *General Audience Catechesis*, 4 January 1995.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2004), 113, 266 and 582.

[15] Cf. Francis, *Message for the 2020 World Day of Peace*.

[16] Cf. *Rev* 21:1-5; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 280.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi* (30 November 2007), 15.
Id., *General Audience Catechesis*, 27 January 2010.
Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (30 September 2010), 87.
Francis, Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei* (29 June 2013), 13 and 42.
Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 62-100, 216-221, 233-245.
Id., Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (8 December 2017), Proemium.
Id., Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (19 March, 2018), 25-29, 40-109.
Id., *Message for Lent 20*19, 4 October 2018.
Id*., Message for the 2020 World Day of Peace. Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion*, 1 January 2020.

Good practices

Many people are seeking a harmonious balance in life that will allow them to unify knowledge with personal, social and environmental experience, and to open up in a contemplative way to the presence of God and to the beauty of creation. There have been many concrete cases of spiritual experiences and specifically of conversions. Working in the fields, sharing the fruits of creation and being in direct contact with nature are closely linked to the message of the Gospel and to the monastic tradition.

The cyclical nature of liturgical seasons evokes the flow of the natural seasons, and has inspired a flourishing body of literature, rich in mystical and contemplative experiences, that can be a source of inspiration for further and deeper study and conversion. Worthy of note and encouragement are the various paths developed by Catholic communities in which liturgy, prayer, contemplation, teaching and exhortation to charity and action are carried out in close contact with nature. In this regard, the monastic (Benedictine, Cistercian…) and Franciscan traditions are of particular note and esteem.

The "Season of Creation", from 1 September to 4 October, stands out as one widely adopted initiative to stimulate ecological conversion in the Church, with thousands of local Catholic communities celebrating this period each year. Originally conceived as an ecumenical initiative, Pope Francis invited the Church to celebrate this time in 2019 by describing it as "a season of increased prayer and effort on behalf of our common home."[17] The Season of Creation has been adopted by several regional episcopal bodies (such as the Council of European Episcopal Conferences and the Episcopal Conference of Latin America), national Episcopal Conferences and dioceses worldwide, and has proved to be a very effective pastoral resource for helping the faithful to develop *an ecological spirituality* (LS 216).

[17] Francis, *Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,* 1 September 2019.

A number of other significant initiatives have also been taken: in 2016 the Episcopal Conference of France proposed that the French Bishops designate representatives for integral ecology in each diocese, with the mission of promoting and supporting ecological conversion in their dioceses.

Another interesting example is *Casa Velha – Ecology and Spirituality*.[18] The centre, located a few kilometres from Fatima in Portugal, offers retreats and training on how to experience ecological conversion in our relationship with God, others and nature.

Some lines of action

1. Be aware of the impact that spiritual conversion can have on commitment and action at the social, economic and political level; and consequently the importance of spiritual formation.

2. Promote monastic traditions in their wise combination of contemplation, silence, prayer, liturgy, work and service.

3. Organize activities linked to *Laudato Si'* during the Season of Creation in order to help the faithful understand and integrate the care of creation as an essential part of our Christian vocation.

4. Foster opportunities for individual and community contemplation and reflection in open spaces.

[18] Cf. https://casavelha.org.

5. Educate to a sense of personal and collective responsibility towards creation and future generations.

6. Raise awareness of the importance of the connection between “personal equilibrium”, “social equilibrium”, and “environmental equilibrium”.

7. Promote pastoral dialogue with those in search of harmony with creation (also from an ecumenical and inter-religious prospective), particularly through events organized to promote protection of the planet and of life.

8. Encourage encounter and dialogue between the different cultural and social groups working to promote an integral ecology.

9. Encourage trust and a frank debate between the economic-financial, political-institutional, agricultural-environmental and bioethical-health sectors, in order to overcome the self-absorption and suspicions that can hinder open dialogue.

2.
Human life

"There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology"
(LS 118)

Introduction and contextualization

"The book of nature is one and indivisible" (LS 6). It includes life, individual persons, families, social relations and the environment. Consequently, we cannot defend nature unless we also defend each human being. "Life is assailed by war, by organizations that exploit people, by speculation on creation, by the throwaway culture and by every system that subjugates human existence to calculated opportunities."[19]

The greatest obstacles to a proper recognition of the inestimable value of every human life derive from what Pope Francis has termed excessive (cf. LS 115), despotic (cf. LS 68) and distorted anthropocentrism (cf. LS 69, 118, 119 and 122). This anthropocentrism has no biblical basis (cf. LS 68) and is reflected in the attitude of those who do not care for other creatures, considering them only from a utilitarian standpoint. Born of an "irrational confidence in progress and human abilities" (LS 19), this attitude ends up replacing God with man. Indiscriminate manipulation of the

[19] Francis, *General Audience Catechesis*, 10 October 2018.

human genome and experimentation on live human embryos (cf. LS 136) are clear examples of this. There is always a risk that human beings can "see nature as an insensate order" (LS 115) and as a result lose sight of *the sense of limit* required for its protection. Today's situation "has led to a constant schizophrenia, wherein a technocracy which sees no intrinsic value in lesser beings coexists with the other extreme, which sees no special value in human beings. But one cannot prescind from humanity. There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology" (LS 118).

The Encyclical sheds light on the powerful contradictions of a society incapable of understanding that *fragility is part of humanity* and cannot be removed in a selective and discriminatory way. From the perspective of integral ecology, each person is called to take care of those in greatest need, acting with justice and charity, like the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk* 10:25-37).

Pope Francis criticizes a culture lacking "objective truths or sound principles" (LS 123) and proposes the preferential option for the poorest as a reference for defining human action.[20] The Encyclical always views the world through the eyes, the hands and the cry of the most vulnerable: "When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor

[20] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 186-201.

person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself" (LS 117).

Essential reference texts

Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae* (25 July 1968).

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Donum Vitae* on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation, 22 February 1987.

Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 38 and 39.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), 42 and 101.

Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Peace* 2007. *The Human Person, the Heart of Peace*, 1 January 2007.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (7 July 2009), 15, 49-51, 74.

Id., *Address at the German Bundestag*, Berlin, 22 September 2011.

Francis, Apostolic Exhortaion *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 158.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 6, 19, 68, 69, 115ff., 229.

Good practices

For many years now the Episcopal Conference of Brazil has developed pastoral programmes to pro-

tect children and the elderly by adopting *an integral approach*: life is protected against the threats of social abandonment, as well as from abortion or euthanasia thanks to the closeness of the members of the Christian community. The *Pastoral da Criança* takes care of families, accompanying women from the time of pregnancy to the birth of their child. After birth, children are monitored for a few years from the nutritional and medical point of view and are introduced to a catechesis that also includes the theme of environmental protection.[21] The *Pastoral da Criança* helps roughly one million children coming from the most disadvantaged areas of Brazil. This experience has recently been extended to other countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

The Pastoral da Pessoa Idosa takes care of the elderly in similar ways. Home visits allow volunteers to monitor their health and, above all, to alleviate the isolation in which many of them live. This pastoral service reaches out to around five hundred thousand people.[22]

Some lines of action

1. Defend the family, as the fundamental unit of society, and also human life from conception to natural death, while addressing the fragility of creation, as an issue of justice.

[21] Cf. https://www.pastoraldacrianca.org.br.
[22] Cf. http://www.pastoraldapessoaidosa.org.br.

2. Stress the fact that eliminating human life is not an acceptable policy to protect the planet and promote integral human development.

3. Cooperate in ensuring that everyone has access to medical care, with respect for the dignity of every person, avoiding a utilitarian mentality and rejecting hidden agendas of euthanasia.

4. Implement specific actions to defend and promote human life on a social, educational and pastoral level (in schools, parishes, etc.).

5. Foster in young people the notion of *sin against human life* by efforts in the educational, cultural and pastoral spheres, especially in relation to the new challenges of bioethics (abortion, euthanasia, suicide, etc.).

6. Promote a deeper reflection on the meaning of the preferential option for the poor in the context of integral ecology.

7. Stress the intrinsic connection between the protection of creation and the protection of the poor, where the poor also include human embryos, children, the sick, the elderly and those who have no one to care for them.

8. Combat the throwaway culture at the educational, pastoral, catechetical, social, political and economic level, through educational and practical programmes.

9. Continue to promote in the Church and in society at large, the understanding and implications of human ecology as these are presented in *Caritas in Veritate* and *Laudato Si'*.

3.

Family and young people in defence of our common home

"I would stress the great importance of the family, which is the place in which life – the gift of God – can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life"
(LS 213)

Introduction and contextualization

The family carries out its mission through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and by its witness in different areas, not least in the defence of creation.[23] In this regard*, the family is also called to ecological conversion,* allowing the personal encounter with Christ to give rise to a greater sense of personal responsibility for our common home. The family is "the principal agent of an integral ecology, because it is the primary social subject which contains within it the two fundamental principles of human civilization on earth: the principle of communion and the principle of fruitful-

[23] Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (19 March 2016), 290.

ness".[24] In the family, "we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity" (LS 213). For this reason, the role of the family is fundamental: "Only by cultivating sound virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment" (LS 211).

On many occasions, *young people are the very ones promoting,* including within the Church *a renewed environmental consciousness*. In the Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment", the Synod Fathers, speaking of the protection of our common home, observed that "the young urge the Church to be prophetic in this field, through her words but above all through choices which show that financial management can be both person-friendly and environmentally friendly."[25] The same text encourages young people to take on a greater role in the Church. The Pope often invites young people to make history and not to confuse happiness with a life of comfort.

Many young people already have "a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the

[24] *Ibid.*, 277.

[25] Final Document of the Synod of Bishops 3-28 October 2018 on "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment", n. 153.

environment" (LS 209). Often, within families they are the ones who are educating their elders to the need for a "bold cultural revolution" (LS 114). Even intergenerational justice can and must find a place and be fully experienced in the family. During the October 2018 Synod on young people, "one of the young auditors from the Samoan Islands spoke of the Church as a canoe, in which the elderly help to keep on course by judging the position of the stars, while the young keep rowing, imagining what waits for them ahead. Let us steer clear of young people who think that adults represent a meaningless past, and those adults who always think they know how young people should act. Instead, let us all climb aboard the same canoe and together seek a better world, with the constantly renewed momentum of the Holy Spirit".[26]

Although commitment to an integral ecology can be seen as deeply rooted in the social doctrine of the Church and in biblical anthropology, it can be widely shared even by those who do not identify as Christians. For this reason*, Laudato Si'* could become the point of reference of a global youth movement for the care of our common home, to which even young people of other religions or non-believers can belong: they can also express their desire for change in new ways, by employing the potential of digital communication.

[26] Francis, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 201.

Their sensitivity to this issue inspires them to take the initiative, an initiative that should not be dismissed, but instead accompanied and encouraged.

Essential reference texts

BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace. If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation,* 1 January 2010.

FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 13, 114, 165, 209, 213, 216, 221.

ID., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (19 March 2016), 277, 290.

ID., *Address at the Prayer Vigil in Preparation for World Youth Day,* 8 April 2017.

ID., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortaion *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 168-174.

Good practices

The Episcopal Conferences along with various ecclesial and lay institutions, have developed a number of projects to help families and young people to respond to *Laudato Si'*. Among these is the document *Questa è la mia casa* ("This Is My Home") issued in 2017 by the Bishops of Umbria (Italy), with a brief introduction by Pope Francis.[27]

[27] Cf. https://www.lavoce.it/edizioni/2017/08/31/questa-e-la-mia-casa.

During the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August 2018, the theme of care for creation was addressed in the context of the Theological-Pastoral Congress, and was also developed in the context of the Meeting through the *Our Common Home Project*.[28]

World Youth Days have had, and will increasingly have, an emphasis on the environment. Conferences on the protection of creation, with the presence of thousands of young people, have been organized at many of them. For example, at the World Youth Day in Panama, in January 2019, there were meetings on *Laudato Si'*, and the *Laudato Si' Generation.* The latter is a global network of Catholic youth organizations led by young people. It is an integral part of the wider *Global Catholic Climate Movement* network, and was officially launched during the World Youth Day in Panama.[29]

Many activities aimed at protecting nature involve children, young people and families. These include initiatives like those involving children who, through school or church programmes, recycle their games over the Christmas holidays and put them on sale for charitable purposes as a way to prevent increased pollution and to build a less consumerist and more fraternal culture.

In addition, the serious and generous commitment of young children to protecting our common

[28] Cf. https://www.icatholic.ie/our-common-home-wmof2018-going-green.

[29] Cf. https://laudatosigeneration.org.

home provides a significant witness that can also encourage adults to be more conscious of the seriousness of the environmental problems we face. For example, the Lesotho Bishops Conference, which has paid great attention to environmental education, together with other institutions such as the *Global Catholic Climate Movement* (GCCM), has trained young *Laudato Si'* activists, who promote awareness campaigns on integrated ecology, through radio programmes and activities at the scholastic and community levels. For their part, the dioceses of South Africa have promoted various *Laudato Si'* projects, such as the *#Youth-go-Clean19*, launched on 23 March 2019, to promote a sense of respect and empathy among young people for the environment and their communities through awareness-raising programmes, care for the elderly and the sick, reforestation, recycling and reuse, and prayer.

Some lines of action

1. Strengthen the awareness that the family is an agent of pastoral activity, called to bear witness to the Gospel including by caring for our common home. The family is called to live the ecological conversion that the Holy Father has asked of the entire Church.

2. Support families in their role as the privileged educational setting in which we learn respect for others and for creation, as well as solidarity, courtesy, forgiveness, openness to life and responsibility.

3. Encourage States, particularly in the West, to promote smart policies for family development, in order to oppose the so-called “demographic winter”.

4. Support single parents in raising their children, mothers in difficult situations who are tempted to have an abortion, and families that care for elderly relatives or persons with disabilities.

5. Promote opportunities for young people to take leadership roles, supporting their initiatives by providing appropriate ethical guidelines that can enable them to work together, even despite their different religious, ideological or political affiliations, in building a future that is more sustainable, inclusive and respectful of the gifts of creation.

4.

Nursery and primary school

"Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life"
(LS 213)

Introduction and contextualization

Schooling plays a central role in the formation of critical thinking and social responsibility from our earliest years. This is all the more true today, in a context where, compared to the past, there is an increased number of sources of information to the point that society today is defined as an *information society*. However, this overflow of information is not matched by our ability to handle it in an adequate, selective and critical way.

It can be said that *school*, which has lost its primacy as a place for the transmission of knowledge, needs to acquire *a new centrality*: to become a place that helps young people to make distinctions, to discern and to think critically. Additionally schools must be able to orient these essential abilities toward ethical values and social responsibility within the perspective of an integral ecology. As we witness an increasingly evident disproportion between technical knowledge and the necessary wisdom to use it, it is important for schools to help

students develop their capacity for knowledge, discernment, critical thinking and responsible conduct.

It is essential that educational processes help students become aware of real-life problems and learn how to respond to them in a way that can contribute in a significant way to the common good. Being able to do something for others and for the environment can help students to grow not only in ethical awareness and social responsibility, but also to mature. Here we can see one practical way of responding to the Holy Father's frequent invitation to view education as the capacity to harmonize *mind* (knowledge), *heart* (sensitivity) and *hands* (action) in a process suited to the processes of children's development. A pedagogy inspired by integral ecology will focus on the child's mind, heart and hands by adopting a *personalistic conception of integral human development*, one that fosters the development of each person and of the whole person,[30] as opposed to an economistic interpretation that, by stressing the notion of unlimited progress, confuses human growth with material prosperity and is unconcerned with social exclusion and the uprooting of identity.

[30] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 14.

Essential reference texts

Saint Paul VI, *Address to Participants in the Ninth National Congress of the Italian Association of Catholic Teachers*, 4 November 1968.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 202-215.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating to Fraternal Humanism - Building a "Civilization of Love". Fifty years after Populorum Progressio* (16 April 2017).

Francis, *Address to the Italian Association of Catholic Teachers*, 5 January 2018.

Good practices

Service-Learning is an effective pedagogical approach that teaches students how to consciously engage in critical thinking and active citizenship. It can be introduced in every type of school and any grade level. The 'Six for One' model (six steps for one project) can be used in the nursery school, and uses the following steps: observe; reflect together; choose a shared project; act; record and reflect on the experience; end with a small celebration. In *primary school*, the phases of a *Service-Learning* project will tend to be more developed and include: 1) an analysis of the situation and identification of the problem or need to be addressed in order to help the community; 2) finding other entities to cooperate with in realizing the project (associations, parish, local authorities, NGOs…); 3) planning moments of

deeper reflection and community service activity projects; 4) carrying out the project; reflecting on the results achieved and the importance of the entire experience; 5) disseminating the results through social media, publications, posters, etc., and 6) a final *celebration*, with the whole community.

Another interesting approach has been adopted by many Irish dioceses where, with the support of *Trócaire*, the themes of *Laudato Si'* and of integral ecology are introduced in the educational curricula for nursery and primary schools through the programme *Grow in Love.* This programme adopts an integral approach to active participation in protecting our common home, facilitating links between "home-school-parish".[31]

The issue of "care for our common home" is increasingly becoming a central feature in the educational programmes of nursery and primary schools; for example, in the diocese of Graz-Seckau, in Austria, the motto "taking responsibility for creation" has been chosen as one of the four guiding principles of the primary schools.

Some lines of action

Nursery School

1. Encourage children's innate curiosity by having them observe and explore natural and urbanized environments, supporting their observations and

[31] cf. https://www.growinlove.ie/en.

helping them to understand the characteristics of the reality in which they live. Allow them to express themselves through drawing, painting, music and dance. Accompany and stimulate them to appreciate beauty and to realize that while everything has been given to us from God as a gift, it is our responsibility to take care of it.

2. Make children responsible for caring for their own environment, starting with their classroom, and involving them in activities that improve it even from an aesthetic point of view. Involve parents in these projects.

3. Carry out *Service-Learning* projects on environmental and social issues appropriate to the children's age (school garden, waste recycling, food…).

4. Promote, together with parents, guided visits to parks, botanical gardens, educational farms, environments that are significant for their beauty. Help children to have memorable experiences of nature. Create posters, billboards and scale models inspired by that experience and by respect for the environment.

Primary school

1. Carry out food education programmes, without imposing preconceived ideas, and by encouraging interactive methods of learning and discovery, helping children to reflect on their style of eating and favouring a correct, conscious, responsible management of their diet.

2. Broaden children's horizon of knowledge about other people's situations besides their own, including those that lack proper nourishment and even starve. Address the causes that hinder integral development and lead to marginalization, such as poverty, inequality, illiteracy, exploitation, child labour, the treatment of women, etc.

3. Promote research projects that investigate the conditions of children's own natural and social environment, so as to assess its quality and identify its problems. Encourage activities that train them to care for their environment. Teach them the most up-to-date technologies and the best practices in recycling and separation of household waste.

4. Help children to develop the basic understanding that environmental issues are linked to human needs (such as poverty). Teaching should also touch upon the environmental aspects of those issues.

5. Encourage experiences of direct contact with nature, favouring the discovery of beauty and balance, and using all languages that contribute to this end: painting, music, dance, games, photography and sport. Organize educational trips and encourage reflection on these experiences, teaching children that, while natural resources are a gift of God, they are not infinite.

6. Promote behavioural change for the sake of human health and of the environment. Carry out awareness campaigns involving other students, parents and local communities, to encourage better,

more moderate consumption of food and a commitment to avoiding food waste.

7. Implement cooperative programmes between schools, including distance learning, sharing projects and using resources offered by communication technologies.

5.

Secondary school

"Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us"
(LS 211)

Introduction and contextualization

It is not sufficient simply to teach young people to think critically without also *teaching them to think ethically and to foster within them a sense of personal responsibility*. Our society has separated ethics and environment: there is a need to alter our perspective and to extend ethical responsibility to all areas of life and to encourage behaviours that attempt to create the conditions needed to preserve, recover and/or promote life and its full realization.

Educating young people to become more aware, and to think critically as well as to act responsibly will help them to develop a unified vision. It will also help to situate themselves not only in terms of history and geography, but also nature and the larger cosmos in which they live. Education in science and the humanities contributes to the formation of a person who is aware of his or her own identity, history and place in the community and the larger world. It also increases their awareness of the interdependent realities that

connect spaces, times, society and environments; in this way, students will be enabled to assume their proper responsibilities.

When education and existence converge, *the school becomes a place of life and openness to the outside world.* It is then that learning makes sense and becomes meaningful for the student.

Essential reference texts

SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 34.

ID., Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 September 1991), 38-39.

BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (7 July 2009), 32, 48-51.

ID, *Message for the World Day of Peace* 2012 – *Educating Young People in Justice and Peace*, 1 January 2012.

FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 202-215.

ID., *Address to the participants in the World Congress promoted by the Congregation for Catholic Education*, 21 November 2015.

ID., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 222.

Good practices

Service-Learning can be used to carry out many educational and training activities. This is the inspiration, for example, of the *Yo puedo* project, a four-

step pedagogical model (*Feeling – Imagining – Acting – Sharing*) which leads students to empathize with situations, and to imagine, implement and share solutions. This model can also be applied to training projects for "ecological citizenship" and that engage the dimensions and languages of each person: the language of the heart (*feel*), the language of the mind (*imagine*), the language of the hands (*act*) and the language of sharing.

Partnership initiatives between Catholic and public educational institutions are also important. In Romania, for example, the Greek-Catholic High School of the Eparchy of Cluj-Gherla has partnered on national projects on climate, recycling and other activities related to integral ecology. In addition, the Greek-Catholic Theological High School of Saint Basil the Great in the Archeparchy of Alba Iulia and Făgăraş and the Catholic College of Saint Joseph in Bucharest are involving students in projects and awareness-raising activities for the protection of our common home that include waste disposal and reforestation.

Another interesting initiative is being carried out in Brazil by the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte, where in 2019 the project *Desconstruindo muros, construindo pontes* was implemented. This activity enables primary and secondary school students to reflect individually and collectively on contemporary human realities.

Other initiatives are taking place in a variety of dioceses where priests have been asked to study the

Encyclical and to organize meetings in schools and parishes to make its contents known and to identify meaningful actions for its implementation on the ground. As a result of these meetings, in the diocese of Banjul, in The Gambia, for example, groups of students came together to make the themes of the Encyclical Letter better known in their respective communities.

Some lines of action

1. Promote multidisciplinary teaching on integral ecology, based on up-to-date scientific data on environmental change. Teach students how to deal with the problems of environmental sustainability through moderation, responsible knowledge and the use of renewable energies. Highlight the importance of the circular economy of nature, which does not produce waste, as a means of addressing the problems of environmental sustainability, thus promoting a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

2. Teach students that a sensible ecological approach always entails an appreciation of its social, cultural, ethical and legal dimensions. Help them, for example, to understand the connection between environmental and social issues like poverty, by using practical cases in developing countries (e.g. crop reduction due to drought), but also in developed countries (e.g. sea-level rise that causes forced migration, etc.).

3. Educate students and their families to problems of social and environmental sustainability by planning activities and events that can generate greater interest and awareness.

4. Educate and empower young people to show leadership in promoting human dignity, mercy, reconciliation, non-violence, peace and sustainable development. In the field of science, there are good examples of educational programmes carried out by students which emphasize their potential to become agents of change. These initiatives should be adopted in all Catholic schools, including those located in low-income countries. It would be useful to create Internet platforms to connect students so that they can share their experiences with sustainability projects.

5. Promote paths of reflection on the ethical and spiritual roots of environmental problems, with reference to the teaching of *Laudato Si'*, and gradually develop that reflection in secondary education, in a way that includes all the members of the educational community.

6. Establish cooperative relationships and networking with specialized Catholic associations, in order to support the development, implementation and evaluation of educational initiatives aimed at defending human dignity and promoting integral ecology.

6.
University

"Environmental education has broadened its goals. Whereas in the beginning it was mainly centred on scientific information, consciousness-raising and the prevention of environmental risks, it tends now to include a critique of the 'myths' of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mindset (individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market). It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium"
(LS 210)

Introduction and contextualization

Universities are places for educating young people and centres of scientific research for the development of knowledge and society. They too are called "to a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet" (LS 14). For this reason, it is essential that education in integral ecology (LS 62, 124, 137) should lead to development policies and an economy that can genuinely sustain the quality of life of all the world's peoples, especially the poorest.

By their very nature and mission, universities embrace the totality of knowledge in all its human and divine ramifications. Their ultimate goal should be the promotion of every human being and of our common home. In practice, this can be accomplished if students are made aware that education brings

with it a greater responsibility for today's problems, for the needs of the poor and for the care of the environment (LS 201, 210)

Universities, especially Catholic universities, face the critical challenge (LS 162, 209) of identifying limitations and inequalities in the management of natural resources and proposing new models of development. It is essential to integrate the ecological, social, environmental, political, economic and educational dimensions of those issues treated in course offerings and the overall formation provided by each academic discipline. Beyond teaching (their *first mission*) and research (their *second mission*), universities also, and above all, have a *third mission,* that of assisting the social development of their local communities. Universities are in fact called to actively interact with civil society and local business for the realization of the common good.

Experience has shown how integral ecology, by its dynamic attention to connections, can represent a framework for structuring scientific activities and higher education. Environmental consciousness in its various forms can serve as the basis for inter-disciplinary dialogue (LS 81, 199) especially in universities, and offer an opportunity for innovation and new forms of professionalism.

In carrying out this third mission, the academic community will collaborate actively and with conviction in the efforts of society as a whole to provide an effective education. It will also show that "environmental education should facilitate making the leap

towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning". At the same time it can provide "educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care" (LS 210).

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (15 August 1990).

Benedict XVI, *Lecture for a Visit to the University of Rome "La Sapienza"*, prepared for 17 January 2008.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015) 14; 62; 81; 124; 137; 199; 201-215.

Id., *Address to the Meeting with Educators*, Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Quito, 7 July 2015.

Id., *Address to the Community of the Catholic University of Portugal*, 26 October 2017.

Id., Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (8 December 2017), Proemium.

Id., Post-Syodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 222.

Good practices

Laudato Si' projects have been launched in many Catholic universities, "to provide a concrete foundation for the ethical and spiritual itinerary [and] drawing on the results of the best scientific research

available today" (LS 15). In this regard, universities are responsible for discovering, with wisdom and creativity, ways of mitigating human impact on the environment, offering new models of sustainable development and promoting responsible lifestyles. Creating practical possibilities and tools for this purpose calls for a clear choice in favour of man and a focus on the importance of values such as dialogue, honesty and transparency in making decisions on the state of our planet and the rights of its peoples, both now and in the future.

TROFIC (*Transdisciplinary Research on Food Issue Centre*) was created in this context as the fruit of an international network of universities, in the footsteps of the *Food and Human Dignity Network* promoted by FIUC (International Federation of Catholic Universities), with headquarters in the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan.[32] This centre promotes and carries out, in the light of a Christian anthropology and approach to life, interdisciplinary scientific activities on issues relating to environmental sustainability, nutrition and access to food.

Other initiatives taken by universities around the world are also worthy of mention, like those of the Catholic University of Ružomberok, in Slovakia, which includes integral ecology in its regular programmes of study. Other initiatives include those carried out by the *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Ge-*

[32] Cf. https://centridiateneo.unicatt.it/trofic-home.

rais, in Belo Horizonte (Brazil), which in its *Plano de Desenvolvimento Institucional* proposed sustainability as a strategic key theme for the period 2017-2021, with concrete actions of sustainability in the academic, administrative and operational fields.

In 2017 the Pontifical Universities and Athenaeums of Rome instituted the "Joint Diploma in Integral Ecology" to disseminate the vision and the mission of *Laudato Si'*.

Some lines of action

1. Educate future generations and young people to think in terms of a united world and of a shared project, integrating the care of the common home and sustainability even in those university courses not strictly related to environmental issues.

2. Teach students to view their education as involving greater responsibility for today's problems, including the needs of the poor and caring for the environment. Encourage students to engage in professions that promote positive environmental change and the social changes needed to achieve the objectives set forth in *Laudato Si'*, drawing inspiration from the best international sustainable development practices.

3. Promote creativity on the part of students, offering them incentives and visions that propose an alternative to models inspired by the technocratic paradigm, especially in those disciplines where there

is a higher risk of assuming that paradigm as the only point of reference.

4. Empower students by involving them in *Service-Learning* activities to disseminate good sustainability practices in the various sectors of human activity, such as food production and access, water management, waste reduction, renewable energy and technological innovation.

5. Develop interdisciplinary research on sustainability that can take into account its three dimensions (ecological, social and economic) as well as respect for nature, humanity and our common home.

6. Study the theology of creation and the relationship between human beings and the world in which we live. Introduce courses in the theology of creation that can help develop the concept of "sins against creation" and an understanding of the bases of a harmonious relationship between human beings and creation.

7. Create institutes in every university that will combine interdisciplinary research on integral ecology, the environment and the health of the planet.

8. Establish think tanks on sustainability and integral ecology, composed of members of different faculties and departments. These groups should be composed of representatives of students, administration, management and teachers, with the aim of improving the university sustainability in procurement and other procedures, as well as promoting sustainability in events and relationships with external bodies, innovation on campuses, internships,

liturgy and vocational training in line with integral ecology, etc.

9. Activate and develop international research networks where scholars with different areas of scientific expertise, coming from different areas of the world, can discuss and exchange ideas in order to offer an integral analysis of the present social and cultural environment.

10
ci tengo!

7.

Lifelong learning

"There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle"
(LS 211)

Introduction and contextualization

Learning is an ongoing process that goes beyond the activities specifically carried out in schools and training institutions; increasingly it involves adults and non-traditional students. It is a lifelong need that embraces all the different areas of our existence: professional, private, family, social, etc.

In particular, an education in integral ecology demands a strong commitment to promoting lifestyles informed by the same teaching. The Church can offer a specific contribution to this commitment by stressing the inescapable ethical need for the concrete care and integral protection of creation while at the same time helping to educate to a "*culture of care*" (cf. LS 231) capable of countering the "throwaway culture" and the mentality that inspires it (LS 16).

Implementing this commitment involves promoting ecological conversion that have will a profound and lasting effect on "lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established

structures of power which today govern societies" (LS 5). "But it is we human beings above all who need to change" and to become aware of "our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone" (LS 202). It is clear that "the ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion" (LS 219), which sees in a "healthy relationship with creation" a constitutive "dimension of overall personal conversion" (LS 218).

The ecological conversion of the community requires a shared and co-ordinated educational commitment between different social actors, aimed at "creating *an ecological citizenship"* (LS 211). This means encouraging the spread, especially among young people, of a new model of relationship between individuals, society and the environment, one that is characterized by the overcoming of individualism and by lifestyles inspired by solidarity, responsibility and care. In the context of this shared educational commitment, the Christian community has a responsibility to offer its own contribution, since the vocation to be stewards of creation as God's handiwork is not something optional or even secondary in the Christian experience.

Essential reference texts

SAINT JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961), 210-211.

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (18 November 1965), 29.
Id., Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), 62.
Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), 18.
Benedict XVI*, Meeting with the Parish Priests and Clergy of Rome*, 14 February 2013.
Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 171; 182; 183.
Id., Encyclical Letter. *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 59; 107; 164; 202-215; 219.

Good practices

The horizon of lifelong learning is broad and includes a variety of activities. By way of example, two projects carried out in very different contexts can be mentioned here: firstly, the creation of *shared vegetable gardens,* which promote and support agricultural education and contact with nature, while also contributing practically to the welfare of society. Another worthy initiative from the intergenerational standpoint is that of *community grandparents*, where elderly volunteers assist children from single-parent families or those living in difficult socio-economic contexts. The support network created by grandparents helps children and vulnerable people, both individuals and in groups, assisting with schooling and offering recreational activities. In this way, grandpar-

ents do not lose their skills and, indirectly, remain connected with the community through a constructive dialogue with children.

Many Episcopal Conferences are making efforts to implement the teaching of *Laudato Si'* through practical programmes. For example, on 27 September 2018 the German Episcopal Conference translated its teachings into a document containing ten recommendations for action at the diocesan level, ranging from promoting awareness and responsibility, to the sustainable management of the Church's activities and assets.[33]

For its part, the Permanent Council of the Brazilian Bishops Conference established on 29 June 2019 an episcopal commission for integral ecology and mining, with the aim of implementing and coordinating the various initiatives of the Church in the field of integral ecology. It did this in collaboration with governmental, judicial and legislative bodies, the business community and civil society, without losing sight of the ethical and spiritual roots of environmental issues.

A number of Episcopal Conferences have set up internal study groups on integral ecology. For example, in early 2000 the Italian Episcopal Conference set up a study group on care for creation as part of its national office for social and labour problems, with the aim of research and the celebration of an annual study day. The Spanish Episcopal Conference

[33] Cf. https://www.dbk-shop.de/media/files_public/jitvyqqly/ DBK_5301001.pdf.

set up a study group on integral ecology within its episcopal commission for social issues, in order to spread awareness of *Laudato Si'* through a variety of activities and with the participation of Cáritas, Justizia y Paz, Manos Unidas, Conferencia Española de Religiosos, and REDES (the coordinating body for Catholic development NGOs). Diocesan commissions on integral ecology are also being established in Spain.

On the local level, there are other initiatives that should be mentioned, such as in the diocese of Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which in 2016 created a diocesan centre for the protection of the environment, with the aim of restoring ruined ecosystems, combatting unhealthy environments, encouraging the environmental education of young people and promoting the use of alternative energy sources. In Canada, the Archdiocese of Ottawa established a *Creation Care Ministry* in 2006 at its social justice office, which raises awareness of *Laudato Si'* and works for its implementation.[34] In November 2017, *Cuidar da Casa Comum*, an association linked to the local Catholic Church, was established in Portugal with the aim of spreading *Laudato Si'* through various activities.[35] In 2005, the Flemish dioceses set up *Ecokerk*,[36] an organization devoted to the development of a Christian vision of ecology and its implementation.

[34] Cf. https://catholicottawa.ca/care-for-creation-of-god.
[35] Cf. https://casacomum.pt.
[36] Cf. https://netrv.be/ecokerk.

In November 2015, the Archdiocese of Atlanta published a noteworthy *Laudato Si' Action Plan,* proposing a detailed implementation of the Encyclical.[37]

Mention should also be made of the initiative *Église Verte*,[38] proposed by the French Episcopal Conference together with the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France, the Protestant Federation of France and the Council of the Christian Churches in France, in cooperation with *Secours Catholique Caritas France,* CCFD-*Terre Solidaires* and CERAS (*Centre de recherche et d'action sociale de la Compagnie de Jésus*). This initiative was launched in September 2017 to stimulate the ecological conversion of Christian communities through an eco-diagnosis of their activities, with methodological suggestions in five fields: celebration and catechesis, buildings, land, lifestyles, local and global commitment.

Similar activities have also been launched by dioceses in Belgium, Canada, Portugal and Spain. The possibility of extending this initiative to other areas such as Catholic schools, monasteries and businesses is under study.

The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) is a remarkable network of over 900 Catholic institutions and thousands of local community leaders, which provides its members with programmes and

[37] Cf.https://2nix922u0v5c1unycf149lry-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/ wp-content/uploads/2019/11/laudato_si_actionplan.pdf.

[38] Cf. www.egliseverte.org.

resources to experience ecological conversion and to receive assistance in caring for creation. It was launched in January of 2015 by a group of twenty Catholic institutions, including the Archdiocese of Manila, the *Jesuit European Social Centre* and Catholic Action Argentina, drawing inspiration from reports of the soon-to-be-published encyclical. Several of the programmes offered are linked to ecological spirituality, such as the *Laudato Si' Retreats* and the *Laudato Si' Circles*, while other programs are linked to sustainability and advocacy.[39] Here it is important to mention the GCCM project, *Laudato Si' Animators.* It is an online training programme that has already trained and certified more than 2000 local leaders in more than 100 countries, providing them with the training needed to promote in their own dioceses, parishes and communities a deeper knowledge of the encyclical and to transform that knowledge into action. The programme requires them to organize an event in their community during Earth Day or the Season of Creation, and it provides support and online sharing between *Laudato Si' Animators* worldwide. Some dioceses, like that of Rome, have cooperated with GCCM in organizing courses using the *Laudato Si' Animators* training model.

In 2018, the Board of Directors of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) launched the campaign *Sowing Hope for the Planet*, intended to

[39] See https://catholicclimatemovement.global.

offer all religious congregations, together with their partners, collaborators and networks, a variety of suggestions and resources on how to integrate *Laudato Si'* into their lives and ministries.[40]

Some lines of action

1. Promote the principle that human growth does not evolve in linear fashion, and is not a biopsychic evolution that starts from elementary forms. Instead, it becomes increasingly rich up to a certain age but then begins to decline with a loss of functions towards the twilight of earthly life. It is important to emphasize that the ages of life are each marked by a constant process of gain and loss, crises and adaptation, critical events and the development of unexpected abilities in responding to new challenges.

2. Encourage the implementation of structures and methods that can help individuals and communities to engage in lifelong learning and that can equip them, also through self-learning, to become the subjects and interpreters of their own development.

3. Favour educational and formational approaches to integral ecology that enhance the role of their recipients, encouraging them to express, share and compare their personal experiences and skills. Raise and strengthen the awareness that everyone – in any circumstance – is a resource for others, and that from every experience and situation it is possible

[40] Cf. https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org.

to learn and to draw lessons for one's own self-improvement.

4. Show appreciation for the family as a privileged place for lifelong learning in integral ecology, for all its members and generations. Support families in the process of their growth as a fundamental cell of society.

5. Support inter-generational exchanges and partnerships. Children, young people, adults and the elderly provide opportunities for the enrichment of each. Make room for collaborative learning between different ages, also by supporting innovative approaches.

6. Counter the culture of super-efficiency and consumerism by showing concern for all forms of vulnerability. The sick, the elderly, people experiencing difficulties, drawbacks and disabilities, are in fact an important social resource from the standpoint of integral ecology, for they represent an opportunity for daily encounter with enduring values. Overcome the welfare mentality, indifference and disregard, and launch initiatives to raise awareness of the dignity of each and every person.

8.

Non-formal education and the culture of encounter

"It takes educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care"
(LS 210)

Introduction and contextualization

Where education is concerned, promoting policies inspired by the principle of an *ethics of care* entails radically reversing the prevailing technical model that identifies training with education and views the process of education merely as the acquisition of conceptual and procedural knowledge, under the assumption that scientific expertise alone is sufficient for proper action. Educating people in the ethics of care means organizing environments where people learn care through experience, including through the assumption of responsibility and personal commitment.

The task of growing in solidarity, responsibility and care is a duty of the entire educational community. An African proverb says that "to raise a child, it takes a whole village". In other words, an *educational community*, understood as a vital network of relationships, is a meeting place in which everyone feels co-responsible in offering his or her life and actions

as a gift to others. A genuine educational experience must be integral and cannot view any one area as disconnected from the whole: family, school, parish, athletic associations, youth groups, cultural centres and the like, all need one other. A city, viewed as an educational community, is a place where all the various bodies work together and agree on an "educational compact". They help one other and put young people at the centre, establishing a relationship of trust with young people, seeing them as active subjects and protagonists who have something to offer to adults. Following the discussions at the 2018 Synod, the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* notes that the whole community has a duty to accompany children and young adults as they grow to maturity (no. 243).

For balanced growth, children and young people need to have opportunities to grow in knowledge of themselves, of others, of all created beings and of God. The best way to achieve this, provided they are properly accompanied, is through the *encounter with suffering*. Contact with the pain of others helps develop charity and empathy, the realization of our own vulnerability and a deeper sense of fraternity. Another way is through *openness to cultural diversity and globalism*, which fosters the realization that we all share a common origin and destiny: all of us breathe the same air and walk the same earth, our common home. These ways help build a *culture of encounter* and a peaceful coexistence based on *reciprocal listening,* as a positive and constructive response to gratuitous hostility and violence.

Non-formal educational environments and activities should also emphasize the relationship between a healthy environment and beauty. Learning to appreciate and love beauty helps us discover the value of everything and every person, of all creation and the One who is behind it, its Creator.

Essential reference texts

Saint John XXIII, *Address to Athletes Participating in the XVII Olympic Games in Rome*, 24 August 1960.

Saint Paul VI, *Address for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Establishment of Scouting in Italy,* 5 November 1966.

Saint John Paul II, *Address to the Girl Guides and Scouts of Europe*, 3 August 1994.

Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013)*,* 220; 223.

Id., *Address for the Closing Ceremony of the IV World Congress sponsored by Scholas Occurrentes*, 5 February 2015.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 202-215; 229-231.

Id*., Video Message on the occasion of the Congress of Scholas Occurrentes at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem,* 2-5 July 2017.

Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, *Giving the Best of Yourself. The Christian Perspective on Sport and the Human Person*, 1 June 2018.

FRANCIS, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 242-247.

Good practices

Scouting is a good "school for youth". It teaches team spirit and it cuts across social classes. It emphasizes *the pedagogy of example* given by older and more experienced persons. It promotes life in contact with the outdoors and thus teaches respect for nature. Scouting opens young people's minds, offers opportunity for recreation and stresses the importance of following the rules and being true to one's word. It upholds the ideals of service, universal fraternity and peace and offers a healthy balance between life in the open, outdoor and physical activity, games and group singing, the spiritual life and service to the community and to those in need.

Within the framework of the programme *Scholas Laudato*, the Pontifical Foundation *Scholas Occurrentes*, in cooperation with the Scouting movement, trains young "Guardians of our Common Home" and builds bridges between non-formal education organizations, schools and other institutions that are part of the platform *Scholas Social*.[41] Manuals and training workshops promote concrete actions aimed at bringing about meaningful changes in the local community, combining art, sport and new technologies in the service of the *culture of encounter*. Young peo-

[41] Cf. https://www.scholasoccurrentes.org/it.

ple train other young people, who in turn share what they have learned with the children of the schools participating in the program.

Workshops focus on a particular issue involving integral ecology, using six different steps: observe/ contemplate, study, involve the whole community, act, evaluate and celebrate. Each theme also involves artistic and sporting activities, shared on the internet as one way of giving visibility to good practices.

Inspired by the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, the Commission on Justice, Peace and Migration of the Bishops Conference of Angola and São Tomé, authored an Action Plan on Environmental Protection for 2017-2019. It is characterized by activities for the dissemination of the Encyclical through radio programmes, conferences and meetings, campaigns to raise awareness and activities for collecting refuse, the creation of a *Manual de Educação Ambiental*, initiatives to promote dialogue with the mining industry, and educational activities to combat deforestation. These projects are accompanied by celebrations and various educational and cultural activities aimed at promoting care for creation among the faithful and the citizens of Angola.

CAFOD (United Kingdom Caritas) has adopted a ten-year Strategic Plan, called *Our Common Home*, which adopts an integral ecology approach, with par-

ticular attention to the culture of encounter and ecological conversion.[42]

The diocese of Salford has developed the *Laudato Si' Centre Project*, encouraging small but positive steps to inspire individuals and communities to promote integral ecology.[43]

In 2011, the Hungarian Bishops Conference founded an association for the protection of creation, called *Naphimnusz*, which actively assists and coordinates Hungarian Catholic communities in caring for our common home.[44]

There are also many informal educational initiatives launched by congregations of women religious. Among these, we can mention the Sisters of Saint Francis in Cameroon. For the 2018 Season of Creation, they organized various educational activities to increase awareness in local communities and schools, using "ambassadors" and role models to teach about the planting, care and protection of trees, and about care for creation and the reclaiming of our common home.[45] In the United States, the Sisters of Saint Joseph work in different ways to educate and form networks that provide opportunities for learning about the importance of sustainability. For example, they have prepared a booklet contain-

[42] Cf. https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate.

[43] Cf. https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/the-laudato-si-centre.

[44] Cf. http://www.teremtesvedelem.hu.

[45] Cf. http://tssfcameroon.org.

ing thirty lessons to teach children how to care for creation, in cooperation with local institutions and colleges.[46]

Some lines of action

1. Encourage concrete experiences in contact with the environment that can engage "head, hands and heart". Such experiences lead to improvements, however small, in the environment, and should be accompanied by moments of reflection and sharing of ideas on what has been lived and learned as a group.

2. Focus on children and young people, helping them to be concerned for others, while treating them as active subjects and agents of social and environmental change. Listen to their suggestions and ideas, and help them concretely to achieve their goals.

3. Do not shield the young from experiences that enable them to "touch the suffering of others". This will allow them to grow in charity and empathy, to appreciate the value of their own suffering and the meaning of life, to respect and care for others and to reject the indifference typical of the throwaway culture.

4. Promote wider interaction with the social, cultural, economic, political and religious community on the local level, without excluding anyone a priori, in the conviction that everything can either help or

[46] Cf. www.ssjphila.org.

hinder sound education, building it up or tearing it down, depending on the value given to it. This will assist in rebuilding the "educational compact" among all actors in society.

5. Take an interest in local problems and connect them with the global ones. Reflect on the positive or negative impact of each single way of acting, also in terms of its global impact.

6. Be concerned for beauty in every setting and for contact with nature. There is an intimate link between harmony and a healthy environment. Propose moments devoted to the contemplation of nature and beauty, to expressing gratitude, to thank God; this too is part of the conversion to an integral ecology.

7. Consider the culture of respect for creation as an instrument of dialogue and, if possible, of convergence between different cultural trends.

9.
Catechesis

"When we ask ourselves what kind of world we want to leave behind, we think in the first place of its general direction, its meaning and its values. Unless we struggle with these deeper issues, I do not believe that our concern for ecology will produce significant results"
(LS 160)

Introduction and contextualization

Catechesis is a process of *education in the faith which presents its contents integrally and organically.* It enables its recipients to be enlightened by the mystery of Christ and to share actively, in the Church, in his redemptive work in the world. In the light of the *Church's social doctrine*, cathechesis is called to deal with integral ecology.

There are a number of *theological and spiritual motivations* for ecological commitment on the part of Christians. "Believers themselves must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith… If a mistaken understanding of our own principles has at times led us to justify mistreating nature, to exercise tyranny over creation, to engage in war, injustice and acts of violence, we believers should acknowledge that by so doing we were not faithful to the treasures of wisdom which we have been called to protect and preserve" (LS 200). The commitment

to the care of our common home is *an integral part of the Christian life* (LS, Chapter Two).

Catechesis must also emphasize its *link to the liturgy*, which, with its symbols and rites, is a place where believers experience themselves as creatures before the Creator and sense their meaningful relationship with the rest of creation. The liturgical texts present creation in a positive way, as God's handiwork, renewed and redeemed in Christ, yet still journeying towards ultimate fulfilment. The liturgy adopts natural elements to express and make present the paschal mystery, above all through the sacraments. These are "a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life… The Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation" (LS 235-236).

Along with the liturgy, catechesis is meant to offer *training in the Christian life.* From the point of view of integral ecology, this calls for promoting direct contact with nature in relation to others.

Nor should we underestimate the fact that environmental issues also provide *an opportunity for an initial proclamation of the Christian faith to those who do not believe.* Many people who are sensitive to the care of our common home are motivated by humanitarian concerns, by the desire for justice or by concrete concern for the future. The active cooperation of believers in this shared enterprise can be an opportunity given by the Holy Spirit to bear witness

to that *magis* that motivates the Lord's disciples also in the field of ecology.

Essential reference texts

Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 279-314 (on God the Creator); nos. 337-349 (on the creation of the visible world); nos. 2402-2406 (on the universal destination of goods); nos. 2415-2418 (on respect for the integrity of creation); nos. 2419-2449 (on the social doctrine of the Church, economic activity and social justice, justice and solidarity among nations, love for the poor).

FRANCIS, *Address at the International Congress on Catechesis*, 27 September 2013.

ID., Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), Chapter IV.

ID., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), Chapter II, 213-217.

Good practices

Local churches have proposed any number of catechetical programmes and resources presenting integral ecology from the standpoint of faith. We can mention, among others, the *Eco-parish Guide. Bringing Laudato Si' to life* published by the *Global Catholic Climate Movement* (GCCM), a guide intended for Catholic parishes.[47]

[47] Cf. https://catholicclimatemovement.global/eco-parish.

Mention can also be made of experience of some Italian ecclesial institutions which for some years have been working towards a *Pastoral Plan for New Lifestyles*: a network linking knowledge to experience in order to foster concern for the care of creation in the Christian community, within the life of individual dioceses and employing ordinary means of pastoral care. It is a flexible means of catechesis and Christian formation that can be applied in a variety of contexts.[48]

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has promoted *Laudato Si'* in a variety of ways, including the programme *Laudato Si' in the Parish*, aimed at providing information and resources, and organizing training on integral ecology, including for priests and deacons.

In 2019, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) adopted a pastoral plan entitled "Evangelizing the Community by Serving God, Humanity and All Creation". It states that from its earliest stages, catechesis should include material on the gift of creation and our God-given responsibility to care for the environment. The plan also promotes training courses on the care for creation in parishes and pastoral ministries in particular.[49]

The text of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* has been included since 2016 in the religious education pro-

[48] Cf. https://reteinterdiocesana.wordpress.com/rete.

[49] Cf.https://sacbc.org.za/Pastoral%20Plan%20-%20CIE%20proof.pdf.

grammes of the Archdiocese of Belo Horizonte, in an effort to spread its message.

Some lines of action

1. In evangelization and Christian formation, it is essential to spend time on the first article of the Creed as an important reference point for any correct theology of creation.

2. The following points are proposed as central theological concepts to be developed for catechesis and for the application of faith to life:

a) The *mystery of creation* in the biblical wisdom accounts awakens amazement and wonder.

b) *God is the Almighty Father and Creator*, and our relationship with him, in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit, makes us recognize our proper place and awakens in us the gift of the fear of God.

c) *"Creation" is more than "nature"*: this awareness allows the human being to approach the world and creatures not as property to be owned, but as a gift of God, to be respected, cared for and valued.

d) *Men and women are the summit of creation and stewards of the garden*: if this places human beings in a qualitatively different role with regard to other creatures, it also requires them to be responsible stewards and not to yield to a certain *distorted anthropocentrism*.

e) *Creation is "journeying" towards its ultimate perfection:* this leads us to reflect on the mystery of evil and the meaning of human freedom, which is challenged to contribute intelligently to a positive evolution, yet also prone to introducing new evils.

f) *Jesus Christ, the firstborn of creation*, is the Way given by the Father for men and women to live their lives in the power of the Spirit, in a fraternal relationship with all creation as we await the transformation of this world. Faith in the Son of God, who became incarnate out of love, is the theological reason for the esteem with which Christians approach worldly realities.

3. In catechesis, the ethical implications of ecology should be presented in the broader context of the Church's moral teaching, as set forth in the third part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

4. Catechesis should assist in a responsible identification of obstacles present in the lives of individuals and communities, such as the denial of issues, indifference, comfortable resignation and blind trust in technical solutions, etc.

5. Catechesis can offer an impetus to conversion at every level of ecological equilibrium: interior, relational, natural and spiritual.

6. By raising awareness of our vocation to be stewards of God's creation, catechesis encourages Christians to act decisively in caring for our common

home at every level: personal lifestyle, proposals for new community practices, commitment to active citizenship and social and political engagement in national and international bodies.

10.
Ecumenical dialogue

"Outside the Catholic Church, other Churches and Christian communities – and other religions as well – have expressed deep concern and offered valuable reflections on issues which all of us find disturbing. To give just one striking example, I would mention the statements made by the beloved Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, with whom we share the hope of full ecclesial communion"
(LS 7)

Introduction and contextualization

Care for our common home provides an excellent framework for dialogue and ecumenical cooperation. In 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople established a Day of Prayer for the Protection of Creation, held each year on 1 September. The Anglican Communion, the World Communion of the Reformed Churches and the World Council of Churches from September 1 to October 4, have also set aside a period called the "*Season of Creation*". In 2016, Pope Francis established *the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, to be celebrated each year on 1 September,[50] and in 2019 he encouraged the Church to

[50] Francis, *Letter Establishing the "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation"*, 6 August 2015.

celebrate the Season of Creation,[51] in the hope that these celebrations will favour a growing communion with the Orthodox Church, include other Churches and ecclesial communities, and be celebrated in accordance with the initiatives sponsored by the World Council of Churches.

Christians of different Churches now cooperate in meeting the challenges of the current environmental crisis through prayer, awareness, education and concrete initiatives. Here we have a fine example of "walking together", which enables us to experience the unity we share. Such cooperation should also be constantly promoted at the level of the Episcopal Conferences and individual Dioceses.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Common Declaration,* Venice, 10 June 2002.

Benedict XVI, *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace. If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation,* 1 January 2010.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 7-9; 14; 63; 64; 111; 216; 222.

Id., *Letter Establishing the "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation"*, 6 August 2015.

[51] Francis, *Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,* 1 September 2019.

FRANCIS and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, *Joint Declaration* (12 February 2016), 11; 17.

FRANCIS and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, *Joint Message for the World Day of Prayer for Creation*, 1 September 2017.

FRANCIS, *Message to His Holiness Bartholomew on the occasion of the International Symposium* "Toward a Greener Attica: Preserving the Planet and Protecting its People" [Athens, June 5-8, 2018], 28 May 2018.

Good practices

With regard to the Season of Creation, an ecumenical steering committee which includes the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, *the Global Catholic Climate Movement*, the World Council of Churches and others, coordinates the web site *SeasonOfCreation.org*, which provides special resources for celebrating this season each year. Following the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity model, the ecumenical steering committee offers local churches a common resource for prayer on an annual theme and for concrete actions to undertake for the care of creation.

During Lent 2016, the National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil promoted a Campaign of Fraternity on the theme "The Common Home, Our Responsibility". *Laudato Si'* was incorporated in the principal text of the Campaign in its entirety, and throughout the Lenten season, training courses on

themes taken from the Encyclical were organized by participating churches. During Palm Sunday of that same year, an Ecumenical Solidarity Fund was established, the fruit of an ecumenical collection in support of various social and environmental initiatives. The Brazilian Bishops Conference, the Brazilian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the United Episcopal Church of Brazil, the United Presbyterian Church, the Syrian-Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Ecumenical Centre for Evangelization and Popular Education, *World Vision* Brazil and the Brazilian Baptist Alliance also joined the 2016 ecumenical Campaign of Fraternity.

Cooperation in advocacy and in certain campaigns is seen in various countries where Christians belong to different denominations (in Germany, this is the case with *Misereor* and *Brot für die Welt*). In South Africa, ecumenical cooperation led to the creation of the NGO *Bench Marks Foundation,* devoted to the study of policy-related issues, the economy and the activity of multinational companies in that country. The *Foundation* produces reports and engages in advocacy.

For the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, on 1 September 2017, Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew published a joint Message in which they stated that "united by the same concern for God's creation and acknowledging the earth as a shared good, we fervently invite all people of goodwill to dedicate a time of prayer for the environment on 1 September. On this occasion, we wish to offer thanks to the loving Creator for the

noble gift of creation and to pledge commitment to its care and preservation for the sake of future generations. After all, we know that we labour in vain if the Lord is not by our side (cf. *Ps* 126/127), if prayer is not at the centre of our reflection and celebration. Indeed, an objective of our prayer is to change the way we perceive the world in order to change the way we relate to the world. The goal of our promise is to be courageous in embracing greater simplicity and solidarity in our lives".

The Italian Episcopal Conference on the Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, publishes an annual Message, drawn up by its two Commissions for Social Problems, Labour, Justice and Peace, and Ecumenism and Dialogue.[52]

Some lines of action

1. Strengthen ecumenical cooperation between the various Christian Churches and ecclesial communities in the area of integral ecology through practical proposals such as fasting, pilgrimages, seminars, disinvestment or reinvestment campaigns, the financing of joint projects, etc.

2. Organize or continue prayer services with other Churches and ecclesial communities on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (1 Sep-

[52] Cf. https://lavoro.chiesacattolica.it/category/ambiti/custodia- del-creato/?cci_cat=373.

tember) or during the “Season of Creation” (1 September – 4 October).

3. Pursue cooperation with other Churches and Communities in the promotion of awareness-raising and educational activities on the issue of care for creation, in order to carry out concrete projects for humanitarian cooperation and development (for example, access to water).

11.

Interreligious dialogue

"Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality. If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it"
(LS 63)

Introduction and contextualization

There is an urgent need for the faithful of the various religious groups to join forces in promoting an ecologically responsible social order based on shared values. The declarations of the various religious groups on climate change are one of many examples of this.[53]

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis emphasizes the urgency and the importance of a dialogue with all re-

[53] Cf. *The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change*, 14 May 2015. *Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders*, 29 October 2015. *Islamic Declaration on Climate Change*, 18 August 2015. *Hindu Declaration on Climate Change,* 23 November 2015. LYNN WHITNEY, *Faith Based Statements on Climate Change*, 2012.

ligions for the care of our common home (cf. LS 7, 14, 63, 64, 111, 216, 222). He also argues that the ecological crisis is essentially a spiritual problem and that interreligious dialogue is essential to resolving it. Concern for environmental decay has an interreligious dimension: religions possess a wisdom that can help bring about the changes needed in our lifestyles in order to overcome the deterioration of our planet. "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" (LS 92). The interconnection and the interdependence of human beings and nature invite everyone to transcend differences of social class, creed, race and culture in order to work together to protect the health of our family home, now and for future generations. To be able to understand this vision, we must remind everyone of our shared responsibility.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, *Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace – Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation*, 1 January 1990.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 48; 51.

Id., *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace – If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation,* 1 January 2010.

Francis, Encycical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 7; 14; 63-64; 111; 216; 201; 222.

Id., *Messages for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, 1 September, 2015-2019.

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, *Towards Responsible Stewardship of Creation. An Asian Christian Approach,* 2015.

Joint Declaration by the Holy See Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism and of the Grand Rabbinate of Israel for Relations with the Catholic Church, Rome, 2010, n. 5.

Commission for Religious Relations with Judaism, "For the Gifts and the Call of God are Irrevocable (*Rom* 11:29) – Reflections on Theological Questions Concerning Catholic-Jewish Relations", 10 December 2015, 46.

Francis, *Address to Participants in the Symposium sponsored by the Organization of American States and by the Institute for Interreligious Dialogue,* Buenos Aires, 8 September 2016.

Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, signed in Abu Dhabi by His Holiness Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyib, 4 February 2019.

Francis, *Address to Participants in the Conference on Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, 8 March 2019.

Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), 106-110.

Good practices

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, in its annual messages of greeting on the occasion of the major celebrations of other religions, and in the course of various conferences dealing with the ecological crisis and the need for dialogue and cooperation, has stressed the importance of interreligious dialogue for combatting this crisis.[54]

There are also numerous initiatives organized by the local Churches to promote an awareness of integral ecology through interreligious dialogue. For example, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Turkey has established a *Laudato Si' Group* (*Laudato Sì grubu*) which engages in prayer and activities for the care of our common home, with the involvement also of young Orthodox and Muslims concerned about environmental issues. In Canada, the Archdiocese of Edmonton has organized numerous ecumenical and interreligious activities on integral ecology.[55]

Some lines of action

1. Encourage a prophetic, contemplative and sober lifestyle.

2. Recover an awareness of the bond between humanity and nature, also with the help of the sa-

[54] Cf. https://www.pcinterreligious.org and http://www.vatican.va/ roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/index_it.htm.

[55] Cf. https://caedm.ca/Ecumenical.

cred texts of the various religious traditions, in order to translate that awareness into daily life.

3. Show concern for the health and sustainability of our planet through shared educational programs aimed at raising ecological awareness and promoting common initiatives involving the faithful of different religions, who live and work side by side.

4. Encourage greater interreligious cooperation in addressing environmental issues, while emphasizing that *universal solidarity* is needed in order to unite humanity in the search for integral and sustainable development.

5. Promote shared commitments with the followers of other religions and encourage change in behaviours and lifestyles through a rediscovery of the kinds of values that provide the basis for a new environmental consciousness.

12.
Communication

"Francis communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason"
(LS 11)

Introduction and contextualization

Like the Poor Man of Assisi, Pope Francis has urged all of us to approach nature and the environment with *amazement and wonder*, and to relate to the world with *the language of fraternity and beauty*. *Laudato Si'* analyzes *the ecology of the media* in relation to the technocratic paradigm; it notes with concern the omnipresence of the media and the internet (cf. LS 47), yet at the same time, it also recognizes the need to employ them in promoting *ecological conversion*, a paradigm shift that moves beyond the mindset of short term gain and quick results (cf. LS 181). "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. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spiritual-

ity of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity" (LS 240).

From the critique of a *tyrannical and distorted anthropocentrism* to the proposal of ecological conversion for a global citizenship (cf. LS 216-221), the language of "*being in relation*" and of communication, recurs throughout the Encyclical, as does the word "dialogue" and the expression "enter into dialogue". *Laudato Si'* proposes a vision of integral relation, which, through the use of the five senses in social relationships, connects human beings, nature and creation. It offers a global perspective that criticizes manipulation and exploitation, the "throw-away" mindset. "Mere accumulation of data, which eventually leads to overload and confusion", is criticized as "a sort of mental pollution" (LS 47) and the need to *care for the media environment* is urged: "Today's media do enable us to communicate and to share our knowledge and affections. Yet at times they also shield us from direct contact with the pain, the fears and the joys of others and the complexity of their personal experiences" (LS 47).

There is a great similarity between care for our common home and communication. Both are founded on communion, on relationships, on the interconnection of everything and everyone. Communicating is sharing; hence our need to realize how interconnected we are at every level: ethical, social, economic, political and educational.

Communication is a necessity, a means and a life environment. It is at the heart of the debate on ecology between human beings and nature, a setting for intergenerational exchange and the sharing and passing down of values. Pope Francis has spoken of the media itself as an environment, a digital environment and a communications environment.[56] As such, communication is one of the areas where *ecological conversion* can take place. Here, respect for creation becomes an essential principle in the ethics of communication. Indeed, those involved in media have the task of recalling and appealing to the links between human destiny and the natural environment, so as to make citizens understand that they are not only consumers, but also responsible stewards of the planet. How far is this approach from the disinformation spread by so-called *fake news*! Communication can have a negative effect on people's thinking, but it can also transmit an ecological ethics and become a forum and means for the development of *a global ecological citizenship* by producing, collecting, broadcasting and spreading discussions, good practices, the experiences and wisdom of peoples, and by helping everyone to rediscover that everything is united and linked. In this way, it can invite us *to enter into communion with others* (cf. LS 65).

[56] *Message for the 2014 World Day of Social Communications. Communication at the Service of an Authentic Culture of Encounter*, 1 June 2014.

Essential reference texts

Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Advertising* (22 February 1997), 17.

Saint John Paul II, *General Audience Catechesis*, 17 January 2001.

Benedict XVI, *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace. If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation*, 1 January 2010.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 1; 47-49; 68; 79; 84; 92; 127; 162; 213-227.

Id., *Letter Establishing the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, 6 August 2015.

Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 86-90.

Good practices

The first step towards a proper communication of *Laudato Si'* is to make it available to everyone; this means translating it into every language, something that has already been done by numerous Bishops' Conferences and local Churches, as for example in Pakistan (where it was translated into Urdu), in Ethiopia, in Bangladesh.

Many digital networks around *Laudato Si'* have been created using the internet, such as the website http://www.laudato-si.net/ which provides resources for understanding, studying, communicating and sharing experiences and good practices on the Encyclical, or the *Laudato Si'* community network https://comunitalaudato-si.org/, an initiative for the

establishment of communities in the spirit of the Encyclical for the promotion of ecological conversion and global citizenship.

Many Episcopal Conferences have done their best to effectively communicate the message of *Laudato Si'*. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, for example, has distributed throughout the country various documents (guides, videos, etc.) and adopted as a priority for its 2017-2020 planning to "teach and advocate about integral ecology, with particular attention to environmental degradation and to its impact on the lives of most vulnerable". We can also mention the programme *Laudato Si' Advocates*,[57] and various means for spreading ways to implement the Encyclical in daily life,[58] within families,[59] or through campaigns on social media and blogs.[60]

The Polish Bishops Conference, in collaboration with Caritas Polska and the *Global Catholic Climate Movement*, distributed millions of *Laudato Si'* prayer flyers in parishes throughout the country to encourage prayer for the United Nations Climate Summit COP24 held in Katowice in December 2018.

[57] Cf. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment.

[58] Cf. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-discussion-guide.pdf.

[59] Cf. http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/Laudato-si-Bulletin-Insert.pdf.

[60] Cf. https://togoforth.org.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops also published a guide to *Laudato Si'*.[61]

In 2003 the Catholic Church in Malta established a commission for the care of creation, promoting various activities with informational materials, radio programmes, conferences and more.[62]

Estabilished in 2018 in Uruguay, the Saint Francis Ecology Group, with the support of the social ministry of the Catholic Church in Montevideo, promotes awareness for care for our common home through communication, education and activities on the ground.

A number of training courses on integral ecology and global citizenship have been organized for journalists, like those proposed by *Greenaccord*.[63]

In 2019, CIDSE (*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité*) produced a toolkit for journalists and communication workers in five languages: "Journalists' Toolkit on Sustainable Lifestyles, with inspirations, writing tips and visual ideas". This is a resource for communicating integral ecology by using positive and hopeful language despite the dramatic challenges that the media are called to report.[64]

[61] Cf. https://jesuitforum.ca.

[62] Cf. https://church.mt/archdiocese/interdiocesan-commissions/interdiocesan-environment-commission.

[63] Cf. https://greenaccord.org.

[64] Cf. https://www.cidse.org/2019/10/16/journalists-toolkit-on-sustainable-lifestyles-with-inspirations-writing-tips-and-visual-ideas.

Some lines of action

1. Promote *websites* for the dissemination of the Encyclical, in order to share educational experiences and good practices, and to promote sharing and prayer groups on social media.

2. Strengthen the pastoral formation of professionals through associations, formal meetings, seminars and conferences.

3. Given the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of the topic, organize training courses on integral ecology and global citizenship for journalists.

4. Encourage and enhance the contribution made by ecclesial structures meant to inform journalists about environmental issues.

5. Invite journalists and environmental media to provide clear, complete and correct information on the Encyclical, maintaining the interest of different audiences through *workshops*, seminars and conferences.

6. Encourage the growth among journalists of a culture of truth, in order to stop the spread of misleading news deliberately created to deny the existence of an environmental crisis.

7. Be concerned to give voice to the voiceless, encouraging and facilitating the collection and dissemination of testimonies by those who have themselves experienced or can relate cases of abuse, pollution and violations of human rights.

Chapter II

INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1.
Food and Nutrition

"Whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor"
(LS 50)

"There is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world's peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing… Civil authorities have the right and duty to adopt clear and firm measures in support of small producers and differentiated production"
(LS 129)

Introduction and contextualization

The Encyclical addresses the issue of food in the context of the wider *global economic system*, highlighting the inadequacies of that system due to inequality, lack of diversification, environmental impact, and the dominant model of production for consumption. The Holy Father forcefully condemns *food waste* as an act of injustice, "stealing from the table of the poor", while recognizing, on the other hand, the importance of *small-scale farming systems* for food and environmental protection. In this regard, the evaluation of innovations made possible by ge-

netic research should take into account their effects on small agricultural producers; this needs to be addressed through a debate involving all stakeholders, in order to have a more comprehensive approach to this complex issue (cf. LS 133-135).

Consequently, *Laudato Si'* urges governments to seek, first and foremost, solutions at the national and local level, in order to promote diversified and sustainable agriculture, investments in rural areas and in national and local markets, and cooperative companies and a community organization capable of protecting *small producers and natural resources*.

One particular problem is that of *food losses* occurring in the post-production stages (post-harvest, processing, storage, transport and sale), with a serious impact on the income of small producers. Such losses are a consequence of an overdeveloped market-centred food system and must be addressed through an approach to human development that is integral, social and ecological.

Recent international statistics report multiple forms of *malnutrition* in the world, with an increase of *obesity* and *under-nutrition*. In light of this, there is an urgent need to promote a *nutritional education* that is healthy and quantitatively, qualitatively and culturally appropriate. It is even more important to understand the impact of *environmental degradation* on those who depend particularly on the land and on water for their food.

Essential reference texts

Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961), Chapter III, 111-142.

Saint Paul VI, *Address to Participants in the World Food Conference,* 9 November 1974.

Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", *World Hunger, a Challenge for All: Development in Solidarity*, 1996.

Saint John Paul II, *Message for World Food Day*, 16 October 2003.

Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, *Agriculture, Food and Nutrition: Responding to the Crises,* in *Crisis in a Global Economy – Planning the Path*, Acta 16, 2011.

Caritas Internationalis, *What Climate Change Means for Feeding the Planet*, 2013.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Land and Food,* 2015.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 50; 129; 135; 180.

Id., *Message for the Fortieth FAO General Conference*, 3 July 2017.

Id., *Address during the Visit to FAO Headquarters in Rome on the occasion of World Food Day*, 16 October 2017.

Id., *Angelus,* 29 July 2018.

Id., *Address to the Forty-first FAO Conference*, 27 June 2019.

Good practices

Caritas India/Caritas Asia have worked in Asian regions affected by prolonged drought, soil salinization, excessive use of chemical agents and pesticides, loss of soil fertility and export farming, in order to provide small farmers with updated knowledge and skills in planning, integrated family farming and integrated pest control. They have also taken action on climate change with various water and soil conservation measures, using sustainable soil cultivation and permaculture techniques. Field visits have been followed by discussions and the creation of future action plans, including on-the-ground interventions and advocacy for food security in those regions.

The right to food for all human beings was at the heart of the campaign *One Human Family, Food for All*, carried out by the World Caritas Confederation from 2013 to 2015 and supported by the Holy Father. The campaign aimed to counter unequal access to food and to raise awareness of the importance of food (where it is produced, who produced it and in what conditions) while also working to prevent food waste. Through this campaign, Caritas Internationalis asked government leaders to be accountable to their international commitments and to adopt appropriate policies to guarantee food access. At the same time, it also encouraged Caritas worldwide to commit to advocate on *governance issues*, for example, as well as access to markets and to land and to productive resources in the various national contexts.

Many initiatives have been taken by Bishops' Conferences and the local Churches to implement programmes for the development and promotion of food safety. Among these, we can point to the commitment of the Archdiocese of Luxembourg to promote actions to improve energy efficiency, with sustainable construction and, above all, rural development projects in various countries such as Guatemala, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon.

In 2018, AEFJN (*Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network)*; AFJN (*Africa Faith and Justice Network)*; AFSA (*Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa)*; SECAM (*Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar)*; and RECOWA (*Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa)* with the support of CIDSE (*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité*), issued a joint publication inspired by the *Laudato Si'* approach to our relationship and responsibility to care for the land and small-scale food producers.[65]

Some lines of action

1. Promote the realization of the right to food for all human beings, and promote it as the basis of

[65] Cf. https://www.cidse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EN-Joint_reflection_on_land_in_Africa_Oct_2018.pdf.

the entire production-distribution-consumption food cycle.

2. Contribute to world food safety by providing adequate support to *small-scale farmers*, primarily in the areas of ecological agriculture, livestock farming and subsistence fishing, particularly on a family basis, with attention to the environment, employment, the dignity of work and legality.

3. Promote adequate access (especially for women and young people) to land ownership and land use, fishing permits, seed purchase, responsible credit, training and insurance, giving priority to land use for direct food production, rather than to the production of non-food products or fuels, countering land-grabbing and deforestation and favouring the cultivation of native and diversified seeds.

4. Support rural populations in order to increase production on their lands, train them to acquire new skills, encourage community organization and participation in local institutions, promoting food production that respects the environment, soil biodiversity and the regeneration time of the various natural resources.

5. Invest in the restoration and protection of agricultural landscapes and in the sustainable use of forests as a means of resilience and adaptation to climate change, for example, by encouraging the development of producer cooperatives, seed banks, micro-credit institutions and decentralized training, data collection and analysis systems and information sharing at the service of rural communities.

6. Link rural and peri-urban areas to commercial intersections through efficient infrastructure, in order to reduce as much as possible potential food losses.

7. Improve the care of animals on farms, particularly animals used in agricultural work and in breeding livestock. Train competent operators in terms of productivity and quality, who can then help producers, especially the poorest, with simple but effective methods to contribute to a meaningful increase in production, in quality of work and income.

8. Invest in important advanced sectors such as permaculture, agroforestry, small-scale agricultural projects, and the production of organic fertilizers and pesticides; the enhancement of soil quality and of its micro-biodiversity; diversified and sustainable agriculture as a contribution, for example, to the survival of pollinizing species and of certain migratory species and to the fight against desertification in certain regions; the protection of varieties of seed traditionally cultivated in poor countries, and the promotion of appropriate seeds for the technical, economic and ecological conditions of each area.

9. Identify and counter the large polluting agro-industrial projects involving extensive and highly mechanized cultivation, sometimes intended to grow products that are not considered as priorities for human consumption, and which often unfairly occupy the territories of the local populations that at times engage in violent expulsion and large-scale deforestation.

10. Promote inclusive debates with all the parties involved in agri-food innovations resulting from genetic research (GMOs – genetically modified organisms) and finance a variety of independent and interdisciplinary research projects that can bring new insights.

11. Pursue a fair international trade system, thus enabling agriculture in poor countries to be strengthened and diversified through the exportation of both raw materials and processed products; ensuring sufficiently high prices for producers in the poor countries; protecting small producers who operate in poor countries from the production of the richest countries or from rich countries' companies operating in poor countries; avoiding excessive and unjustified dependence on suppliers and patents.

12. Curb speculation on foodstuffs, since it endangers the food security of the human family.

13. Counter irregular and undocumented fishing through international cooperation.

14. Show particular concern for areas affected by natural disasters, wars, large migrations, facilitating access to seeds and food, and ensure the transition from assistance to rehabilitation in order to support the recovery of rural areas at the end of a crisis.

15. Adopt and disseminate awareness, educational and cooperation programmes to avoid food wast and post-harvest losses, including by addressing production, distribution and catering chains.

16. Raise awareness around adequate diets, pointing out that they have direct consequences on overall human development, especially during pregnancy and in the early years of life. Encourage quantitatively and qualitatively nutritious, healthy and fair diets, based on the best available knowledge of products, their origin, their properties and of traditional food cultures.

2.
Water

"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" (LS 30)

Introduction and contextualization

The Encyclical clearly highlights that the depletion of natural resources is linked to unsustainable levels of consumption in the most developed countries.

Among these resources, drinking water is of primary importance, because it *is essential for human life* and for supporting *ecosystems*: it is vital for living beings and for the growth of vegetation, for human hygiene and fighting diseases, as well as for the agricultural, pastoral, crafts and industrial sectors.

The increase in water demand due to the increase in the world's population, exacerbated by climate change and pollution, represents a major challenge. The *worsening of water quality* due to pollution in combination with the growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to *privatize* this resource, are serious problems. In accordance with the principle of *the universal destination of goods*, and thus of the universal right to their use, the Holy Father insists on access to clean and healthy water as *an essen-*

tial, basic and universal human right. Yet even today this right is, in fact, denied to the poorest among us and is not adequately recognized or promoted at the local and international levels. Our world has a grave *social debt towards the poor* that must be paid back by providing greater assistance, and by educating and raising awareness to *avoid waste*. Given that "every privatization of the natural good of water, at the expense of the human right to have access to this good, is unacceptable", in response we need to look beyond immediate concerns and a purely utilitarian view of reality, and to urgently adopt shared projects and concrete actions.[66] It is also conceivable that the control of water by large multinational businesses may become a major source of *conflict* in the coming decades.

For all Christians, water represents a symbol of purification and life, above all through its use in baptism, the sacrament of our rebirth into eternal life. Jesus offers himself as water capable of quenching human thirst for ever: "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink" (*Jn* 7:37). In turn, he asks us to give him as drink to all those who thirst in our own times: "I was thirsty and you gave me drink" (*Mt* 25:35). In the global village in which we are living, this not only entails personal gestures of charity, but also concrete choices and a constant commitment to ensure that water, as a primary good, is available to all.

[66] Francis, *Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,* 1 September 2018.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, *Message for World Food Day,* 13 October 2002.

Benedict XVI, *Message for World Water Day*, 23 March 2007.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 27.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Water. An Essential Element for Life,* 2013.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 27-31.

Pontifical Academy of Sciences, *The Human Right to Water: An Interdisciplinary Focus and Contributions on the Central Role of Public Policies in Water and Sanitation Management*, 24 February 2017.

Francis*, Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation,* 1 September 2018.

Id., *Message for World Water Day*, 22 March 2019.

Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), 43-49.

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, Aqua Fons Vitae. Orientations on Water,* 2020.

Good practices

In Brazil, Caritas works to provide access to drinking water for domestic and agricultural purposes, carrying out initiatives for the implementation of other human rights, such as the right to food, health and

active citizenship. The aim is to ensure the availability of water in the long term through the installation of tanks and to guide local communities by organizing seminars on water management and infrastructure maintenance. It also includes educating the population to avoid waste, and carrying out regular monitoring visits and meetings with residents. The results achieved are an increase of agricultural productivity, health improvement, and greater social welfare.

In Burkina Faso, in the framework of the National Water Plan, Caritas Burkina OCADES (*Organisation Catholique pour le Développement et la Solidarité*) has plans to guarantee access to drinking water for people in rural areas where water is often wasted. In close collaboration with local communities, OCADES creates infrastructures to help maintain and repair manual pumps and to mitigate health problems; it also organizes education programmes for girls. For ten years, a programme co-financed by *Secours Catholique* and Caritas France has allowed more than 50,000 people in 10 rural municipalities to receive a supply of drinking water, health services and environmental education, with remarkable results. In total, more than 60 new wells drilled and more than 200 old wells have been rehabilitated, more than 5,000 domestic latrines built, more than 10,000 trees planted, more than 200 hydraulic technicians trained and more than 500 user associations set up. The aim of the Church's programme is to strengthen social cohesion in the realization of projects and to co-create a better future through access

to basic social services. To this end, Muslims, Christians and followers of traditional African religions maintain a constructive dialogue and manage collective projects. OCADES pursues this effort to promote integral human development.

The Episcopal Conference of Congo has carried out numerous activities to implement *Laudato Si'*, including some related to drinking water, as well as the development of studies on this important resource and on the various sources of pollution, and the implementation of special projects promoted by Caritas Congo.

There are numerous initiatives promoted by Bishops' Conferences and local Churches to implement water development programmes. For example, the Church in Slovakia is working with Caritas to provide drinking water access in Syria and Iraq, drilling wells and restructuring houses to favour the return of displaced persons.

In 2019 the Justice and Peace Commission of the Spanish Bishops' Conference launched the Campaign #ConectAguaPobreza to raise awareness of the use of drinking water.[67]

Some lines of action

1. Adopt education and awareness programmes on the preciousness of water, in order to encourage responsible consumption and to promote its reuse.

[67] Cf. https://www.enlazateporlajusticia.org/agua.

2. Ensure the availability of water not only for drinking purposes, but also for hygiene, food preparation, household uses, and agriculture, thus promoting a broader concept of access to water.

3. Help local communities to work responsibly toward water self-sufficiency, strengthening their ability to determine their own needs, to adopt appropriate management mechanisms, to carry out constant quality control, to collect and save rain water, and to maintain water infrastructures connected to irrigation, household use and toilets.

4. Strengthen the will and the means at state level to guarantee to all a safe, reliable and constant supply of accessible and affordable drinking water.

5. Promote sustainable models of water consumption through ecological techniques, such as containers for drinking that are reusable and not a threat to human health, so as to minimize the use of disposable plastics.

6. In cases where drinking water is obtained by technological procedures (desalinization and others) owned by private individuals, ensure that its distribution and cost are determined on the basis of fair and ethical criteria.

7. Strengthen the codification and implementation – in international conventions and national legal systems – of access to drinking water as a fundamental and universal human right.

8. Determine tariffs and adequately train local administrations, so that the supply of water is guar-

anteed to everyone, even to those who are unable to pay for it.

9. Favour “drop by drop” irrigation, which avoids large wastage of water.

10. Combat water pollution which affects rivers, oceans and groundwater.

11. Correctly manage and recover as much wastewater as possible, in order to protect ecosystems and rural development.

12. Assess adverse effects on the water cycle and on biodiversity that future hydroelectric or industrial projects built in the vicinity of watercourses may have, and then take appropriate preventive measures to avoid disasters.

13. Set up dispute resolution for competing uses of water considering priorities based on the dignity of the human person.

3.
Energy

"Worldwide there is minimal access to clean and renewable energy"
(LS 26)

Introduction and contextualization

The Holy Father often refers to the concept of *access to energy*, which includes the conditions governing the possibility of consuming this important resource. This includes considerations such as whether it is economically or quantitatively accessible, whether the sophistication of the plant corresponds to the capacity and the real needs of the users, and so on. Pope Francis also insists on the characteristics of *clean and renewable energy*, as there is a growing and justified concern for the effects that activities related to energy resources (extraction or transformation, transport, storage, consumption) have and could have on societies (in terms of inequality or social unrest, but also health) and on the environment (at local and global level, in particular on climate, air, water and soil pollution).

On the global level, *Laudato Si'* insists on the need to replace, "progressively and without delay", technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels (LS 165). An energy transition is in fact

currently under way, with fossil fuels being slowly replaced by sources of renewable energy, yet these still represent only a small part of the quantity of fossil fuels being used. Until greater progress is made in this indispensable energy transition, it is legitimate to choose the less harmful alternative or to find short-term solutions and fair criteria for the distribution of the related costs, in order to ensure that the poorest countries do not have to bear the financial burden they impose disproportionately.

In some areas of Africa and on some islands, a large part of the population and many functional buildings (including schools and health centres) still lack electricity and use kerosene lamps. Reflecting on access to energy leads to questions about how this resource is being used.

Building safe, accessible, affordable and efficient energy systems based on renewable energy sources would enable us to respond to the needs of the poor and at the same time limit global warming. Such energy systems can positively contribute to dealing with the causes of climate change and strengthening resilience to the present and future impact of climate change at local level.

Essential reference texts

SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to Participants in the Study Week on "Energy and Humanity: Needs – Resources–Hopes"*, 14 November 1980.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 49.
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Energy, Justice and Peace*, 2014.
Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 26; 164; 165; 180; 211.
Id., *Message to Participants in the "National Day" of the Holy See at EXPO 2017 in Astana,* 2 September 2017.
Id., *Address to Participants in the Meeting for Executives of Major Companies in the Oil and Natural Gas Sectors, and Other Energy Related Businesses*, 9 June 2018.
Id., *Address to Participants in the Meeting organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on the Theme: The Energy Transition and Care for our Common Home,* 14 June 2019.

Good practices

A number of local Churches are working together with local communities to promote access to non-polluting energy for all, paying attention to the entire cycle of energy production and consumption, as well as the maintenance and longevity of their facilities. These initiatives often create lasting partnerships for the supply of clean energy, with modalities that can sometimes be replicable for areas most in need.

The Episcopal Commission on the Laity of the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines signed *a memorandum* with *WeGen Laudato Si'* to favour access and use of renewable energy, especially solar energy, by Church institutions and by the poorest communities in the Philippines. In this context, the project also promotes information and communication campaigns to disseminate the teaching of Pope Francis and of *Laudato Si'*. The Diocese of Maasin, in the Philippines, became the first diocese in the world to equip all parishes with solar panels. After a feasibility study carried out by *WeGen Laudato Si'*, solar panels were installed on diocesan buildings. Even though the installation was free, parishes pay a monthly fee according to the savings on the electricity bill for a period that goes from seven to fifteen years. The project also allows, through a special mechanism, sharing excess energy with other Church institutions.

Since the end of the last century, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has been carrying out the Diocesan Green Energy Procurement Project, promoted by Inter-Diocesan Fuel Management Ltd, which aims at facilitating access to renewable energy sources by various Catholic institutions in the dioceses of England and Wales.

In 2015, in Austria, following the lines of action on sustainability, some dioceses made the important decision to phase out fossil fuels completely and to purchase certified green electricity.

In 2017, *Cafod* (Caritas United Kingdom), with some partners, developed and proposed a methodology for access to sustainable energy to be applied in the poorest situations. It is known as the Energy Delivery Model Toolkit, and it was applied in the Diocese of Isiolo (Kenya), in collaboration with the local Caritas. A clinic has been equipped with solar panels and batteries, providing it with electricity and thus allowing it to be illuminated and operational even at night. The electrical energy generated in this way is also supplied to a water purification system.

In the Holy Land, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine–CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association) has installed numerous solar plants to generate electricity.

There are also cases where diocesan offices, parishes, small Christian communities and schools have chosen to use electricity produced by solar panels, such as the Archdiocese of Calcutta (India). In the Diocese of Lezhë (Albania), the Rogationist Fathers carried out various programmes with the NGO *Vides* for the installation of photovoltaic plants and the organization of training courses on renewable energies.[68]

In 2018, the CIDSE network (*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité*)

[68] Cf. https://progettoalbania.rcj.org/inaugurazione-impianto-photovoltaics-to-regional-lezhe-and-blessing-of-the-first-but-stone-of-the-gym-of-our-school-29-May-2019.

produced the documentary "Energy to Change",[69] which brings together six stories from Switzerland, Congo, Brazil, Belgium, Portugal and Kenya. The documentary demonstrates how it is possible to build sustainable energy systems in different situations and in all their phases (production to distribution and consumption).

In a completely different context, Vatican City State in 2008 installed a sophisticated photovoltaic system on the roof of the Paul VI Audience Hall, which transfers the electricity produced into the power grid. A second plant with solar thermal collectors for the conversion of solar energy into thermal and refrigeration energy was installed two years later in another area of the Vatican. A circuit of refrigerated water is thus used for the air conditioning of the Vatican cafeteria.

Some lines of action

1. Address the situation of those lacking access to electricity and/or who frequently use energy in a way dangerous for health and the environment.

2. Promote actions and projects to ensure that energy is available to all, with the least possible impact on health and on the environment; suitable for its intended uses in terms of type and power;

[69] Cf. https://changeandcare.atavist.com/energy-to-change.

capable of being employed in adequate quantities and modalities for every type of use contributing to integral human development; and respectful of the rights and the voice of local communities.

3. Promote, with due technical and administrative controls, decentralized energy systems (micro-grids), based on renewable energies, with enduring infrastructures and appliances that enhance the responsibility of the various communities and of every single family. Respect local culture and ensure that the local community, as far as possible, is able to manage and maintain the plants, without being unnecessarily dependent on networks and bureaucracies.

4. Research and promote energy efficiency and, at the same time, responsible energy consumption, especially in countries where the per capita consumption is highest.

5. When building new ecclesiastical buildings, or renovating existing buildings, use natural materials as much as possible and consider using energy efficiency systems.

6. Strictly monitor exploration and extraction activities in the most fragile ecosystems and in offshore activities, especially in developing countries. Make sure to involve the local population, in order to prevent human rights being violated, and also to keep water, soil and air from being negligently and consciously polluted.

7. Reduce and, if possible, completely stop the burning off of excess natural gas at hydrocarbon extraction sites (flaring), by developing safe alternatives for the environment, the population and for the plants themselves.

8. Drastically reduce pollution (with local or global impact) during energy production, transport, distribution and consumption, adopting advanced technology systems that are widely available, and using an energy mix that can achieve the decarbonization of the energy sector and more generally of economies more generally.

9. Sell energy at an affordable price. Fairly divide the profit of the sale, and also consider the negative externalities in tariffs and in business models.

10. Condemn and abandon commercial strategies based on energy waste, on planned obsolescence of various kinds of machinery, on the supply of low-quality products that still require energy to be produced, and on single-use, disposable objects.

11. Promote non-polluting modes of transport, taking into account not only fuel but also the entire life cycle of vehicles. Facilitate the use of means of transport such as bicycles, public vehicles and various forms of car sharing.

12. Continue research into the harm caused to the environment and human health by various energy-related activities, and disseminate the results.

13. Encourage daily choices in lifestyles, for the sake of reducing energy consumption, especially in the wealthiest areas of the planet.

4.

Ecosystems, deforestation, desertification, land use

"The establishment of a legal framework which can set clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems has become indispensable; otherwise, the new power structures based on the techno-economic paradigm may overwhelm not only our politics but also freedom and justice… There is an interrelation between ecosystems and between the various spheres of social interaction, demonstrating yet again that 'the whole is greater than the part'… New forms of cooperation and community organization can be encouraged in order to defend the interests of small producers and preserve local ecosystems from destruction"
(LS 53, 141, 180)

Introduction and contextualization

Laudato Si' clearly states: "Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years" (LS 53). At the same time, we also have been called to be "instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness" (LS 36). God the Father has a plan for his creation. The book of Genesis invites us to *till and keep* the garden of the world. Certainly, we can take from the bounty of the earth whatever we need for subsistence, but we must exercise responsibility and care for its resources (cf. LS 67).

The Encyclical identifies the problem of the excessive use of natural resources within the context of the *ethics of international relations* and also in the light of the *ecological debt* accumulated by the countries in the global north vis-à-vis those of the global south. The extraction of raw materials causes pollution, as does the use of developing countries for landfills and the dumping of toxic waste. The depletion of soils and natural biodiversity, the deforestation of large areas of the planet, water pollution and the devastation of landscapes ought to weigh on the conscience of those who have exploited our common home.

Citing the Aparecida Document, *Laudato Si'* speaks of "the interests of economic groups which irrationally demolish sources of life" (no. 54). It also highlights the slow progress made in care for biodiversity and in the fight against desertification, as well as the concrete risk that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars. Politics will have to prevent and resolve this scenario. The symptoms of change and degradation are so strong that we are forced to recognize that "the present world system is certainly unsustainable from a number of points of view" and to fear the possibility of "a breaking point" (LS 61) for the world.

Essential reference texts

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Id., *Message for the Church's Fraternity Campaign in Brazil*, 15 February 2017.
CELAM, *Discípulos misioneros custodios de la casa común. Discernimento a la luz de la encíclica Laudato Si'*, 25 January 2018.
Synod of Bishops, *Final Document of the Synod on Amazonia*, 2019.
Francis, *Address to Participants in the Meeting organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on the Mining Industry*, 3 May 2019.
Id., *Address to Participants in the World Congress of the International Association of Penal Law*, 15 November 2019.
Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), 28-40; 47-52.

Good practices

There are many activities aimed at promoting reforestation as well as commitments and education initiatives for proper soil management, like those promoted by the Namibian Bishops' Conference or in some dioceses of Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Pakistan or Papua New Guinea.

In response to Saint John Paul II's concern for the desertification of the Sahel and that the peoples of the region enjoy sufficient food and water and a dignified future, the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel has been working since 1984 to improve living conditions in nine Sahel countries through, for example, reforestation, agroforestry, irrigation and techniques to stop desertification. The Foundation also builds multi-purpose schools and wells, and allocates funds to provide farmers with tools for their work.

Another indication of the active involvement of the Church is the creation of local networks, through which ecclesial communities manage catchments together. In the Amazon River basin, the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesial Network (REPAM) has become a reference point for addressing the problem of the exploitation and degradation of the Pan-Amazon Region. Set up in 2014 by the episcopal conferences, religious congregations and Caritas, REPAM combines creative pastoral work with a prophetic socio-political vision. Its work includes political advocacy and the transformation of the development model. It also includes the protection of biodiversity with the help of ethical and

spiritual principles based on a recovery of the sacred dimension of life present in the culture of the indigenous peoples. Examples of this commitment are the initiatives in Peru of the *Iglesias y Minería* network for the defence of communities and territories, and the efforts being made by religious and laity to defend the territory from the degradation caused by the mining industry. Inspired by this model, similar projects have been carried out in Africa for the Congo River basin (REBAC), in Central America (REMAM), in the Asia-Pacific and also in the Southern Cone of Latin America.[70]

In 2009, Auxiliary Bishop Adriano Tomasi of Lima launched the project *Manchay Verde* in Lima's Pachacamac district, to address the problem of waste water management. After passing through a waste water treating system, the water was collected in the septic tank, settled and then pumped upwards, towards a small phyto-purification basin. The result was clear water, flowing from a slope in a drop-by-drop system, suitable for ornamental irrigation. This prototype basin is built in transparent plates, so that guided visits can be organized (especially for schools and local authorities) and other educational activities. By 2019, *Manchay Verde* had planted more than

[70] Mention can also be made of the activity of Bishop Luigi Infanti della Mora, Vicar Apostolic of Aysén (Chilean Patagonia), for the protection of glaciers from the threat of hydroelectric power stations. See his Pastoral Letter "Give Us Today Our Daily Water" (2008).

2000 trees on an irrigated area of six hectares. In other arid areas of Lima, other projects inspired by this experience have also been launched.

In 2018, the Bishops' Conference of Angola and São Tomé launched the initiative *Floresta Laudato Si'*, planting hundreds of trees in the desert of the province of Namibe, with the intention of replicating the project in other areas. In addition, the Conference's Justice, Peace and Migration Commission initiated a dialogue with the mining industry aimed at mitigating the harmful effects of mining on people and on the environment.

Between 2016 and 2019, the dioceses of Pakistan, in cooperation with Caritas, launched a campaign to promote the planting of one million trees throughout Pakistan. They also carry out awareness and advocacy activities with local communities and authorities.

Some lines of action

1. Promote sustainable lifestyles and models of consumption which respect ecosystems and the limitation of natural resources. Firmly oppose exploitation and misuse, whether individual or collective, through a widespread education to *ecological citizenship*.

2. Encourage non-polluting and solidarity-based production systems. The various experiences of a *solidarity economy* can offer guidelines for setting

up new diversified production models that generate wealth while respecting environmental limits.

3. Promote reforestation projects.

4. Find effective means of protecting traditional communities and indigenous peoples, their intrinsic human rights, their immense cultural heritage and their knowledge about the conservation of biodiversity, from the exploitation of their territories, the destruction of their habitat, and the appropriation of their knowledge, especially in the absence of adequate protection of their intellectual property.

5. Strengthen commitment to readiness in the face of the threat of natural disasters and maintain community resilience as a response to the growing frequency and complexity of environmental disasters.

6. Support initiatives based on transnational cooperation such as (a) the protection of the Congo River basin, with its forests and peatlands, and (b) the "Great Green Wall" meant to strengthen the resilience of society and the natural system of the Sahel and the Sahara through appropriate management of the ecosystem, the sustainable development of land resources, the protection of rural heritage and the improvement of the living conditions of local populations.

7. Support initiatives that enable communities suffering the effects of environmental disasters and the excessive use of natural resources to take part in decision-making processes in this regard, at local, national and international levels.

8. Encourage new global regulatory frameworks for implementing the principles of integral ecology through fair rules for protecting biodiversity, the planet's main biomes and the people that inhabit them, rejecting false solutions, and promoting real change for the future of life on earth.

5.

Seas and oceans

"Let us also mention the system of governance of the oceans. International and regional conventions do exist, but fragmentation and the lack of strict mechanisms of regulation, control and penalization end up undermining these efforts"
(LS 174)

Introduction and contextualization

The wise administration of "global commons", such as oceans and seas, requires humanity to have systems of governance proportionate to the *complexity* of their management.

Oceans are often referred to as the blue lung of the planet. They are a crossroads for many activities and challenges. For example: the organization of port activities and tourist and commercial routes (for the transport of food, consumer goods and raw materials); the exploitation of *fish resources* (*fishing* or *aquaculture*), of *energy* from currents, *seabed* and subsoil resources, to say nothing of other resources such as salt and algae; the deployment of cables for the exchange of data and communications; scientific studies and the delimitation of maritime areas which enjoy different types of protection; *tourism*; and *migration*, which at times takes place in dramatic conditions. There are also negative aspects that need to be

addressed, such as trafficking in human beings, *piracy*, illegal fishing and various forms of illegal trafficking, including *drugs*, *weapons* and counterfeit goods. There is also the need for submarines and military ships to patrol various areas, some of which are fraught with tension (from rivalry between states to conflicts between fishermen); continuing concern for the environmental conditions of the sea, and in particular for the presence of *plastic and microplastics* in the water and in animals, pollution (caused by ships, *offshore* extraction activities or from dry land); acidification; loss of biodiversity, which entails the extinction of species and the impoverishment of coral zones; the working and living conditions of port workers, coastal communities, the inhabitants of small islands, seafarers and fishermen; the expansion of some cities on the seas or the advancement of the sea on dry land (which may become a threat for dwellings, fresh water resources, agriculture); and coexistence or competition between different fishing methods.

Oceans-related issues can lead to geopolitical tensions, thus they require agreement on systems of governance aimed at the common good of the human family, capable of working in subsidiarity and with an integral, long-term approach. The Holy Father points out the need for such governance in *Laudato Si'*.

Essential reference texts

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Conference on the Law of the Sea, Vatican City, 1979.

Saint John Paul II, *Address to Fishermen and Seamen in Civitavecchia*, 19 March 1987.

Id., *Homily during the Liturgy of the Word with the People of the Sea in Gdynia*, Poland, 11 June 1987.

Id., Apostolic Letter *Stella Maris* on the maritime apostolate, 31 January 1997.

Id., Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Oceania* (22 November 2001), 31.

Id., *Address to the Participants in the 15th Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, 29 April 2002.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 40; 41; 174.

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Francis, *Message to the "Our Ocean" Conference held in Malta,* 27 September 2017.

Id., *Address to Representatives of the "Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat"*, 11 November 2017.

Id., *Message for the Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, 1 September 2018.

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Aqua Fons Vitae. Orientations on Water,* 2020.

Good practices

The Church accompanies those living in close contact with the seas and oceans with special attention: fishermen, seafarers, travellers, migrants and the many coastal communities. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the Apostolate of the Sea has ensured pastoral and spiritual care in many countries and aboard ships, demonstrating concern for the living conditions of coastal people and combating problems such as slavery, poor working conditions and family separation.

In many countries, local Catholic communities are involved in beach cleaning activities or in the construction of walls (mangrove plantations, fences, sandbags) to stem the tide of rising sea levels. Caritas Kiribati has involved youth groups in mangrove plantation; Caritas in Australia, Philippines and Vietnam has also organized training, activities and other forms of help for fishing communities.

In Oceania, the bishops have contributed to mobilizing public opinion and to questioning public authorities on the condition of the sea, and in particular on various projects for the extraction of minerals or hydrocarbons from the seabed, which could lead to serious problems for the ecosystem. The Federation of Bishops' Conferences of Oceania issued a statement on 16 April 2018 concerning the difficult situation of the population in many of those areas. The Church also assists those in the most extreme situations, for example after a cyclone, or in case of

resettlement, as in the case of the evacuation of the Carteret islands towards some areas of the island of Bougainville.

In February 2020, the European Network of Justice and Peace Commissions issued the document *Common Good of the Seas. Basic Text for the 2020 Annual Concerted Action of Justice and Peace Europe*, which can be used as a starting point for advocacy or practical initiatives.[71]

Some lines of action

1. Reduce the amount of polluted water and plastic in the oceans, avoiding the use of the seas and oceans as a landfill.

2. Eliminate piracy, human trafficking, drugs and other forms of illegal trade at sea and in ports.

3. Improve warning systems and emergency procedures in the case of cyclones and tsunamis.

4. Protect maritime zones rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage, regulating tourism, navigation and economic activity.

5. Promote among ship-owners, seafarers and tourists traveling at sea greater awareness of the consequences and the socio-environmental impacts of their activities.

[71] cf. http://www.juspax.ch/it/justice-et-paix-europe/concerted-actions/the-common-good-of-the-seas.

6. Forgo the underwater mining of minerals or hydrocarbons that often cause damage to areas rich in biodiversity.

7. Avoid intensive fishing, which does not allow regeneration, is uneconomical and destructive, as well as the fishing of endangered species.

8. Adopt fishing rhythms and methods that respect biodiversity, in particular by avoiding trawling, especially where it can damage the seabed, and by creating conditions for traditional fishermen to have access to sufficient fishery resources to live in dignity.

9. Protect the working and living conditions of seafarers and fishermen, guaranteeing respect for human standards and promoting family life.

10. Raise awareness about the dramatic situation of those communities forced to abandon the lands that they inhabit and cultivate because they are being progressively submerged.

11. Enhance and disseminate the Apostolate of the Sea, in ports and at sea.

12. Encourage spiritual initiatives and theological reflection linked to the oceans and seas. Educate people to contemplate the oceans and seas and promote shrines that have developed over time a special connection with the sea.

13. Apply the law of the sea, clarify its provisions and strengthen cooperation at all levels, specifically with regard to providing assistance at sea (especially to migrants in difficulty), monitoring fish-

ing, disciplining mining and extraction of resources from the seabed, regulating the use of armed force on the seas, and combatting pollution.

6.
Circular economy

"Our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them"
(LS 22)

Introduction and contextualization

The *present economic system* is unsustainable and demands that we consider many of its key aspects: consumerism, short-term thinking, speculation, irrational confidence in economic growth, dependence on fossil fuels, the increase of the ecological and social debt affecting the earth and the poor, the control and manipulation of information and technology, and the lack of investment in people and in dignified work.

It is imperative to promote a *new vision of the economy* capable of taking into account ecological concerns (cf. LS 128, 129, 195). We need an "economic ecology capable of appealing to a broader vision of reality" (LS 141). An integral ecology demands a new conception of the economy in which produc-

tion of wealth improves – rather than destroys – our world (cf. LS 129). What the world needs is a *circular economy model* capable of reversing the trend and eliminating social exclusion and environmental devastation (cf. LS 22).

A circular economy is *an alternative to the traditional linear economy* (producing, using, throwing away). In a circular economy, resources are not excessively exploited for production, but are kept in use for as long as possible, obtaining maximum value and recovering products and materials at the end of each life cycle. It is possible, even in the design, manufacturing, sales, reuse, and recycling phases, to determine how to achieve maximum value from products, during and at the end of their usefulness, and to thereby strengthen the economy in the process.

The transition to a circular economy can represent a decisive revolution and a great opportunity. It would involve a new way of looking at the relationships between markets, consumers and natural resources*, making obsolete the very concept of "refuse"*, since *everything is of value*. In economic terms, it would mean ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in the way we manage *input* and *output*, and in the way we strengthen the connections between producers and consumers, between growth and sustainability, between people and the planet. This transition is already taking place and is related to the interaction between technological innovation, investments in sustainable infrastructure and growth in the produc-

tivity of resources. It is part of an effort to foster stable, balanced and inclusive circular growth.

Essential reference texts

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Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 1; 12; 26-27; 35.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 30; 34.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 323-376.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 21; 49; 24-26; 34-52.

Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 52-62; 186-188; 191-194; 198-199; 203-215.

Id., *Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 28 October 2014.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 22; 138-142; 189-198.

Id., *Address to Participants in the Third World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 5 November 2016.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Oeconomicae et Pecuniariae Quaestiones. Considerations for an Ethical Discern-*

ment Regarding Some Aspects of the Present Economic-Financial System, 17 May 2018.

Good practices

There are abundant examples of the circular economy. One example provided by Caritas is the diversification of agriculture based on the reuse of crop leftovers (El Granado, Dominican Republic).

Caritas Dominicana and Caritas Spain have developed a project to diversify community farms, in response to the loss of crops due to climate change. A key component that was introduced is crop mix. In this way, excess banana plants provide shelter to smaller plants, such as pumpkin, aubergine or coriander, and these in turn offer nutrients to the soil and better use of irrigation. Another important aspect is training on farm care, pruning and weed control, including manual hybridization without any chemical substances. The companies managed in this way improved their productivity, and their owners soon moved from a single product production to a range of products to be sold in the market. After witnessing an increase in production, farmers agree that the effort is worth the results. Caritas Barahona Director explains the approach with the following words: "It is a matter of recovering a family's own consumption farming where the exchange of seeds, animals and food between rural families is encouraged in a harmonious relationship with nature."

In Austria, several parishes and ecclesial institutions (schools, universities, hospitals, etc.) have adopted EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) certification in order to assess the environmental performance of their buildings, thus promoting energy efficiency, reducing costs and ensuring a better working environment.

The Church in Montevideo is also carrying out interesting recycling projects such as *Resuena*,[72] which involves Catholic institutions, or *Triciclo*, and aims at carrying out environmental education activities for young people and adolescents.[73]

In the Diocese of Mount Hagen, in Papua New Guinea, *Laudato Si'* has become the reference point for every environmental initiative. Particular attention has been given to adequate waste management in order to combat pollution due to household waste through clean-up days, education activities and collaboration with government agencies.

Some lines of action

1. Ensure a person-centred approach, attentive to the dignity of work and to a fair transition of employment sectors for workers and communities.

2. Promote reusing and recycling natural resources already in the economic circuit, encourage

[72] Cf. http://www.resuena.com.uy.

[73] Cf. https://icm.org.uy/iglesia-y-ecologia-el-cuidado-de-la-casa-comun.

the re-use of various organic waste (bioenergy, biofuels, compost…). Avoid producing objects, materials and substances that are particularly complicated to recycle (such as some multi-layer plastics) and encourage research on alternative materials.

3. Encourage cleaning beaches and other common places.

4. Aim for the adoption of easily recyclable or biodegradable packaging.

5. Promote vehicles or other equipment sharing (for example, car sharing systems), and second-hand markets.

6. Foster investment in sustainable infrastructure, supported by clear national and regional strategies and programmes, facilitating the flow of public and private financing.

7. Stimulate the private sector to "unlock" innovation and improve supply-chain transparency through regulations and incentives that promote the transition to a more circular, low-greenhouse-gas emission economy.

8. Give a decisive boost to innovation, in particular, through international partnerships and funding, in order to address challenges which go far beyond the issue of energy.

9. Promote the reform of fossil-fuel subsidies and taxation of carbon dioxide emissions (CO2).

7.
Work

"This has to do not only with manual or agricultural labour but with any activity involving a modification of existing reality, from producing a social report to the design of a technological development. Underlying every form of work is a concept of the relationship which we can and must have with what is other than ourselves"
(LS 125)

Introduction and contextualization

Saint John Paul II explained that work, as an expression of the person and a contribution to the community, reveals us to ourselves and unfolds our capabilities in a dynamic process of continuous creation.[74] It also reveals our rights and our duties. Work "is part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment" (LS 128), and should be promoted *in an inclusive way*, emphasizing the importance, including the economic importance, of family relations. *Laudato Si'* links and examines the two fundamental dimensions of work: *to preserve* what has been given us and *to cultivate* it by cooperating with God[75] in order to make fruitful the garden he has entrusted to

[74] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 6.
[75] Cf. *Genesis* 2:5 and 15.

us. Consequently there is no basis for opposing the protection of the environment and work itself, which develops nature's promises and potential.

Our role as human beings thus requires the exercise of responsibility and *prudence* in all aspects, whether technical, scientific or legislative, through a continuous *process of discernment* about the future of humanity and more generally about life on earth in all its developments. Work is rightfully considered a necessity, not only for the survival of individuals, but also for the progress of the community. Work is in fact the link connecting economic activity and the life of society. Integral human development is therefore adversely affected by *unemployment*, and economic dysfunctions always involve human costs.[76]

Essential reference texts

Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), 67-68.

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[76] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 32.

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Good practices

Various dioceses have decided to initiate farming projects with people who are unemployed, poor or in a phase of irregular migration (Italy, Kenya and Venezuela).

In 1995, the Italian Episcopal Conference, promoted Project Policoro, which created hundreds of occupational opportunities (particularly consortia, cooperatives and small enterprises) and thousands of jobs, especially in the poorest areas of the country where organized crime is influential.

In the name of inclusion and integration, the Sisters of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in Peru, receive mothers in difficulty or orphans with HIV in their foster homes, and involve them in craft activities. In Spain, Caritas Biscay has started the cooperative *Koopera*, aimed at the social and professional integration of persons at risk through environmental care activities (re-cycling, waste collection), personal services and textile work. This has involved developing programmes of social and occupational integration with a strong component of training, on behalf of people ordinarily marginalized by society.

In France, *Le Cèdre* commercial centre, established in 1998, enables thousands of institutions (including many Catholic schools and parishes) to pay in instalments for their purchases (various services, information technology, stationery, canteens), thus saving expenses and at the same time favouring sup-

pliers chosen according to the principles of integral ecology.

Another interesting project is also *The Future of Work After Laudato Si',* which brings together various institutions in order to strengthen the voice of the Church in the world of work through: 1) forms of cooperation and networking between ecclesial institutions as a means of improving cooperation and knowledge-sharing; 2) reflection and research into current and future challenges so as to develop specific responses in the field of work; 3) skills training for active participation in dialogue on labour issues.

The United States Bishops' Conference promotes, through *the Catholic Campaign for Human Development*, a series of programmes and activities that promote integral ecology, with particular attention to labour problems; it cooperates, for example, with *People United for Sustainable Housing*, in Buffalo (New York), in order to foster better economic opportunities and environmental benefits for local communities.

In Guinea, the *Agropastoral Center of Saint Ursula of Mount Ziama,* located in the Massif du Ziama Biosphere Reserve, in the Diocese of N'Zérékoré, was established in 2016 and is directed by the Ursuline Sisters of Sion. It is both a business platform and a forum for the dissemination of technical solutions (particularly with regard to organic farming). It also provides organizational and moral solutions, as well as human and professional promotion, aimed at eliminating poverty and promoting sustainable

socio-economic development. The goal of the organizers is to create *new human resources* and thus to demonstrate that the inhabitants of the Guinean forest are able to care for themselves, reduce unemployment and rural exodus, and undertake integrated agriculture.

Some lines of action

1. Promote decent work and respect for workers, rejecting all discrimination, recognizing the equal dignity of women, and the value of every kind of work, provided that it is worthy of the human person.

2. Guarantee a fair wage, suitable for the integral needs of families, and combat child labour. Promote flexible work schedules compatible with family life, as well as periods of rest and spiritual and cultural recreation.

3. Work to formalize informal labour and the informal economy, which often entail the risk of exploitation, uncertainty and harm to health.

4. Create jobs in the most underdeveloped countries where people tend to emigrate, and guarantee the conditions necessary for them to find work and live a dignified life.

5. Help make agricultural work become more and more "one" with the environment by safeguarding ancient techniques and knowledge, based on the use of natural and non-polluting products. This can be done by respecting the rhythm of the natural cy-

cles and by ensuring a production that privileges indigenous species and protects biodiversity.

6. Promote stable employment opportunities for young people in order to enable them to become productive, making use of their skills for the benefit of society and to form their own family.

7. Promote an inclusive economy that is not limited to social assistance, but takes care of the poor, long-term unemployed and low-skilled workers, migrants, the marginalized, prisoners and former prisoners, and people with disabilities. This will help them to integrate socially and economically, making them independent and responsible.

8. Adopt protective measures for those jobs that force one parent to live far from the rest of the family for long periods. Promote the economic value of the family as capable of generating resources in a virtuous manner.

9. Recognize the valuable educational and economic role of those parents who work while staying at home to take care of their children. This helps prepare children to be useful members of society in the promotion of the common good.

10. Stress the social and economic value of motherhood, so that it is well protected. Put the family, rather than just the individual, at the heart of the economic system.

11. Enable workers to form organizations and make their voices heard in free and respectful discussions. Facilitate relationships between employers

and workers based on participation, trust, subsidiarity and shared responsibilities.

12. Effectively implement the Conventions on the rights of workers and inform workers of their rights. Promote measures to prevent accidents and unemployment.

13. Prevent and eliminate new forms of slavery, human exploitation, human trafficking and prostitution by promoting research on the best prevention and investigation procedures.

14. Reaffirm and protect the primacy of the human person over machines and new technologies. Intentionally direct research, development and legislation towards those sectors that significantly influence the future of the world of work (genetics, biotechnology, nanotechnology, cognitive sciences, robotics, artificial engineering and data management).

8.
Finance

"The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings. Finance overwhelms the real economy. The lessons of the global financial crisis have not been assimilated, and we are learning all too slowly the lessons of environmental deterioration"
(LS 109)

Introduction and contextualization

There is a clear connection between today's financial situation and ecological conversion. This raises two questions: "What are the costs and what are the benefits of an integral ecology?" The answers to these questions demand moral discernment that cannot be left to the world of finance alone. That world which is all too often dominated by a technocratic paradigm, with a drive toward speculation and a thirst for short-term profit, is something criticized by *Laudato Si'*. Any moral discernment in relation to the current situation, should first understand the real meaning of each project and then best direct its future economic developments.

Unfortunately, today "exclusively short-term financial interests, which can result in a negative impact on the environment, as well as on man him-

self"[77] are still prevalent. The search for "profit as an end in itself"[78] continues through investments which do not contribute to the real economy, and which are based on unreliable financial products and on high price variability, detached from production and demand. In addition, the desire of many investors to minimize risk leads them to lend funds only to those who already own capital, excluding those individuals and peoples most in need. In this way, the gap between those who have access to credit and those who do not continues to increase. A rich world and a vibrant economy can and must put an end to poverty. The level of wealth and technology accumulated by humanity, as well as the recognition of the importance and value of human rights, no longer allow for excuses. For that matter, the Covid-19 pandemic itself shows that it is time to challenge a system that resticts welfare, where it is present, and an economic-social system that allows for large-scale speculation on disasters, with negative effects on the poor.

In considering the connections between the economic, financial, ecological and social aspects of the current crisis, it is important to keep in mind four pillars for any ethical reflection capable of contribut-

[77] Benedict XVI, *Address to Participants in the Meeting organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Encyclical Mater et Magistra*, 16 May 2011.

[78] Id., Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 38.

ing to the inauguration of a new paradigm for development (cf. LS 108 and 202):

1) the meaning and value of money; 2) the vision of the future that we would like to build and the relative investments to be made for this purpose; 3) the primacy of the common good in financial policies and in the assessment of the social impact of investments; 4) the regulatory framework needed for a "free and stable global economic-financial system at the service of a real economy" [79] capable of reconciling the world of finance and the world of work.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, *Message to Participants in the Forty-third Catholic Social Week*, 10 November 1999.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 36; 45; 65.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Note *Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority*, 24 October 2011.

Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 54-57; 202-208.

Id., *Address to Participants in the Conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and*

[79] PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, *Towards Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority*, 2011.

Peace on "Impact Investing for the Poor", 16 June 2014.

Id., *Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 28 October 2014.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Land and Food* (2015), 32-36, 133-138.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 56; 109-112; 128; 185; 189-192.

Id., *Address to Participants in the Third World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 5 November 2016.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, *Oeconomicae et Pecuniariae Quaestiones Considerations for an Ethical Discernment Regarding Some Aspects of the Present Economic-Financial System*, 17 May 2018.

Francis, *Address to Participants at the Meeting for Executives of Major Companies in the Oil and Natural Gas Sectors and other Energy-related Businesses*, 9 June 2018.

Id., *Address to Participants in the Meeting organized by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development on the theme: The Energy Transition and Care for our Common Home*, 14 June 2019.

Id., *Address to the participants of the Seminar "New forms of solidarity, inclusion, integration and innovation"*, Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 4 February 2020.

Good practices

Investors can encourage positive changes in various sectors of the economy. This is the case when they decide not to invest in companies that fail to meet certain standards (human rights, child labour, environmental and so forth). It is encouraging to see that some investment funds are moving towards this type of responsible finance. At the same time, banks are proposing to individual citizens investment options that meet the same standards, and listed companies are attempting to adapt their activities and reporting accordingly. Those who wish to make ethical investments consonant with their religious beliefs can have recourse to filters and counsulting, even though they may at times have to accept a lower profit. Three major conferences, organized by Catholic Relief Services and the Holy See, have focused on these themes.[80]

In 2017, the Belgian Bishops' Conference proposed a Charter for the good management of the Church's assets.[81]

Some Bishops' Conferences, like that of Austria,[82] Caritas Internationalis and various Catholic in-

[80] Cf. www.viiconference.org.

[81] Cf. https://www.cathobel.be/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/17-05-11-Charte-de-bonne-gestion-Contenu.pdf.

[82] Cf. RichtlinieEthische Geldanlagen, https://www.bischofskonfe-renz.at/dl/muoMJmoJKMoJqx4KJKJKJKkolml/Richtlinie_Ethische_gel- danlagenfinal.pdf.

stitutions have made commitments to disinvest from all companies that extract or produce fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas).[83] A worldwide campaign promoted by The Global Catholic Climate Movement is active in this regard. This disinvestment approach was supported and adopted by the Synod Fathers during the Synod on the Amazon,[84] and continues to grow with further commitments year by year.

On the micro level, too, there are various micro-credit activities (especially in developing countries) and programmes that help in the prudent use of loans received. Still others assist families in debt or victims of usury. The Italian Bishops' Conference has supported access to credit for vulnerable individuals and micro-enterprises through the "Loan of Hope". Other similar initiatives are developing, favouring direct and supportive links between richer countries and poorer areas.

Some lines of action

1. Promote ethical, responsible, and integral criteria for invesment decision making, taking care not to support companies that harm human or social ecology (for example, through abortion or the arms trade), or environmental ecology (for example, through the use of fossil fuels).

[83] Cf. http://bit.ly/disinvestimento.

[84] Final Document of the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region 6-27 October 2019, n. 70.

2. Through networks and universities, raise awareness about ethics, the common good and responsibility in banking and the financial intermediation sector.

3. Speed up investments in sustainable infrastructures, supported by clear national and regional strategies and programmes.

4. Increase investments in infrastructures functional to the real economy on the part of multilateral development banks and other financial development institutions, paying particular attention to social inclusion and environmental protection.

5. Reorganize financial institutions and financial markets to operate for the common good and for integral human development by providing for appropriate and effective supervisory authorities.

6. Restrict and control the activities of those that carry out cynical and irresponsible speculation activities.

7. Adopt evaluation criteria for more "integral" financial investments, taking into consideration not only their expected future returns (using ESG criteria), but also their environmental and physical sustainability.

8. Promote responsible investments in social and environmental sectors, for example by evaluating progressive disinvestment from the fossil-fuel sector.

9. Examine carefully, and according to ethical criteria, proposals from civil society and the private

sector regarding crypto-currencies (for example *Bit-Coin*) and alternative currencies with local validity.

10. Adopt financial models that consider the entire business and production cycle, avoiding inappropiate bonuses for shareholders of companies that damage the natural environment without making adequate reparations.

11. Close the gap between those who have access to credit and those who do not, with the involvement of trusted brokers who can help to reduce the risk level, and favour micro-credit.

12. Impose severe penalties upon financial institutions involved in illegal transactions that favour tax evasion and/or speculate on basic food products.

13. Close tax havens. Avoid tax evasion and money laundering, which rob from society. Place human beings before the interests of the most powerful corporations and multinational companies, which end up repressing and hindering local production.

14. Promote a transparent and consistent management of the Church's assets. Have the courage to adopt the perspective of integral sustainability in the sense proposed by *Laudato Si'*.

In this way it will be possible to witness to the possibility of taking a different approach to economics and finance.[85]

[85] Cf. SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, *Final Document*, 27 October 2018, 153.

9.
Urbanization

"Nowadays, for example, we are conscious of the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities, which have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise. Many cities are huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water. Neighbourhoods, even those recently built, are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space"
(LS 44)

Introduction and contextualization

"Authentic development includes efforts to bring about an integral improvement in the quality of human life, and this entails considering the setting in which people live their lives" (LS 147). For this reason, *Laudato Si'* emphasizes the "interrelationship between living space and human behaviour" (150).

The world is becoming increasingly urban, a trend that will not change in coming years. Cities are struggling with budgets and have very limited financial resources to provide citizens with services or to keep pace with rapid population growth. This risks encouraging their "disintegration" (cf. LS 49). Almost one billion people live in informal settle-

ments, with no access to decent housing, clean drinking water, or safe sanitation facilities. Despite the importance of urban planning for the environment and for the poor, it is often neglected or poorly conceived. Even today, a large part of the urban population continues to live in poor neighbourhoods or slums.

In urban areas, infrastructures are very important for addressing environmental and poverty-related issues in terms of transport, green areas, housing planning and social cohesion (cf. LS 232). They provide an opportunity to promote integral ecology by contributing to our sense of belonging. "There is a need to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of 'feeling at home' within a city which includes us and brings us together. It is important that the different parts of a city be well integrated and that those who live there have a sense of the whole, rather than being confined to one neighbourhood and failing to see the larger city as space which they share with others" (LS 151).

Essential reference texts

SAINT PAUL VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesimo Adveniens* (14 May 1971), 9-12.

SAINT JOHN PAUL II, *Address to the Mayors of the Sixty Most Populous Towns in the World*, 3 September 1980.

Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 71-75.
Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 21; 24; 28-29; 44-45; 49; 141; 142; 147-153; 192; 231-232.
Id., *Address at the Workshop "Modern Slavery and Climate Change: the Commitment of the Cities"*, 21 July 2015.
Id., *Address to Members of the National Association of Italian Municipalities*, 30 September 2017.

Good practices

Many cities worldwide have adopted good practices, including special policies, that are implemented by public administrations and civil society (in particular neighbourhood associations) to improve services in low-income neighbourhoods. They include, for example, services that promote decentralized urban management systems with particular attention to transport, waste management and sanitation services, and that provide assistance and support to those who are most vulnerable, such as the elderly.

On 5 June 2016, the Archdiocese of Jakarta (Indonesia), launched the Ecological Penance Movement (Sileko), which asks anyone taking air travel to contribute 10,000 IDR, equivalent to US$ .70, to a special fund to be used for the creation and maintenance of green areas by some parishes in the city. Indonesian dioceses also launched a number of pro-

jects for the reforestation of depressed areas in the city, as well as for the collection of plastic waste, for cleaning beaches, and for raising awareness of ecological issues among children and young people.

Many activities also promote sustainable transport. These include renewing car fleets by choosing cars that pollute less, including electric cars. This approach has been taken by some Apostolic Nunciatures in order to reduce pollution in urban areas.

On 13 March 2019, the Apostolic Nunciature in Malaysia received a "platinum certification" from the Malaysian *Green Building Index*, attesting the high eco-sustainability index of the Nunciature building. In particular, the certification recognized the energy and water efficiency of the Nunciature, its indoor environmental quality, the design and sustainable management of the building, and also the resources and materials used. It also looked at the design and architectural innovation used for the building, which were eco-sustainable.

Some lines of action

1. Promote, with community participation, suitable construction policies to foster social and economic inclusion and a better connection with the labour market by re-qualifying, not transferring, shantytowns and converting under-used land into affordable housing within cities.

2. Preserve some remnants of urban infrastructures that either united or wrongly separated people

as historical sites using them as support for educational and awareness raising activities.

3. Foster municipal policies that promote access to clean energy.

4. Control sustainable urban development by removing, through appropriate regulations and incentives, distortions resulting from speculation and the lack of transparency in the real estate market.

5. Develop an ecological, economical and efficient transport system in cities that provides equal opportunities for all (including pedestrians and cyclists). Strengthen public transport and develop integrated solutions that draw upon public, private and informal resources in cities.

6. Acknowledge the informal economy by increasing informal workers' access to public services, public spaces, and public procurement by reforming laws and regulations to support these workers, and by including their leaders' decision making processes and establishing regulations.

7. Ensure the construction of well insulated buildings with low or zero-carbon emissions in all housing plans.

8. Plan for increased green areas and urban gardens for social purposes in urban development projects.

9. Promote the involvement of citizens, particularly those living in poor neighbourhoods, in all decisions dealing with renewal and development projects.

10. Design urban spaces with concern for the value of beauty and a sense of belonging and integration.

10.

Institutions, justice and public administration

"If everything is related, then the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life"
(LS 142)

Introduction and contextualization

"The political community and civil society, although mutually connected and interdependent, are not equal in the hierarchy of ends. The political community is essentially at the service of civil society and, in the final analysis, the persons and groups of which civil society is composed… The state must provide an adequate legal framework for social subjects to engage freely in their different activities and it must be ready to intervene, when necessary and with respect for the principle of subsidiarity, so that the interplay between free associations and democratic life may be directed to the common good".[86]

This is how the social doctrine of the Church explains *the priority of civil society*: the political community, governments and the various administrative

[86] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 418.

bodies are at the service of civil society and must be organized to carry out their duty to promote the common good.[87] *Laudato Si'* stresses the importance of "the health of a society's institutions" (LS 142). These institutions must respond to the various challenges the community faces, since some of them (like the use of water or the fight against crime) cannot be dealt with only at the state level, but, in the light of the principle of subsidiarity, also at intermediate levels, as part of the "globalization of a substantive social and participatory democracy".[88] Governments must avoid corruption, promote transparency and examine the demands that arise in society with farsightedness. This should be done in accordance with the criteria of justice and morality, and out of concern for the common good of society as a whole, rather than simply on the basis of the electoral or financial power of the groups promoting those demands.[89]

Essential reference texts

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (7 December 1965), 69.

[87] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Civil Authorities at Westminster Hall*, 17 September 2010; *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 164-170.

[88] Id., *Address to Participants in the Meeting promoted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Encyclical Mater et Magistra,* May 16, 2011.

[89] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 47.

Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1997), 52; 54.
Saint Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesimo Adveniens* (14 May 1971), 46; 47.
Saint John Paul II*, Address to Presidents of the European Parliaments*, 26 November 1983.
Id., Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 46-47.
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Chapter 8.
Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 37; 41-43; 47; 57; 67.
Id., *Address to Civil Authorities at Westminster Hall*, 17 September 2010.
Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 205; 222-230.
Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Land and Food* (2015), 113-115; 141-145.
Francis, *Address and Responses during the Meeting with the Community of Christian Life (CVX) and the Missionary Students' League of Italy*, 30 April 2015.
Id., Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 142-146; 180-189.
Id., *Address during the Third World Meeting of Popular Movements*, 5 November 2016.
Id., *Address to Heads of State and Government of the European Union*, 24 March 2017.
Id., *Meeting with Authorities and Civil Society*, Lima, 19 January 2018.

Id., *Message for the 2019 World Day of Peace – Good Politics is at the Service of Peace*, 1 January 2019.

Good practices

Many Bishops' Conferences have prepared pamphlets or messages on the training and proper role of political leaders, reminding them of their responsibilities with regard to their values and the decisions they make. One example is the document of the Permanent Council of the French Bishops' Conference: "*Dans un monde qui change, retrouver le sens du politique*" (2016) and that of the Commission for Natural Resources of the Bishops of Congo: *Regards des Partis politiques et des Confessions religieuses de la République Démocratique du Congo sur l'Environnement et les Ressources naturelles* (Kinshasa 2016).

A number of Bishops' Conferences interact with local authorities, such as the various Catholic Conferences of individual states in the United States, like California, Virginia, Florida, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. These Conferences cooperate with local authorities to focus legislative attention on integral ecology, air quality, access to water, environmental health, response to natural disasters, energy efficiency, and response to pollution.[90]

Many dioceses, Catholic associations and parishes organize training courses on rights, aimed at

[90] Cf. https://www.cacatholic.org/common-home.

people in poor areas, and provide them with legal assistance and advice.

A number of episcopal justice and peace commissions, in cooperation with governments, have been involved in political and administrative elections helping to supervise and monitor proper voting procedures. They have also served as mediators in crisis situations, for example, after armed conflicts, and have worked to improve conditions in prisons.

In 2019, CCEE (Council of European Episcopal Conferences), COMECE (Commission of EU Episcopal Conferences), CIDSE (*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité*), GCCM (*Global Catholic Climate Movement*), JESC (*Jesuit European Social Centre*) and *Justice and Peace Europe* established the *European Laudato Si' Alliance* (ELSi'A), for the purpose of adapting the approach of *Laudato Si'* to the European context and in particular to the institutions of the European Union. The Alliance will work to support the Church's message on integral ecology in relation to environmental policy and social justice; to promote an exchange at the European level of best practices for a more eco-responsible and sustainable lifestyle; to encourage theological and spiritual reflection on the subject of ecological conversion; and to develop a broad network of European Catholic movements to cooperate with Bishops' Conferences on developing proposals for EU policies on climate, development and environment.

Some lines of action

1. Disseminate each year the *Message for the World Day of Peace*.

2. Organize special moments of formation for political, economic, industrial, military and association leaders, paying particular attention to the principles, values and methods of integral ecology.

3. Train all citizens to understand democratic processes and to offer (as individuals and as groups) their contribution to decision-making processes.

4. Support the agencies of the Church, local institutions and civil society that work with the most marginalized and isolated people.

5. Help people in precarious situations, including migrants, to obtain what they are entitled to with regard to property rights and access to identity documents.

6. Promote and protect access to justice for the poor or the poorly educated, those with disabilities and those needing protection, such as the victims of human trafficking, by informing them of their rights and how to report abuse and threats.

7. Encourage evaluation processes with all stakeholders, on the effectiveness of laws. Carry out impartial inspections on the proper functioning of the various administrative bodies and review the results in order to improve situations, procedures and legislation wherever necessary.

8. Appoint trained chaplains for the pastoral care of politicians, legislators, business leaders, mil-

itary personnel, healthcare providers, prisoners, and prison staff.

9. Apply the principle of "prior consultation" to all major projects (agricultural, industrial or natural resource extraction), in a respectful, timely, free and duly informed manner, encouraging the specific contribution that each community can make to development.

10. Strengthen at national and transnational levels, the administrative bodies and police forces responsible for: examining procurement procedures and licences for mining or similar projects; the proper use of development funds and royalties, which should contribute to equitable and inclusive progress in many countries; the fight against corruption, money laundering, new forms of slavery and, more generally, organized crime, including cybercrime.

11. Carefully rethink the prison system, in order to encourage the rehabilitation of prisoners, with special attention to young people serving their first sentence and their parents.

12. Foster dialogue between local Churches and legislative bodies, in order to propose laws that promote the common good and human rights in a way consistent with Christian anthropology.

11.
Health

"Some forms of pollution are part of people's daily experience. Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths"
(LS 20)

"Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment"
(LS 155)

Introduction and contextualization

The concept of systemic health outlined in *Laudato Si'* corresponds to a human ecology that pursues *the integral well-being of the human being*. This model takes into consideration the mind and body of a person, as well as interactions with his or her natural and social environment. "We cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture" (LS 43). Health is a matter *of equity and social justice*. It has to do with access to healthcare for all citizens, the state of health services in the poorest areas, the different "levels" of access to healthcare available to the various social classes,

the cost of medicines (including "an unduly rigid assertion of the right to intellectual property"[91]), the right to healthcare, the disclosure of and access to information relevant to good health and prevention, and the reality that some places are more or less healthy than others.

Most of the chronic diseases and so-called functional disorders are due to environmental factors. One need only think of air pollutants, fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, changes in climate and other similar factors. In large cities, paradoxically, many people experience loneliness: they live in crowded neighbourhoods that lack services and spaces for social interaction. The *decay of ecological networks* leads to the decay of *social networks*, and in both cases it is the poorest who are those most affected. "Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behaviour patterns, and the ways it grasps reality" (LS 139).

Among other things, *Laudato Si'* insists on the interconnection between understanding and care for the human body and our relationship with nature. A *healthy anthropology* is not only necessary for an integral ecology; it also has rich implications for sexuality, fertility, the transmission of life and, more generally, the various issues related to bioethics. These matters are closely connected both positively and

[91] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 22.

negatively with the progress of scientific and technical knowledge (genetics, neurosciences, etc.), and their corollaries in experimentation, legislative developments, ethical questions, and the new economic and power generating opportunities linked to the use of the human body as a form of raw material.

Essential reference texts

Saint John Paul II, *Catechesis on Human Love in the Divine Plan*, General Audiences from September 1979 to October 1984.

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Donum Vitae*, 22 February 1987.

Saint John Paul II*, Message for the 1990 World Day of Peace – Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation*, 1 January 1990.

Id., Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995).

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction *Dignitas Personae*, on certain bioethical questions, 8 September 2008.

Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 48.

Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 20-21; 50-51; 120; 139; 155.

Id., *Address to Participants in the International Conference "The Culture of Salus and Welcome at the Service of Man and the Planet*", 19 November 2015.

Id., *Message to Participants in the XXXII International Conference on the Theme: "Addressing Global Health Inequalities"*, 18 November 2017.

Id., *Address to Participants in the Conference organized by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life on the Theme "Yes to Life! - Caring for the Precious Gift of Life in its Frailness"*, 25 May 2019.

Good practices

In some countries of South America, Bishops have repeatedly denounced the pollution caused by large oil spills or mining operations which at times seriously damage biodiversity and human health.

The Church has traditionally been very active in providing health care facilities and specialized personnel in particularly poor areas, where some diseases or deficiencies, often linked to unhealthy environments, are not acknowledged or are underestimated by administrations or laws, and lead to rejection and abandonment by the community.

In the United States, the Catholic Medical Association organizes a year training experience which includes prayer, study, practice and tutoring with doctors, priests and moral theologians. The programme, called "Medical Student and Resident Boot Camp", deals from an integral ecology standpoint with the challenges that young Catholic medical students face while studying and practising modern medicine: secularization, atheism, relativist and positivist attitudes.

The American Bishops' Conference, through the *Catholic Campaign for Human Development*, promotes a series of programmes and activities to foster integral ecology, with particular attention to health problems. They work, for example, with the *Louisiana Bucket Brigade* to protect the health of the most vulnerable populations in Louisiana from the harmful effects of the petrochemical industries working in the area. Similar programmes are carried out in Idaho (*Idaho Organization of Resource Councils*), Tennessee (*Stateside Organizing for Community Empowerment*) and other States.

The Social and Development Commission of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia promotes an *Energizing Programme* which is having a powerful impact on people's health. The aim of the programme is to distribute energy-efficient stoves and solar power plants to rural families, considerably improving their conditions of life by addressing health concerns, reducing pollution, providing low energy costs, reducing the burden on women, and reducing the degradation of natural resources and deforestation.

Some lines of action

1. Invest in prenatal diagnosis and treatment of malformations and diseases rather than promoting diagnoses in view of selection and elimination.

2. Promote policies capable of ensuring optimal conditions for the development and equilibrium of children. Promote an appropriate education in affec-

tivity and sexuality in order to teach children respect for their own body and that of others, appreciation for the value of sexual complementarity, fertility and unborn human life.

3. Support the patient's right to an etiological diagnosis based on integral research into the causes of the disease.

4. Aid health workers in correctly forming their conscience, starting from departments of medicine and training courses for nurses, ensuring that they receive a human, moral, pastoral, spiritual and religious formation.

5. Raise the awareness of institutions, welfare bodies and the health industry, so that the right to health protection and access to healthcare and medicines will be extended to all people, with particular attention to the poorest and most vulnerable.

6. Encourage research on the interactions between human health and environmental degradation, in order to better understand those interactions and to work actively towards prevention, protection, care and education.

7. Promote greater awareness of the impact of various forms of pollution and lifestyles on health. Establish and strengthen health protection in the various development, infrastructure and industrialization projects.

8. Promote a healthy lifestyle by clearly informing people about the damage caused by improper nutrition, drug use and other dependencies and discouraging any behaviours that may be a source of

risk for oneself and others. Raise awareness on the risks arising from addiction, also to digital devices, and provide resources for medical and spiritual assistance.

9. Carry out a preliminary environmental impact assessment on projects, covering the working conditions and the possible effects on people's physical and mental health, the local economy and safety. Carry out a risk/benefit assessment of all possible alternative solutions, and make the final decision on the basis of an honest and transparent discussion with all the parties concerned.

10. Promote palliative care as an integrated system of assistance to the sick. Train health workers to offer a medical, human and spiritual accompaniment that respects human life from conception to natural death.

11. Examine the dangers associated with the rapid spread of viral and bacterial epidemics in the context of a world characterized by increasing urban development and human mobility.

12. Promote inclusive access to primary healthcare as a basic human right, closely linked to the right to life and to human dignity.

12.

Climate: challenges, responsabilities, opportunities

"The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all… Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day"
(LS 23, 25)

Introduction and contextualization

"We must continue to be aware that, regarding climate change, there are differentiated responsibilities. As the United States Bishops have said, greater attention must be given to the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests… In any event, these are primarily ethical decisions, rooted in solidarity between all peoples… *continuity is essential,* because policies related to climate change and environmental protection cannot be altered with every change of government. Results take time and demand immediate outlays which may not produce tangible effects within any one government's term. That is why, in the absence of pressure from the public and from civic institutions, political authorities will always be reluctant to intervene, all the more when urgent needs must be met" (LS 52; 172; 181).

Climate change has a major impact not only on the environment, but also on ethical, economic, political and social issues, *especially affecting the poorest.* Although the poor are the least responsible for global warming, they are the most likely to be affected, since they have the least adaptive capacity (possessing fewer resources). They also often live in geographical areas which are particularly at risk (such as small island states), and face greater difficulties in accessing energy. In addition, they are more dependent on agriculture, the economic sector most exposed to this phenomenon. When we think about the impact of climate change, we must also think of *those who will come after us*.

In light of this, and also as we learn more from the scientific community, climate change is now one *of the principal and most urgent issues* needing to be addressed by the international community. The task is difficult and complex. It requires coming up with a global and shared long-term strategy based on precise commitments and capable of promoting the integral development of present and future generations, protecting human health and the environment, and meeting short and long-term energy needs.

The continuing multidisciplinary debate on this issue is also aimed at *defining a new model of development*, on the basis of the synergistic bond between the fight against climate change and the fight against poverty, a model in line with the principles of the Church's social doctrine. The reality of climate change is increasingly making individuals and gov-

ernments realize that nothing can be accomplished by working alone. It entails committing to low-carbon sustainable development, investing in strengthening technologies and resilience, and transferring them under fair conditions, particularly to the most vulnerable countries. We have seen that there is a close connection between the fight against climate change and the fight against extreme poverty. Consequently, responding to climate change can also become an opportunity for improving overall living conditions, health, transport, energy and security, and for creating new job opportunities.

Essential reference texts

BENEDICT XVI, *Message for the 2010 World Day of Peace*.

FRANCIS, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 22; 26; 164-165; 180; 201; 211.

ID., *Address to the Environment Ministers of the EU,* 16 September 2015.

ID., *Address at the United Nations Office in Nairobi*, 26 November 2015.

ID., *Angelus*, 13 December 2015.

ID., *Message to the Sessions of the Conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 2014 and 2016-2019.

Good practices

The Catholic Church carries out many activities in the areas of education, training and practice in order

to address adequately the issue of climate change, especially in the areas of adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation refers to the strengthening of socio-economic structures in order to contain the impacts of climate change, while mitigation refers to the efforts made to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are among the main causes of global warming. In the field of education, there are numerous initiatives, at the primary, secondary and university levels, aimed at promoting suitable training on how to respond to the complex and interdisciplinary reality of climate change.

The voice of the Catholic Church in international debates on climate change has been, and continues to be, important for emphasizing the moral duty and urgent need to adopt policies to address the challenges of climate change for the sake of the common good. That voice remains fundamental in the fight against purely individual or national interests. CIDSE (*Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité*) published in 2017 *Climate Action for the Common Good*: a resource for helping governments and other stakeholders to reflect on how they should respond to the challenges of climate change in light of *Laudato Si'*.[92]

In 2016, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh established a *Cli-*

[92] Cf. https://www.cidse.org/2017/11/14/cidse-climate-action-for-the-common-good.

mate Change Desk to study issues related to climate change and nature-friendly lifestyles more deeply.

The Caritas confederation has a number of practical projects aimed at helping the most vulnerable communities adapt. Among these, we should specifically mention Caritas Mongolia, which since 2010, has implemented, in the extremely cold climate of that region, a plan to extend the vegetable growing season through innovative models of passive solar greenhouses, trench greenhouses and bioclimatic cellars as means of climate resilience and adaptation. The project aims not only to save five hundred tons of CO2 per year, but also, and above all, to promote an inclusive and self-sufficient local economy. It also hopes to increase the production of vegetables, thereby ensuring food security, increasing the income of families that sell excess produce, and improving the nutritional status of vulnerable families.

Among the handbooks, we can mention those published in 2014 by the Irish Bishops' Conference: "The Cry of the Earth. A Pastoral Reflection on Climate Change",[93] and the handbook prepared by Trócaire: "GLAS. A Pastoral Resource to Supplement 'Climate Change. The Cry of the Earth'".[94]

[93] Cf. https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/parishes/cry_of_the_earth_2014.pdf.

[94] Cf. https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pari- shes/glas-resource.pdf.

The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) organizes advocacy initiatives related to the fight against climate change and coordinates other climate initiatives ranging from online training courses to the participation and mobilization of Catholics on climate-related issues.

In May of 2014, the Sisters of the Holy Cross established a carbon footprint reduction fund to monitor their congregation's annual general travel emissions and to compensate for these emissions by promoting renewable energy, reforestation and energy efficiency projects in the areas where religious live and serve. Since 2015, this internal grant programme for carbon compensation has reduced emissions by more than 961 tons and financed 40 projects in six countries.[95]

Some lines of action

1. Promote awareness for the care of our common home and for its climate in nurseries and preschool programmes, emphasizing concrete examples by which children can help protect creation for present and future generations.

2. Encourage interdisciplinary teaching in schools based on integral ecology, and on how to resolve the problems of climate change and sustainability by changing lifestyles and using innovative technologies.

[95] Cf. http://www.holycrossjustice.org.

3. Plan university level courses on the problems of climate change and environmental degradation, with corresponding solutions, integrating these with the knowledge imparted in degree programmes in the natural and social sciences.

4. Raise awareness that policies and technologies that combat atmospheric pollution and climate change also have a positive effect on people's health, promote a healthy economy and create jobs that are inclusive, especially of those most in need.

5. Combat climate change with sustainable development activities based on the use of renewable sources of energy and reforestation, especially in the earth's "lungs", such as the Amazon region.

6. Carefully assess different solutions proposed to help mitigate climate change, using the precautionary principle and avoiding technocratic approaches. Assess the potential collateral benefits and the accompanying risks of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and projects, and their effects on the fight against poverty, on food and water availability, agriculture, the strengthening of rural communities and the restoration of decayed ecosystems.

7. Establish virtuous connections between projects encouraging agriculture and climate resilience and those concerned with disaster risk reduction.

8. Encourage the private sector and other non-state actors to transition towards more ecologically sustainable economies by, for example, supporting activities to promote renewable energy sources and climate resilient development; to improve energy ef-

ficiency and reduce waste; and to sustain a culture of sharing, recovery and reuse.

9. Support the international process of cooperation in addressing the problem of climate change and work for the effective implementation of existing international instruments on this issue.

10. Support the international process aimed at defining the category of "climate refugee" and adopting appropriate measures to ensure that necessary legal and humanitarian protection is provided in such cases.

THE COMMITMENT OF VATICAN CITY STATE

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Laudato si'

In order to apply the recommendations contained in *Laudato Si'* to Vatican City State (VCS), a number of carefully planned environmental management projects are being carried out by its various offices and administrations.

With regard to *environmental protection*, several projects are in place. The review and improvement of the refuse collection system in VCS is inspired by the notion of refuse as an economic resource capable of being used productively and virtuously. In this sense, procedures have been adopted for the differentiated collection of refuse in every office and administration and for the differentiated disposal of both normal refuse (organic, plastic, paper and metal) and special/hazardous refuse (used oils, tires, hazardous metals, plastics, batteries, medical materials).

The *protection of water resources* is ensured through the reduction of waste and the intelligent use of water thanks to the installation of closed circuits for recycling water from fountains. In addition, since 2016, a dispensing system has been adopted at the VCS employees' canteen, where users drink water directly using their own glass, thus greatly reducing water waste and production of refuse. A new irrigation and watering system has also been designed to modernize the watercourses by introducing new

management techniques and to save water by distributing it according to the type of plantation.

The *care of green areas* in VCS and related activities involve the progressive reduction of harmful plant protection products in favour of the development of an integrated control system which helps preserve the existing ecosystem through the introduction of antagonist insects, non-toxic-selective plant protection products, crop rotation and crop resistant varieties.

The commitment to reduce *energy resources consumption*, has led to interventions to ensure better energy control and a reduction in the emission of carbon dioxide: the installation of solar panels, lighting systems with LED apparatuses, light and movement sensitive switches of the latest generation, which regulate the intensity of the light according to the natural light in the room (also set to respect the standards set for protecting the safety and health of workers). The old systems are no longer used and technological improvements have been made with new generation operating systems and applications that reduce environmental impact. New systems have been implemented which automatically switch off the lighting in the event of absence of personnel and shut off the supply of electricity at the end of the work day. Various upgrades have also been made on the lighting systems in order to reduce energy consumption. As of 2018, for example, the new lighting system for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel permitted a savings of about 60 percent on energy costs and

greenhouse gas emissions and a considerable slow-down in the deterioration of the frescoes; the new lighting system for Saint Peter's Square, the Bernini colonnade and the Vatican Basilica yielded a 70 to 80 percent energy saving as well as a significant visual improvement of the artistic surfaces of the vaults. As already mentioned, VCS has also installed solar panels that produce and transfer electricity into the energy grid.

CONCLUSION

In these days marked by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, "we find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm… The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our pre-packaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly 'save' us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity. In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters".[96]

[96] FRANCIS, *Meditation during the Extraordinary Moment of Prayer in Time of Epidemic*, 27 March 2020.

These words shed light on the present document, whose aim, as indicated several times, is to reaffirm the centrality of integral ecology in the lives of each of us and to help find concrete ways to put it into practice, starting with ourselves but above all from the need to care for our common home and those who inhabit it, especially the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

As we have seen, many initiatives can be undertaken by the members of the Catholic community, and indeed by all men and women of good will, to respond to this appeal of the Holy Father for an integral ecology.

It is appropriate, then, to reflect on the best ways to implement this engaging and demanding proposal of Pope Francis. In particular, Churches are called to provide a good example in following the indications of *Laudato Si'*. Education and training initiatives for integral ecology, sorted waste collection and disposal, the use of less polluting means of transport, critical and circular consumption, better insulation systems for buildings, energy efficiency, ethical investment, elimination of disposable plastic, care for green areas: all these are areas in which the Catholic Church in her various institutions, parishes, schools, universities and hospitals can make a significant contribution.

The projects undertaken by the Holy See include involvement in the ecumenical initiative of the "Season of Creation" and the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, celebrated each year on 1 September, often with the choice of an annual theme

to be discussed and contextualized. Here it is worth mentioning how Pope Francis, in his Message for the celebration of the 2016 Day suggested adding "care for our common home" as a supplement to the two traditional lists of the seven works of mercy: "as a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a 'grateful contemplation of God's world' (LS 214) which 'allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us' (LS 85). As a corporal work of mercy, care for our common home requires 'simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness' and 'makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world' (LS 230-231)".[97]

The Church's social doctrine clearly indicates the urgent need "*to convert the model of global development"*[98] into a model more respectful of creation and the integral human development of all present and future peoples. This includes adopting *a new paradigm of development* based on prudence and precaution, on concern for the poor and for future generations, on the modification of lifestyles and of consumption and production patterns which are often "unsustainable" from an economic, social and environmental point of view, and also the strengthening of the covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the "crea-

[97] Francis*, Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, 1 September 2016.

[98] Benedict XVI, *Angelus,* 12 September 2006.

tive love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying".[99]

To think in terms of *one world* and *a common plan* represents a complex challenge, since the same genius and creativity that has led to enormous technological development now struggles to come up with effective forms of international cooperation in resolving our world's grave environmental and social problems. Increasingly, however, there is a demand for clear and consistent dialogue about the common good, one capable of enhancing multilateralism and cooperation between states and avoiding the risk of political and economic exploitation. Yet multilateral cooperation, while necessary, is not sufficient to respond adequately to the great and exciting challenges of our time.

"What is it that we should do?" (*Lk* 3:14). There is no single answer to this question. As in John the Baptist's response to the crowds who asked this question, there are different tasks for each of us, according to our age and condition and the role we have in the Church or in society. But there is one answer that applies to all of us, since each of us has the responsibility to protect our common home and to show concern for our neighbours, whether near or far in space and time. Like every summons to conversion, this call to ecological conversion is addressed

[99] ID., *Angelus,* 16 September 2007.

to each of us personally and demands a discernment and change in the way we live.

"We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others… Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice… The Portuguese Bishops have called upon us to acknowledge this obligation of justice: 'The environment is part of a logic of receptivity. It is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next'. An integral ecology is marked by this broader vision" (LS 159).

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INDEX

Introduction 5

Chapter I
EDUCATION AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

1. Integral ecology and spiritual conversion . 23
2. Human life 31
3. Family and young people in defence of the common home. 37
4. Nursery and Primary School 45
5. Secondary school 53
6. University 59
7. Lifelong learning 67
8. Non-formal education and culture of encounter 77
9. Catechesis 85
10. Ecumenical dialogue 93
11. Interreligious dialogue 99
12. Communication 105

Chapter II
INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Food and Nutrition 115
2. Water 125

3. Energy 133
4. Ecosystems, deforestation, desertification, land use 143
5. Seas and oceans 151
6. Circular economy 159
7. Work 165
8. Finance 173
9. Urbanization 181
10. Institutions, justice and public administration 187
11. Health 195
12. Climate: challenges, responsibilities, opportunities 203

THE COMMITMENT OF VATICAN CITY STATE. . . . 213

CONCLUSION 216

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The world has been shaken by the crisis created by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to the death of many thousands of people and is changing our way of life. At this difficult time, which will certainly bring changes to the societies in which we live, we are called to care for one another and to avoid becoming closed in on ourselves. The crisis we are experiencing makes ever more evident – five years after its publication – the importance of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* that Pope Francis wrote on *care for our common home*, which teaches that everything is connected within the lens of integral ecology. Seriously facing the causes of this crisis will require a real *change of direction* and a *spiritual conversion* which can lead to a renewed awareness of our relation with ourselves, with others, with society, with creation and with God. In light of this, the Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology proposes some operative guidelines born of a careful reading of *Laudato Si'*, with *the aim of inspiring action* on the part of the Church's institutions, the faithful and all men and women of good will.

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