

Laudato Si'

EARTH BEATS

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Earth and Environment Commission Newsletter
Sisters of Holy Cross - US Region



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In Chapter 2 of *Laudato Si'*, *The Gospel of Creation*, Pope Francis calls upon our Christian faith to care for nature and for the most vulnerable among us, honoring the three fundamental relationships:

with God, with our neighbor, and with Earth.

"God saw everything that was made and it was very good."

Gen 1:31

"God took humans and put them in the garden to till it and look after (keep) it."

Gen 2:15



refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while
"keeping"

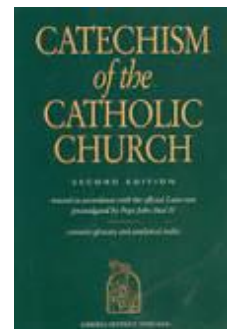
means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving.

This implies a relationship of **mutual responsibility** between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of Earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect Earth and ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. (67)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

"Each of the various creatures reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. We must, therefore, respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things?" (69)

"Everything is interconnected, and genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice, and faithfulness to others." (70)



What other scripture passages on creation elaborate on this?

How do these excerpts of the encyclical shed light upon our relationship with Earth?

The rediscovery of nature can never be at the cost of the freedom and responsibility of human beings who, as part of the world, have the duty to cultivate their abilities in order to protect it and develop its potential. (78)



It would be mistaken to view other living beings as mere objects subjected to arbitrary human domination. When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of “might is right” has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end up in the hands of the first comer or the most powerful: the winner takes all. Completely at odds with this model are the ideals of harmony, justice, fraternity and peace as proposed by Jesus. (82)

In today’s world, what do you see that portrays humanity in command of all creatures?

- The spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore from the very heart of things, something new can emerge. (80)
- The entire material universe speaks of God’s love and boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (84)
- There is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night. (85)
- The bishops of Brazil have pointed out that nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of God’s presence. (88)

Jesus witnesses the deep relationship between humans and nature. As Jesus made his way throughout the land, he often stopped to contemplate the beauty sown by God and invited his disciples to perceive a divine message in things:

“Lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest.”
(Jn 4:35) (97)

***Reflect upon times when Divine Presence was revealed to you through nature.
How do the sun and the moon speak to you?
How do these experiences encourage you to take action for Earth and all species?***

All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect. (89)



A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. (91)

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

The bishops of Paraguay stated that: “Every *campesino* has a natural right to possess a reasonable allotment of land where he can establish his home, work for subsistence of his family and a secure life. ... apart from the ownership of property, rural people must have access to means of technical education, credit, insurance, and markets”. (94)

***How do I honor the rights of those less privileged than myself?
Do the sick, the poor, the oppressed have equal dignity in my eyes?***

Pause

Let us pray:

Peace, justice and the preservations of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes which cannot be separated. ... Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for all creatures and which unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (92)



Listen to a song of your choice.

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