

# Go, you are sent... to care for creation

**“...God saw all that he had made, and indeed it was very good.”**

GENESIS 1:31

Pope Francis is very clear in *Laudato Si* that care for the environment cannot be separated from care for human beings, and that poverty and injustice are linked to exploitation of the environment and an unfair use of resources by a few.

There is an inter-generational aspect to caring for our common home, as future generations have a right to the earth's resources and a liveable home. For example, some consequences of climate change are being experienced now, but its greatest threat is to future generations. We have a moral obligation to live in a way which ensures resources are shared fairly and used sustainably, and the ability of the earth to support future generations is not compromised.

Care for creation covers a wide range of global and local issues, including climate change, land and water use, renewable energy and energy conservation. The solidarity of the human family is at the heart of caring for creation, as the effects of choices people make in one region or country may have effects far beyond their immediate environment.

Pope Benedict and Saint John Paul II have spoken strongly about the inordinate acquisition of material goods and of the need for an “ecological

conversion”. In *Laudato Si* Pope Francis develops further the need for a personal and community “ecological conversion”, which leads to “an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith”. This spirituality which flows from our encounter with Jesus Christ inspires and motivates in a way which doctrine alone cannot do.

1. What distinguishes a Catholic approach to care for creation from that of other organizations?

2. What can we do – in our homes, parishes, schools, archdiocese – to promote a culture of care for the earth among ourselves and in our society?

3. Who should we seek to influence and how should we do it?



**“We all know that it is not possible to sustain the present level of consumption in developed countries and wealthier sectors of society, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty.”**

LAUDATO SI 27

**“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. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”**

LAUDATO SI 139

**“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... Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.”**

LAUDATO SI 211-212

**“Nevertheless, self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds ... The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.”**

LAUDATO SI 219

**“Obviously ‘human life itself and everything it embraces’ includes care for our common home. So let me propose a complement to the two traditional sets of seven: may the works of mercy also include care for our common home. As a spiritual work of mercy, care for our common home calls for a “grateful contemplation of God’s world” (*Laudato Si* 214) which “allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us” (*ibid.*, 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.” (*Laudato Si* 230-31)**

POPE FRANCIS, MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION 2016

