

All Creation Is Connected: Voices in Response to Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology, by Daniel R. DiLeo (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2018). Copyright © 2018 by Anselm Academic. All rights reserved. [www.anselmacademic.org](http://www.anselmacademic.org).

Like the encyclical itself, these essays aim through and beyond the Roman Catholic public to all of us earthlings. They amplify and carry forward *Laudato si'*'s mission—which, if a viable future for our species matters, is of paramount importance.

—Catherine Keller  
Drew University Theological School

In the light of the crisis we face in the planetary community of life, *Laudato si'* may well be the most important Catholic teaching document of the twenty-first century. It brings commitment to Earth, to its lands, seas, and rivers, to all of its creatures, to the center of Christian faith and practice, and teaches us to hold this together with a commitment to social justice in “integral ecology.” The authors of the twelve chapters of *All Creation Is Connected* engage in important conversations with *Laudato si'* from a wide range of contexts and disciplines. They bring fresh insights into a reading of the text by means of the kind of dialogue about our common home to which Pope Francis calls us all. This is an important book that not only provides important insights, but like *Laudato si'* itself, can inspire the reader to a deeper ecological conversion.

—Denis Edwards  
Australian Catholic University

The authors of the dozen essays in this excellent book make up a “dream team” of engaged scholars and activists dedicated to honing an unflinching religious response to the environmental crisis. Each deserves a membership card in that rare club of energetic teachers possessing a true knack for offering highly accessible messages on important topics. Every chapter of this book sheds abundant light on the crucial appeal of Pope Francis in *Laudato si'* for deeper environmental concern and care for our common home. Providing an eloquent witness to the power of ecological conversion, this volume will enhance your knowledge and spark your energy to make ecology the priority it must be today.

—Thomas Massaro, SJ  
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

*All Creation Is Connected* contains many finely crafted and engaging articles reflecting on the environmental crisis in light of *Laudato si'*. Drawing upon an impressive community of American-based scholars, *All Creation Is Connected* treats the roots of the crisis and the response required clearly and with a keen sense of urgency and passion. [A]n invaluable resource for anyone interested in the future of our 'common home,' and especially for those inspired and shaped by the Gospel.

—Pádraig Joseph Corkery  
St. Patrick's College

*All Creation Is Connected* opens *Laudato si'* to a wider theological, scientific, and historical context. It shows how the encyclical can be integrated within varied strains of Catholic ethics such as the virtue approach or liberationist ethics. Together with the excellent bibliography and suggested study materials it can serve as an excellent supplementary educational tool for the encyclical.

—John T. Pawlikowski, OSM  
Catholic Theological Union

Few encyclicals have been awaited as eagerly as *Laudato si'*. Pope Francis's letter is long and complex, as well as fascinating and significant. For that reason, readers will benefit greatly from these essays. Thirteen recognized and respected scholars explore not only the encyclical itself, but situate the document within contexts of liturgy, Catholic social teaching, liberation theology, science, ethics, sociology, peacebuilding, and mysticism. Taken together the essays in this volume provide a wealth of data and information that help us appreciate *Laudato si'*—its wisdom, its challenge, and its importance for the life of the planet.

—Kenneth R. Himes, OFM  
Boston College

This is an excellent volume of carefully selected essays that illuminates the breadth and depth of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato si'*. Dan DiLeo has skillfully woven together a comprehensive portrait of the encyclical that provides substantive insight on its theological, cosmological, and ethical vision for a renewed human community and planetary ethics. The reflective questions and suggested readings at the end of each chapter make this book a very helpful tool for educational forums and discussion groups. I highly recommend it.

—Ilia Delio, OSF  
Villanova University

I strongly endorse *All Creation Is Connected: Voices in Response to Pope Francis's Encyclical on Ecology*. The essays are an excellent companion to deepen understanding of the critical theological, social, and ecological insights and claims woven throughout *Laudato si'*. The early chapters show both the continuity and new ground that *Laudato si'* makes with earlier Catholic social teaching. The later essays, on Pope Francis's critical contribution of the themes "Integral Ecology" and "Ecological Conversion," are especially compelling. The connections several authors make to Leonardo Boff's liberation theology and Teilhard de Chardin's and Thomas Berry's cosmological theologies ground *Laudato si'* in important contemporary theological conversations. Especially important for theologians is Richard Miller's stellar chapter, "The Cry of the Earth: The Scientific Background" . . . a clear and thorough discussion of the implications of breaching "planetary boundaries" through escalating climate change brought about by human activities—the central problem addressed in *Laudato si'*. This book will generate and ground critical conversations and active responses to Pope Francis's call for a global ecological conversion.

—Daniel T. Spencer  
University of Montana

## Editor Acknowledgments

Just as “no man is an island,” no publication is the work only one person—particularly an edited volume, and especially a volume that emerges from a conference. Since this book was developed out of the conference “*Laudato si’* and the American Catholic Church,” cosponsored by Catholic Climate Covenant, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America (see “Introduction”), several acknowledgements are thus in order.

I would first like to thank the leadership of those organizations that cosponsored the abovementioned conference: Daniel J. Misleh, Executive Director of Catholic Climate Covenant; USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development staff; Stephen F. Schneck, Ph.D., Director of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America; and Maria Mazzenge, Assistant Director of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at the Catholic University of America. I would also especially like to thank those organizations’ personnel who helped arrange and administer the conference: Wesley Cocozello, former Director of Operations at Catholic Climate Covenant; Woinishet Negash, Office Manager of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America; and Lydia Andrews, Assistant to the Director of the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America.

In addition to those who helped organize “*Laudato si’* and the American Catholic Church,” I am grateful to the authors who generously contributed to this volume and the professionals who intrepidly shepherded the production process: Bradley Harmon, Maura Thompson Hagarty, and Beth Erickson of Anselm Academic.

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# All Creation Is Connected

Voices in Response to Pope Francis's  
Encyclical on Ecology

Daniel R. DiLeo, editor



## Dedication

This volume is dedicated to Daniel J. Misleh, founding Executive Director of Catholic Climate Covenant, whose commitment and witness to Catholic teaching on climate change inspires people of faith and goodwill to better *care for our common home*.

Created by the publishing team of Anselm Academic.

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# Introduction

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DANIEL R. DiLEO

“Why care about the environment?” A 2017 Gallup poll suggests that many Americans may be asking this question. The poll indicated that from January 2016 to April 2017, Americans consistently ranked the environment as one of the least important issues facing the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Animated by Pope Francis’s encyclical *Laudato si’* (*LS*), the short answer to this question is the title of this book: *All Creation is Connected*.<sup>2</sup> The longer answer, at least in part, comes from six paragraphs of *Laudato si’*. First, all of creation—its discrete parts and its totality—has inherent goodness and value (*LS* 76). Second, God is in and throughout creation, which God makes and sustains (*LS* 80). Third, humans are called to lovingly and prudently “cultivate and care for” God’s creation (*LS* 66, cf. Gen. 2:15). Fourth, humans are creatures such that environmental degradation kills and injures human persons and communities (*LS* 139). Relatedly, the poor and marginalized are often most harmed by environmental degradation even though they typically contribute least to it (*LS* 48). Finally, human-caused “climate change is a global problem with grave implications” for humans and non-human creation (*LS* 25).

Grounded in *Laudato si’*, and in continuity with traditional Roman Catholic teaching, one might thus respond to the question of “Why care about the environment?” by highlighting the innate value of creation for which humans are called to care and in which God is present; the suffering and death that environmental degradation brings to human creatures (especially the poor who often do

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1. Gallup, “Economy Top Problem in a Crowded Field,” n.d., [http://www.gallup.com/poll/200105/economy-top-problem-crowded-field.aspx?g\\_source=Economy&g\\_medium=newsfeed&g\\_campaign=tiles](http://www.gallup.com/poll/200105/economy-top-problem-crowded-field.aspx?g_source=Economy&g_medium=newsfeed&g_campaign=tiles); Gallup, “Most Important Problem,” April 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx>.

2. Pope Francis, *Laudato si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, June 18, 2015, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

relatively little to harm creation); and the particular urgency of climate change, which may soon become runaway and irreversible.

There is more to *Laudato si* than the above insights, but these help to illustrate that *Laudato si* can offer thoughtful answers to real questions. *All Creation Is Connected* invites you to consider what leading Catholic voices in the United States have to say about this groundbreaking encyclical.

### ***Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home***

On June 18, 2015, Pope Francis released his highly anticipated encyclical *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*.<sup>3</sup> Six months later Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which helped the pope draft the encyclical, urged bishops to engage in widespread interdisciplinary dialogue to operationalize *Laudato si'* and “help bring about the huge action needed to address the world’s environmental issues.”<sup>4</sup> This volume emerges out of a gathering that embodied Cardinal Turkson’s sentiments.

### **Genesis and Structure of This Volume**

In November 2015, Catholic Climate Covenant, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America held a three-day conference titled “*Laudato si'* and the American Catholic Church” to catalyze informed, practical dialogue around the encyclical. The conference sought to inspire and equip pastoral action that thoughtfully integrates *Laudato si'*, and to this end brought together prominent Catholic thinkers and social ministry leaders for a series of presentations and conversations.

Although the meeting was convened to help social ministry leaders incorporate *Laudato si'* into their work, it became evident during

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3. An encyclical is an extended letter from a pope on some topic. *Laudato si'* is the first encyclical that focuses on ecology.

4. Cardinal Peter Turkson, “Catholicism and the Environment: Reflections on *Laudato si'*,” Vatican Radio, January 22, 2016, [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/01/22/cardinal\\_turkson\\_bishops\\_should\\_promote\\_laudato\\_si/1202931](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/01/22/cardinal_turkson_bishops_should_promote_laudato_si/1202931).

and after the conference that the scholars' presentations could help a broader audience better understand and respond to *Laudato si'*. In order to act on that recognition, this volume has brought together many of those presentations along with additional complementary essays.<sup>5</sup>

The twelve chapters in this work are organized into five sections. Part 1, "Background and Reception," outlines the theological and sociological contexts from which *Laudato si'* came and into which it has been received. In chapter 1, Monsignor Kevin W. Irwin reviews the conciliar and papal background of *Laudato si'* and suggests how the encyclical develops precedent Catholic teaching on ecology. In chapter 2, Walter E. Grazer provides further reflections on the ecclesial background and innovative theological dimensions of *Laudato si'*. In particular, Grazer reflects on *Laudato si'* in light of previous teachings on ecology from the U.S. Catholic bishops. In chapter 3, Michael Agliardo, SJ, provides sociological analysis of how *Laudato si'* has been received in the environmental, interfaith, political, and Catholic arenas of American society.

Part 2, "The Cosmos," considers how Pope Francis understands the nature, history, and future of the universe. In chapter 4, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim outline the cosmological vision of *Laudato si'* and compare Francis's perspective with those of previous popes, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, Thomas Berry, and the *Earth Charter*. In chapter 5, Drew Christiansen, SJ, describes the role of particularity, diversity, unity, and harmony in the cosmology of *Laudato si'*. Christiansen also considers how Pope Francis sees the relationship between technology, mysticism, and aestheticism.

Part 3, "Integral Ecology," unpacks this concept, which is central to *Laudato si'*. The term itself is not a neologism; it has been used, for example, by scholars to describe an interdisciplinary (or "postdisciplinary") approach to the interconnectedness of all reality.<sup>6</sup> *Laudato si'*, however, is the first papal encyclical to employ the term and uses the phrase to communicate the foundational claim

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5. The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the respective contributors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of Catholic Climate Covenant, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, or the Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America.

6. Sean Eshjorn-Hargens and Michael E. Zimmerman, *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World* (Boston: Integral Books, 2011), 47.

that “everything”—God, humans, non-human creation, economics, politics, culture, spirituality, etc.—“is connected” (*LS* 91). Against this background, Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF, describes in chapter 6 how Leonardo Boff and his Franciscan Liberation Ecological Theology influenced the use of integral ecology in *Laudato si’*. In chapter 7, Richard W. Miller utilizes the nine processes of the planetary boundary framework to provide scientific grounding for the core claim of integral ecology that all of creation is “interconnected” (*LS* 240).

Part 4, “Ecological Conversion,” assesses how persons and communities might respond to Pope Francis’s call for what essentially amounts to an ecologically-sensitive *metanoia*.<sup>7</sup> In chapter 8, Jame Schaefer suggests how persons and communities can cultivate and respond to an “ecological consciousness” that promotes the flourishing of all creation. In chapter 9, Nancy Rourke considers the relationship between character development and action, and outlines the role of virtue ethics in *Laudato si’*. In chapter 10, David Cloutier underscores that ecological sustainability requires a conversion of both individuals’ hearts, which animate personal actions, and the social structures that shape and are shaped by human choices.

Part 5, “Catholic Social Ethics,” examines *Laudato si’* in light of “the body of the Church’s social teaching” of which it is part (*LS* 15). In chapter 11, Daniel P. Scheid describes how *Laudato si’* utilizes and expands three key concepts of Catholic social teaching: the common good, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor. In chapter 12, Tobias Winright suggests that the connections in *Laudato si’* between peace and integral ecology—connections made in 1990 by Pope John Paul II and in 2010 by Pope Benedict XVI—merit the development of a new approach to the ethics of war and peace: “integral peacebuilding.”

## Conclusion

At the beginning of *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis outlines “what is happening to our common home” (*LS* 17). Before he begins this account, however, he emphasizes, “Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn

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7. Greek for “conversion, repentance, change of mind.”

what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it” (*LS* 19). That is to say, inquiry and reflection for this pope must translate into concrete activities; we must be “contemplatives in action,” in the words of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) to which Pope Francis belongs.

The chapters in this volume are intended to help readers better understand and more deeply engage with *Laudato si’*. In the spirit of Pope Francis’s sentiment above, however, the goal of this volume is not to provide content for speculative reflection only. Rather, the purpose of this work is to help readers appreciate *Laudato si’* in ways that might inspire ecological conversions that produce corresponding actions and advocacy. To that end, let us now, as Pope Francis says at the beginning of *Laudato si’*, “enter into dialogue . . . about our common home” (*LS* 3).

# PART 1

## Background and Reception

### Chapter 1

Background to and Contributions of *Laudato si'*: *On Care for Our Common Home*

KEVIN W. IRWIN

### Chapter 2

*Laudato si'*: Continuity, Change, and Challenge

WALTER E. GRAZER

### Chapter 3

The Reception of *Laudato si'* in the United States in Secular and Sacred Arenas

MICHAEL AGLIARDO, SJ

## Background to and Contributions of *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*

KEVIN W. IRWIN

This chapter offers a summary of documents on ecology, published before *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*, from the Catholic magisterium,<sup>1</sup> and indicates important contributions that Pope Francis makes to the growing body of Catholic teaching on ecology.<sup>2</sup> The chapter<sup>3</sup> is divided into four unequal sections: (1) the Second Vatican Council, (2) papal teachings from Pope Paul VI up to and including Francis, (3) teachings from conferences of

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1. In classical Latin, the word *magister* meant “master,” not only in the sense of schoolmaster or teacher, but in the many ways one can be a “master” of an art, a craft, or a trade. Hence the term carries connotations of the role or the authority of one who is a master. In modern Catholic usage, the term *magisterium* has come to be associated almost exclusively with the teaching role and authority of the hierarchy—the pope and the bishops. Today, *magisterium* more commonly refers not only to the teachings themselves but also to those who exercise authority in teaching—again, the pope and the bishops.

2. Pope Francis, *Laudato si': On Care for Our Common Home*, June 18, 2015, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

3. The review that follows is meant to express and summarize salient themes from a number of authoritative Catholic Church sources. Given the breadth and depth of what Pope Francis offers in the encyclical (as can be seen by reviewing its table of contents), this review cannot be exhaustive in terms of laying out the magisterial background for the number of varied themes in the encyclical and the sources on which the pope relies, such as theologians, spiritual writers, and authors of works relating to faith and science.

Catholic bishops, and (4) a summary of the major theological contributions in *Laudato si'*.

## Vatican II on the Environment

The Second Vatican Council, convened between 1962 and 1965, was a meeting in Rome of the world's Catholic bishops to discuss a range of issues regarding the Catholic Church and its relationship to the world. Among its many documents, the Council's 1965 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*) most clearly addresses the environment.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, however, the text is actually more notable for what it does not say, or for what it says cryptically, about creation and the environment generally, or for what it says about resources specifically.<sup>5</sup> Wherever the document notes ecological issues, it speaks about them from anthropological and ethical perspectives, naming human beings as the center of creation (*GS* 12), responsible for respecting creation's autonomy and insuring equitable distribution of its goods (*GS* 36, 39). In spelling out principles for a just economy, the document identifies humans as responsible for consolidating control over creation in order to insure an economic order that respects the dignity of all human persons (*GS* 9, 33), a theme that recurs when the text discusses the relationship between nature and culture (*GS* 33). Although the document teaches that humans have a fundamental responsibility to insure the preservation of the earth and its resources, the text does not recognize the intrinsic goodness, value, or dignity of creation.

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4. Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, December 7, 1965, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat\\_ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat_ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

5. In much English language literature today, the term *environment* refers to the life context in which we live, our habitat, which Christians believe was given us by God and for which we are responsible. *Ecology* (from the Greek *oikos*, "home") refers to our being at home on the earth, and "ecological crisis" refers to the destruction that has been worked to make the earth, our home, less inhabitable for a variety of species. *Creation* refers to the whole created world and all living beings as gifts from God the creator. Chapter 2 will address the distinctions Pope Francis makes between "nature" and "creation," "ecology" and "environment."



## Recent Papal Teaching on the Environment<sup>6</sup>

### Pope Paul VI

The same anthropologically-based themes in *Gaudium et spes* are found in Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum progressio* (PP 22–28).<sup>7</sup> Four years later in *Octogesima adveniens* (1971), Pope Paul spoke of the “environment” and directly chastised humans who have forsaken their responsibility and, “by an ill-considered exploitation of nature,” risk “destroying it and becoming in . . . turn the victim of this degradation” (OA 21).<sup>8</sup> In connection with the United Nations sponsored Conference on the Environment at Stockholm in 1972, Pope Paul VI reiterated previously-stated concerns but also made significant additions. He recognized a symbiotic relationship between humans and non-human creation.<sup>9</sup> He urged people to use their native capacity for good, specifically their intelligence, to renew nature that is ravaged and exploited to the detriment of all creation.<sup>10</sup>

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6. The fact that Pope Francis cites Pope John XXIII in *Laudato si'* is notable, even if it is not germane to this article. At the very beginning of *On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis writes about Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris*, in which there are two important points to note. First, both John XXIII's *Pacem in terris* and Francis's *On Care for Our Common Home* are not addressed to the usual people inside the Church, but they include the broad expanse envisioned by John XXIII, that is, people of good will. Second, Pope Francis's citing of John XXIII, who was writing at the brink of a nuclear disaster, could well indicate that for Francis the state of the (neglected) environment is cause for similar urgent worldwide concern. In addition, it is important to note Pope Francis's reliance on the “see, judge, act” method adopted by John XXIII in *Mater et magistra* (236). The then-Archbishop Bergoglio used this explicitly in his editorial work on the CELAM document from Aparecida in 2007 (more below). In point of fact, John adopted this from Pius XII, who relied on the work of (Belgian) Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882–1967), who worked with the poor and adopted this triad as his approach to implementing the Church's social justice teaching.

7. Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, March 26, 1967, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html).

8. Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima adveniens*, May 14, 1971, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apl\\_19710514\\_octogesima-adveniens.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html).

9. Pope Paul VI, *Message to Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the Conference on the Environment*, June 1, 1972, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/messages/pont-messages/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_mess\\_19720605\\_conferenza-ambiente.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/popepaul-vi/en/messages/pont-messages/documents/hf_p-vi_mess_19720605_conferenza-ambiente.html).

10. Ibid.

He articulated the theme of interdependence (of all things on the earth), noting a corresponding solidarity among them.<sup>11</sup>

Five years later (occasioned by the fifth World Environment Day), Paul VI returned to the theme of responsibility to hand over a healthy environment to future generations and noted that humans have the choice whether to construct and ennoble the world about them or to destroy it and squander its goods.<sup>12</sup> In this text for the first time, the pope referred to humans in the key, biblically-inspired phrase “custodians of creation.” He concluded with a forceful appeal, based on interdependence, of a “fraternal sharing and protection of a good environment.”<sup>13</sup>

## Pope John Paul II

John Paul II's first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis* (1979), provides an ecological touchpoint to which he repeatedly returns.<sup>14</sup> The pope notes that the destruction of creation is one of the things of which humans today are afraid (*RH* 15) and observes that humans have to make choices about progress or threats to creation's very existence (*RH* 16).<sup>15</sup> The pope focuses on the dignity of human persons, the responsibility humans bear for equitable sharing of the earth's resources, the wise use of their talents to work and produce

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11. In noting that the environment is an urgent issue, the pope called for a radical commitment toward its preservation based on the biblical injunction (from Gen. 1:31 and 1 Tim. 4:4) that all creation was “good” and offered St. Francis of Assisi as a significant Catholic exemplar of a Christian contemplative stance that would witness to the harmony of humans with and in nature (*ibid.*). Then, in 1979, John Paul II named St. Francis of Assisi as patron of ecology. See Pope John Paul II, *Inter Sanctos*, November 29, 1979, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/la/apost\\_letters/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19791129\\_inter-sanctos.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/la/apost_letters/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19791129_inter-sanctos.html).

12. Pope Paul VI, *Message for the Fifth World-Wide Day of Environment*, June 5, 1977, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/pont-messages/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_mess\\_19770605\\_world-day-ambiente.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/pont-messages/documents/hf_p-vi_mess_19770605_world-day-ambiente.html).

13. *Ibid.*

14. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, March 4, 1979, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html).

15. *Ibid.* He also discusses redemption as a “new creation” (*RH* 8).

goods, and the ways that issues of the environment are linked to the world economy.<sup>16</sup>

In his encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981), the pope emphasizes that by divine intention humans reflect “the very action of the Creator of the universe” when they “subdue” and “dominate the earth” (*LE* 4; reiterated and explicated more fully in *LE* 25).<sup>17</sup> He asserts that “the earth” is “that fragment of the universe” that humans inhabit, as well as “the whole of the visible world insofar as it comes within range of the influence of humans and of their striving to satisfy their needs” (*LE* 4). “The earth” includes “all the resources that the earth (and indirectly the visible world) contains and which, through the activity of persons, can be discovered and used for their ends.”<sup>18</sup> It is through work that humans become more and more the masters of the earth, exercising this task in accord with and “within the Creator’s original ordering” (*LE* 4).<sup>19</sup> Human beings thus have responsibility to preserve and share the resources of the whole earth with all that dwell on it.

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16. To the assertions of Paul VI about the earth’s goodness, John Paul II juxtaposes the sin of Adam with the redemption of Christ, the second Adam (*RH* 8). But he articulates a less than happy picture of creation today by stating that it may well be subject to futility (citing Rom. 8) and that humans’ responsibility in dominion has led to the pollution of the natural environment and to armed conflicts (*RH* 8). Humans have a dignity beyond compare in creation; humanity also, therefore, has deep responsibility for it as its “intelligent and noble ‘master’ and ‘guardian,’ and not as a heedless ‘exploiter’ and ‘destroyer’” (*RH* 15). Many of our fears, the pope writes, come from what humans produce or how they use their creative capacities; humans have not insured that “progress” and “development” “make human life on earth ‘more human’ in every aspect of that life” (*RH* 15). Because of human capacity for thought and moral action, the pope insists on the priority of “ethics over technology, . . . the primacy of the person over things, and . . . the superiority of spirit over matter” (*RH* 16). It is significant that the pope speaks about support for the world economy and the principle of solidarity to lead to “a wider and more immediate redistribution of riches and of control over them” (*RH* 16). Because humans have capacities that other orders of creation do not, they bear responsibility to preserve creation.

17. Pope John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, September 14, 1981, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091981\\_laborem-exercens.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html).

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.* “Original ordering” is an interesting phrase, especially given the more recent debates about evolution and whether one holds an evolutionary understanding of creation.

In *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987), John Paul II reiterates the above themes but also advances and specifies his thought about development and preserving resources (SRS 26).<sup>20</sup> He urges a “rigorous respect for justice” aimed at “a fair distribution of the results of true development” that shares the good things God has given to all (SRS 26, 35). In exercising dominion over creation, the pope reminds humans that they “have a certain affinity with other creatures” (SRS 26),<sup>21</sup> which “imposes limits upon the use and dominion over things” (SRS 29).

These limits include avoiding “indiscriminate possession of created things and the products of human industry” (SRS 29).<sup>22</sup> The pope warns humans not to use limited natural resources “as if they were inexhaustible, with absolute dominion (SRS 34).” Natural resources are not only here for the use of this generation, but “above all for generations to come” (SRS 34).<sup>23</sup> He thus states that the *dominion* granted to humans by God is not an absolute power, and he insists that one cannot speak of a freedom to “use and misuse” or to dispose of things as one pleases (SRS 34). The limitation imposed from the beginning by the Creator himself and expressed symbolically by the prohibition not to “eat of the fruit of the tree” (cf. Gen. 2:16–17) shows clearly that, when it comes to the natural world, humans are subject not only to biological laws, but also to moral laws that cannot be violated with impunity (SRS 34).

The document *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation* (1990 World Day of Peace Message) is John Paul II’s most focused, single-topic treatment of the “new ecological awareness” as a moral concern (1990 WDP 1, 5, 6, 15).<sup>24</sup> He reiterates previous papal

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20. Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, December 30, 1987, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html).

21. It is noteworthy that in his 1989 Easter message Pope John Paul II speaks of the reconciliation accomplished through Christ’s blood, a reconciliation of humans with God, with themselves, and with nature, and of humans’ responsibility for creation. See Pope John Paul II, *Urbi et orbi*, March 26, 1989, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/messages/urbi/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19890326\\_easter-urbi.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/messages/urbi/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19890326_easter-urbi.html).

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Pope John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation: Message of His Holiness John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, January 1, 1990, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19891208\\_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html).

teachings on the goodness of creation (1990 WDP 3–5), on the earth’s resources as for the common good and use of all (1990 WDP 8), and on the responsibility of humans to insure more equitable distribution of the world’s goods through a “new solidarity” (1990 WDP 10), especially among highly industrialized nations. In view of the relationship between the environment and poverty, war, and the lifestyle of modern society, he identifies today’s ecological challenge as a “moral crisis” (1990 WDP 11–13). In response, he calls on men and women to adopt habits of “simplicity, moderation, discipline, . . . [and] a spirit of self-sacrifice” (1990 WDP 3). Since “*we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention both to the consequences of such interference in other areas and to the well-being of future generations,*” the pope characteristically encourages a true international approach to creation care (1990 WDP 3, italics in original).

Three additional aspects of this message are particularly innovative. First, the pope speaks of the “aesthetic value of creation,” calling on humans to contemplate nature and “the works of human ingenuity” (1990 WDP 14). Methodologically, this assertion offers one fruitful avenue for developing even more substantial Catholic approaches to the ecological crisis.<sup>25</sup> Second, John Paul II invites “ecumenical and interreligious cooperation” (1990 WDP 15).<sup>26</sup> Finally, John Paul II explicitly addresses human-forced climate change by noting that the “‘greenhouse effect’ has now reached crisis proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations, and vastly increased energy” (1990 WDP 6).

In the encyclical letter *Centesimus annus* (1991), John Paul II returns to the familiar anthropological foundation for his teaching on equitable distribution of the earth’s resources (CA 37). It is an “anthropological error,” he asserts, that humans forget that the earth’s goods come from “God’s prior and original gift of the things that are”

25. This assertion should be read in light of Pope Paul’s citing of St. Francis of Assisi’s “contemplative stance” toward creation (see footnote 9) and with what we will term the “sacramental vision” espoused in *Centesimus annus* (37) (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, May 1, 1991, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html)).

26. This document is particularly notable because it immediately preceded the World Council of Churches (Seventh) Assembly at Canberra, Australia (Feb. 7–20, 1991), the theme of which was “Come Holy Spirit—Renew the Whole Creation.” See *Signs of the Spirit*, Official Report, Seventh Assembly, ed. Michael Kinnamon (Geneva: WCC, 1991).

(CA 37). The pope contextualizes and asserts the importance of safeguarding “*the moral conditions for an authentic ‘human ecology,’*” (CA 38, italics in original), which requires respect for the earth as gift to man and for man himself as gift. The use and meaning of the phrase “human ecology” therefore marks an important terminological development in the way the magisterium speaks about ecological issues.

In his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, John Paul II’s consideration of the dignity of the human person is stated negatively: when the sense of God is lost, then humans fail to consider themselves as “mysteriously different” from other orders of creation, which is a problem since we are not “merely one more living being” (EV 22).<sup>27</sup> Without the sense of God, furthermore, “nature itself, from being ‘*mater*’ (mother) is now reduced to being ‘matter,’ and is subject to every kind of manipulation” (EV 22). More positively, he asserts, “There is a truth of creation that must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected” (EV 22).

In identifying positive signs about life in our day, John Paul II notes “growing attention being paid to the quality of life and to ecology, especially in more developed societies, where people’s expectations are no longer concentrated so much on problems of survival as on the search for an overall improvement of living conditions” (EV 27). Here the pope reiterates the central place of humans within creation, especially human responsibility to exercise dominion (EV 34). He notes that humans alone are capable of knowing their Creator. The pope applies the Genesis text about tilling and looking after the garden (Gen. 2:15) to the moral responsibility humans have for the preservation of the natural habitats of the different species of animals and other forms of life (EV 42).

In a *General Audience* delivered on January 17, 2001, John Paul II refers both to the responsibility of “stewardship” and the need for “an ecological conversion” (1-17-2001 GA 4).<sup>28</sup> Because of this, the pope encourages “not only a ‘physical’ ecology . . . but also a ‘human’ ecology” in order to prepare “for future generations an environment more in conformity with the Creator’s plan” (1-17-2001 GA 4).

27. Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, March 25, 1995, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25031995\\_evangelium-vitae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html).

28. Pope John Paul II, *General Audience*, January 17, 2001, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_20010117.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117.html).

## Pope Benedict XVI

Often called “the green pope,” Benedict XVI is known both for what he did in the Vatican to preserve energy (e.g., installing solar panels) and for his frequent writings on the environment.

In his encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate* (2009), Benedict asserts, “*The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa*” (CV 51, italics in original).<sup>29</sup> Today, he argues, there is a need for “*new life-styles*” (CV 52). For Benedict, nature and society/culture are integrated such that the decline and desertification of one leads to the impoverishment of the other. Additionally, the Church “must above all protect mankind from self-destruction” by promoting a “human ecology” that the Church must proclaim in the public sphere (CV 51). Next Benedict teaches that the problematic moral tenor of society, which often lacks respect for human life, is inconsistent with creation care and contradicts the desire for future generations to respect the natural environment (CV 51). Finally, Benedict reemphasizes that the ultimate source of truth and love “is not, and cannot be, mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love” (CV 52). Therefore true development toward the protection of the environment and the betterment of society “is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted” (CV 52). As such, the pope calls for “*new life-styles*” animated by, quoting John Paul II, “the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth” (CV 51, italics in original).

One year after *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict published *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation* (2010 World Day of Peace Message).<sup>30</sup> In that message, the pope built on his encyclical and gave extended treatment to ecology. He recognized that “our present crises—be they economic, food-related, environmental or social—are ultimately also moral crises, and all of them are

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29. Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, June 29, 2009, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html).

30. Pope Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation: Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, January 1, 2010, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20091208\\_xliiii-world-day-peace.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliiii-world-day-peace.html).

interrelated” (2010 WDP 5). Additionally, he calls humanity to both “review . . . our model of development” and “consider the cost entailed—environmentally and socially—as an essential part of the overall expenses incurred” in economic transactions (2010 WDP 5, 7, italics in original). Moreover, he pointedly asks if humanity “can . . . remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change” and calls for changes in the types and quantities of humans’ energy consumption and distribution patterns (2010 WDP 9).

### Pope Francis

When a Catholic bishop is elected bishop of Rome—and thus pope of the Catholic Church—he chooses a papal name to honor an ancestor in faith and identify a model whom he hopes to emulate. For Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, this model was Saint Francis of Assisi, patron saint of those who promote ecology and a person who cared for both creation and the poor.

At his formal installation Mass, Pope Francis drew on the ethic of his namesake by “ask[ing] all those who have positions of responsibility in economic, political and social life, and all men and women of goodwill: let us be ‘protectors’ of creation, protectors of God’s plan inscribed in nature, protectors of one another and of the environment.”<sup>31</sup> This responsibility to protect creation extends from “the beauty of the created world” (citing the book of Genesis and life of Saint Francis of Assisi) to “respecting the environment in which we live . . . protecting people . . . and showing loving concern for each and every person.” While admitting that this will take hard work, Pope Francis also emphasizes that tenderness is a virtue of the strong, not the weak. Additionally, he sets in motion his papal concern for the poor by challenging himself to “open his arms to protect all of God’s people and embrace, with tender affection, the whole of humanity, especially the poorest, the weakest, the least important, those whom Matthew lists in the final judgment on love: the hungry,

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31. Pope Francis, “Homily of Pope Francis: Mass, Imposition of the Pallium and Bestowal of the Fisherman’s Ring for the Beginning of the Petrine Ministry of the Bishop of Rome,” March 19, 2013, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130319\\_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html).



the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison (Mt 25:31–46). Only those who serve with love are able to protect!”

As he admits, Francis’s first encyclical, *On the Light of Faith* (*Lumen fidei*, 29 June 2013) was largely authored by Benedict XVI. But its sections on faith and reason are extensively quoted in *Laudato si'* regarding faith and science (*LS* 141, which quotes *LF* 34).<sup>32</sup> Other notable sections in *Lumen fidei* that come to bear in *Laudato si'* address faith and the common good, faith and the family, a light for life in society, and consolation and strength amid suffering (*LF* 51, 52, 54–55, 56, 57).

Later that same year, Pope Francis issued his post-synodal exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (November 24, 2013).<sup>33</sup> Although its primary topic is the new evangelization, that is, sharing the gospel in the twenty-first century, the document lays much of the groundwork of *Laudato si'*. This is evidenced by the fact that *Laudato si'* repeatedly cites *Evangelii gaudium* (e.g., *LS* 56, 89, 110, 141, 152, 178, 196, 199, 216, 225), especially regarding insights that underpin the notion of interconnectedness that defines the concept of integral ecology in *Laudato si'* (e.g., invitation to dialogue with all persons and concern for the vulnerability of creation to sociopolitical and economic systems that value only profit and power, cf. *LS* 56, 181, 215, 257).

## Recent Teaching on the Environment by Conferences of Bishops

In the Catholic tradition, national or international groupings of bishops, called episcopal conferences, serve the needs of the Catholic Church in their particular nation or international regions. Of the many that Francis cites in *Laudato si'*, this chapter examines the work of the conference of Latin American bishops, known as CELAM (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano*), because of the influence of CELAM’s *Aparecida Concluding Document* on the formation and

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32. Pope Francis, *Lumen fidei*, June 29, 2013, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130629\\_eniclica-lumen-fidei.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_eniclica-lumen-fidei.html).

33. Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, November 24, 2013, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

contents of *Laudato si'*. The work of the conference of U.S. bishops will also be considered but only briefly since this topic is treated at length in chapter 2 of this volume.

### CELAM *Aparecida Concluding Document*—Fifth General Conference of Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean

In 2007, CELAM met for their Fifth General Conference in Aparecida, Brazil, to reflect on a number of issues. Their inclusive *Concluding Document* addresses “the evangelizing action of the Church” (*ACD* 1), that is, the effort to share the gospel with all people.<sup>34</sup> Most notably, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, then-archbishop of Buenos Aires and the future Pope Francis, was its final editor. The document skillfully and thoroughly combines evangelization with a number of related issues—including catechesis, education, liturgy, and sacraments—all in the context of evidence of decreasing participation in Church life and liturgy.

What may come as a surprise is the frequency with which and the manner in which the *Aparecida Concluding Document* deals with ecology and the environment. Many of the themes seen here are fleshed out more fully in *Laudato si'*. In effect, this is the key document that leads to the pope’s encyclical. The *Aparecida Concluding Document* adopts the “see, judge, act” method of social ethics<sup>35</sup> in treating the theological foundations and themes of ecology (cf. *LS* 24–27, 104–13, 126, 181, 250–52), specific ecological issues (cf. *LS* 66, 83–87), and the interrelationship of ecology and other issues (cf. *LS* 114–26, 397). The document also offers positive pathways forward and cautions about the crisis at hand (cf. *LS* 471–88).

In sum, the CELAM bishops, viewing reality through a wide-angle lens, see ecology and evangelization, the environment and poverty, the teachings of the Catholic Church and deforestation,

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34. CELAM, *Aparecida Concluding Document*, May 2007, <http://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>.

35. “See, judge, act” is often used in social justice methodologies, as noted when discussing Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et magistra* above. Sometimes this is expanded to include “celebrate.”

as all parts of a whole. This document provides background to what the pope calls “integral ecology” in *Laudato si'*.

## Catholic Bishops of the United States

Three major texts from the Catholic bishops of the United States are important with respect to *Laudato si'*. First, *Renewing the Earth* (1991)<sup>36</sup> asserts that the environmental crisis is a moral challenge involving the intertwined issues of environment, energy, economics, equity, and ethics. It sets forth the biblical data and principles of Catholic social teaching on ecology, recognizes humans as “God’s stewards and co-creators,” sounds a “call to conversion,” and concludes with “a word of hope” (RE V). Second, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good* (2001)<sup>37</sup> contains two insights reiterated in *Laudato si'*: first, the fact that the climate is “part of the global commons” (cf. LS 23) and, second, the need for prudence in response to climate science (cf. LS 186). Third, *Global Climate Change* (2010)<sup>38</sup> is a letter written to the U.S. Congress by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and leaders of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment that outlines agreed-upon principles for approaching the environmental crisis. (A thorough examination of these documents is in chapter 2 of this volume.)

## Major Contributions of *Laudato si'*

Nothing can substitute for a careful (even prayerful) reading of *Laudato si'*. In order to aid this process, here is a summary of what I regard as important and lasting contributions that Francis makes in

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36. USCC, *Renewing the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching*, November 14, 1991, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/renewing-the-earth.cfm>.

37. USCCB, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*, June 15, 2001, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/global-climate-change-a-plea-for-dialogue-prudence-and-the-common-good.cfm>.

38. USCCB, *Global Climate Change*, February 2010, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/global-climate-change-2010.cfm>.

the encyclical to Catholic, Christian, religious, and secular ecological discourse.

First, *Laudato si'* provides a comprehensive, inclusive theology of creation and ecology that highlights Catholicism as a theological, not fundamentalist, tradition (see *LS* 17). The foundations for this rich theology include God as Creator (*LS* 73), God as Trinity calling all of creation into God's Trinitarian communion (*LS* 238–40), and the sacramental principle,<sup>39</sup> which recognizes that all creation serves as “a locus where God is revealed, disclosed and experienced, and which underlies Catholic understanding of liturgy and sacraments” (*LS* 235–36).

Second, *Laudato si'* incorporates concrete methods, principles, and concerns, such as the “see, judge, act” method, the precautionary principle (which asserts that it is not necessary to know everything in order to act, *LS* 186), and a view toward universal and intergenerational communion (*LS* 93, 158).

Third, the encyclical encourages a movement from “natural” or “human” ecology to an “integral ecology.” In this way, the document appeals for a turning away from a “tyrannic anthropocentrism” marked by consumerism and individualism (*LS* 34, 50, 68, 119, 162, 184, 203, 208–10), and it emphasizes the interconnectedness of all of creation (*LS* 68–70, 91–92, 114–22, 137–42, 240). This means addressing all ecological degradation (not “just” climate change and global warming, *LS* 23–26), as well as combating pollution, waste, and the “throwaway culture” (*LS* 20, 206), examining the ethical implications of food distribution practices (*LS* 32, 38, 50), upholding and advocating for the absolute right to potable water, the relative right to private property, the right to life, and the right to economic justice (*LS* 27–31, 93, 120, 154). It also means promoting intellectual honesty, transparency, and academic freedom (*LS* 16, 138–40, 188).

Fourth, the encyclical calls for the conversion of individuals and communities through contemplation and dialogue (*LS* 71, 216–21, 237), and it encourages especially the dialogue between faith and science (*LS* 62, 63, 95, 102, 105, 107, 110, 114, 131). Moreover, this conversion is to result in a new way of viewing, living in, and becoming stewards and caretakers of creation.

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39. Kevin W. Irwin, “A Sacramental World: Sacramentality as the Primary Language for Sacraments,” *Worship* 76, no. 3 (May 2002): 199.

## Conclusion

Pope Francis and his papacy might well be called a “living parable.” He talks the talk and walks the walk. *Laudato si'* articulates the ecological vision that animates the life of Francis, who drinks from the well of his own pastoral experience and who sits at the feet of his predecessors in the papacy and his brother bishops around the world. In reading (and hopefully rereading) this document, all people are invited to personal and collective conversion. In sum, Pope Francis inspires readers who carefully and prayerfully study *Laudato si'* to better care for our common home.

## Review Questions

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1. How would you describe Catholic magisterial teaching on ecology in one sentence?
2. How would you define *anthropocentrism*?
3. *Human dignity* is a recurring concept in Catholic magisterial teaching on ecology. What does this term mean to you?
4. What do you think is the difference between human ecology and integral ecology?
5. Why do you suppose Pope John Paul II said that “the ecological crisis is a moral issue” (1990 *WDP* 6)?

## In-Depth Questions

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1. Before reading this chapter, were you aware of Catholic magisterial teachings on ecology that came before *Laudato si'*? If not, why do you think that might have been?
2. Pope John Paul II and the U.S. Catholic bishops speak of the need for “conversion” regarding ecology. What would ecological conversion look like for an individual? For society?
3. In *Renewing the Earth*, the U.S. Catholic bishops describe humans as “co-creators” with God in creation. Why do you think the bishops use this term, and what image does it conjure up for you?

4. In *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops emphasizes the need for prudence in response to climate change. How might this virtue—described by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'* as the “precautionary principle”—inform modern conversations about climate change?
5. This chapter identifies several contributions that *Laudato si'* makes to ecological discourse. To which one are you most drawn? Why is that?

### Suggestions for Further Study

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Pope Benedict XVI. *The Environment*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2012.

———. *Ten Commandments for the Environment: Pope Benedict XVI Speaks Out for Creation and Justice*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria, 2009.

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