



Daniel Bonnell

## Season of Creation 2022

### LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF CREATION

To listen to the cry of creation is not like shutting out all other sounds in order to hear a single bird's cry in a forest. The environment is around us, within us, above us, beneath us and beyond us. Its voice is the voice of the universe. When we listen to the cry of one part of the environment to which we have responsibility we are led also to attend to all the relationships that compose our environment and to the way in which they interact with one another to form the world in which we live.

Care for the environment will embrace all our relationships, ranging from those with the air we breathe, the food we eat, the things we buy, the way we travel, dress, speak, listen and work, to our relationships with ourselves, with family, friends, hospitals, people who are homeless and excluded, schools, workplaces, banks, politics and with our

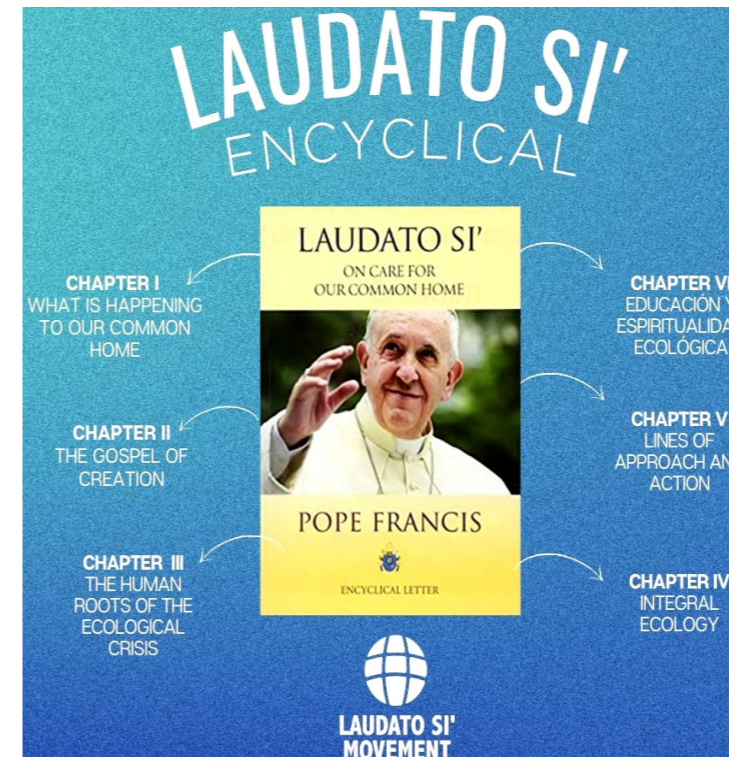
world. Care for the environment is not one single aspect of our lives. It embraces all aspects of our lives.

### AN INTERRELATED WORLD

This vision of a world in which all is connected has been the distinctive gift of Pope Francis. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* he insisted that action to protect the environment and to address climate change is as much an issue of justice as are actions to provide shelter and food for the poor. The effects of neglecting and exploiting the environment fall heaviest on the poor. They also threaten the future of the planet and betray the trust by which we hold our world for our children and grandchildren.

Pope Francis offers a vision of an interrelated world in which what we do well or badly in one of our relationships will affect all our other relationships. Our environment is not part of the world; it is our whole and only world. If we exploit and pollute the natural world,

we shall also foul and put at risk our entire human world.



### A NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS

This vision is challenging but it is also reassuring. Many of us find it difficult to make the care for the environment a personal priority because there seems to be such a large gap between anything we can do and the large realities of the environment – global warming, desertification, rising sea levels, the tension between the need for power and the threat to the environment posed by fossil fuels, and so on.

But when we see the world as a network of relationships in which all is interconnected, we can work at seeking harmony between all the relationships that shape our own lives.

### ATTENTION TO SMALL DETAILS

From this perspective our commitment to listen to creation begins with the small details of our daily life. We attend to the power we use, the ways we pray and to the packaging we accept. We also consider composting our food scraps for the growing of herbs, and reflect on the ways we travel.

This attention to small details is not an attempt to look good but an expression of respect. Like the disciplines of fasting and of prayer that have traditionally undergirded a life lived with God, they form the matrix of a life that takes the environment seriously.

As we pay attention to small things, we can recognise more clearly the character of our culture with its generous and reckless elements, its extravagance,

and its modesty, its destructive and its healing elements.

### LONGING FOR INTEGRAL JUSTICE

Personal attention to our domestic life opens out into the larger relationships to people and to groups that are part of our lives. We begin to see the links between the neglect of the environment and the neglect of Indigenous Australians, people who seek protection and people who are disadvantaged. We begin to long for integral justice.

In this integrated view of the world listening to the voice of creation in the world of nature is central. We see there the preciousness and glory of tiny things like autumn leaves, sunsets, ants at work, the cool breeze at the end of a hot day. We see also how delicate are the connections between sun, water and growth. Creation is massive but it is also delicate.

(Adapted from Fr Andy Hamilton, *Australian Catholics*)



*I have heard their cry ... I know their sufferings ...  
Come, now! I will be with you  
Exodus 3:1-12*

### SEASON OF CREATION 2022 SYMBOL

The worldwide increase in wild and uncontrollable fires are a sign of the devastating effects of climate change on the most vulnerable people, animals and vegetation in our common home.

### THE BURNING BUSH

The fire that called Moses as he tended his flock on Mt Horeb (Exodus 3:1-12) did not consume or destroy the bush. The flame of the Spirit revealed God's presence. The holy fire affirmed that God heard the cries of all who suffered and promised to always be with us.

In the 2022 Season of Creation, the burning bush is the symbol of God's Spirit calling us to listen to the voice of creation and to the voices of those who hold generational wisdom about how to live gratefully within the limits of the Earth.

These are the voices of the Earth. The global Christian family is called to awaken to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and with each other

*"for we know things can change"  
Laudato Si' n 13*