

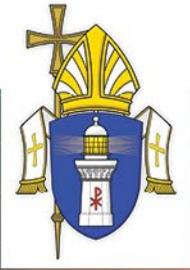
“PRAISE BE TO YOU”:

# Laudato Si'



A Discussion Guide  
for Parishes, Schools and  
Small Groups





## Acknowledgements

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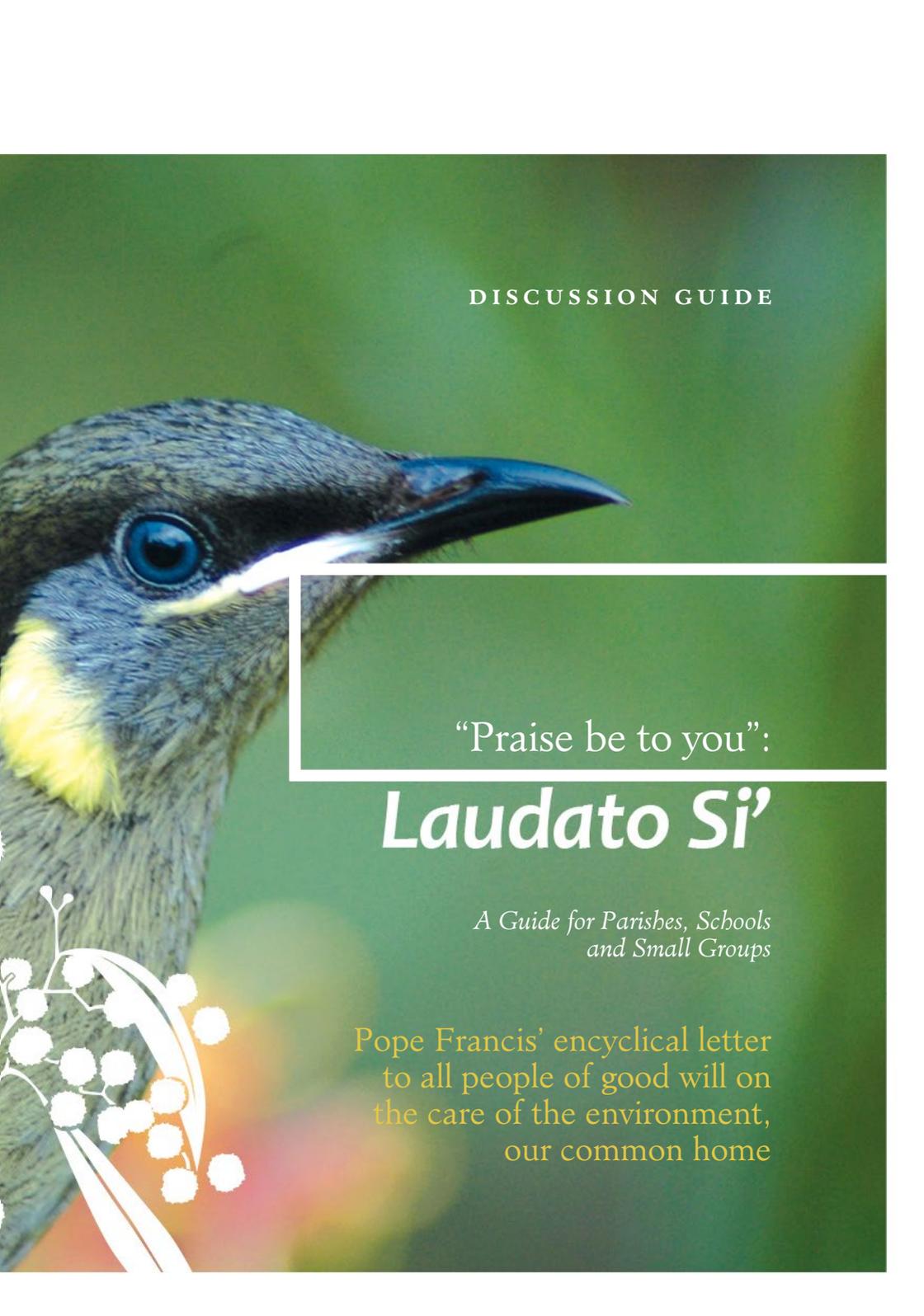
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DISCUSSION GUIDE

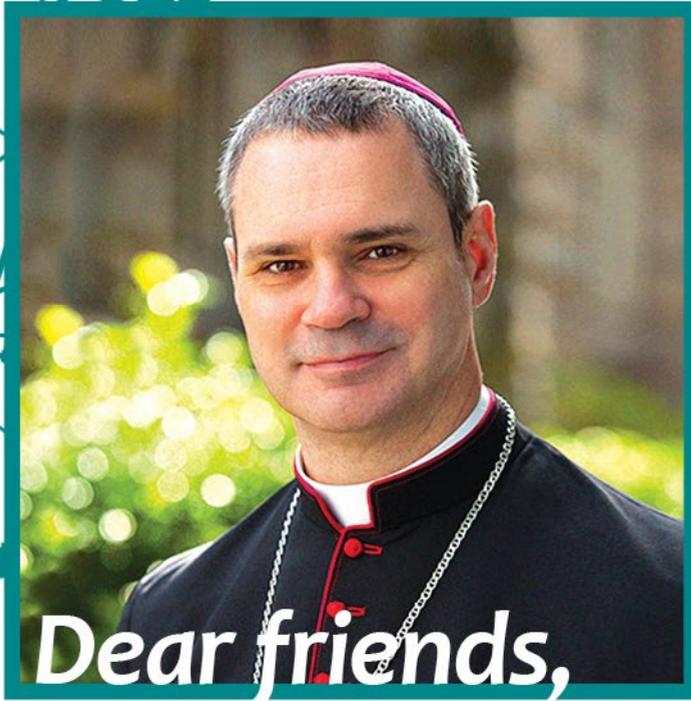
“Praise be to you”:

# Laudato Si’

*A Guide for Parishes, Schools  
and Small Groups*

Pope Francis’ encyclical letter  
to all people of good will on  
the care of the environment,  
our common home





I am greatly encouraged by the beautiful challenge that Our Holy Father Pope Francis gives us in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* ('Praise Be To You').

In his 'letter to the world', Pope Francis puts before us a vision infused with hope for the future, urging us to re-think our relationship with the world, 'our common home.'

He asks each of us to open our eyes to the beauty of the gift of Creation in which we live and breathe, and to give our world its honour, care, and protection.

In particular, Catholics ought to look upon our common home as a gift of God the Father, and for which Our Lord Jesus Christ gave his life on the cross. In the Eucharist, we offer bread and wine, gifts of the earth, to God upon the altar, and we receive those gifts transformed into the body and blood of the Lord. So, we are pilgrims nourished by both the gifts of the earth as well as the gifts of God himself.

We are never just citizens of the earth – we also belong to a locality, a small and equally important portion of the whole earth, and in your local Church family I like to think of each of you as a participant in a ‘neighbourhood of grace.’

In our Diocese of Broken Bay, our neighbourhoods of grace occupy a region of Australia replete with coastal communities, many national parks, and glorious examples of the beauty of Creation. We have reason to give thanks and to wonder at the goodness of the world in which we inhabit.

Nevertheless, as in all good and wonderful things, we can take them for granted and can often neglect them to our peril. This is true of all sorts of great things, such as friendships, good health, parents and children, spouses, our domestic homes. Celebrating the Eucharist is a way that God reminds us that we never receive a good thing once, but must receive it over and over again, renewing our thanks for it at regular opportunities.

The need for a deep and responsive spirit of thanks should imbue all of our actions in the world, contributing not merely to the natural environment, but to what Pope Francis and previous Bishops of Rome have referred to as our ‘human ecology’ – the complex set of relationships in which we live and act. The call to action is always a call to prayer; each places us in a web of relating to one another that can only flourish when centred in God’s gracious love.

Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* fosters in us a thankful heart and a call to action for a world facing many threats.

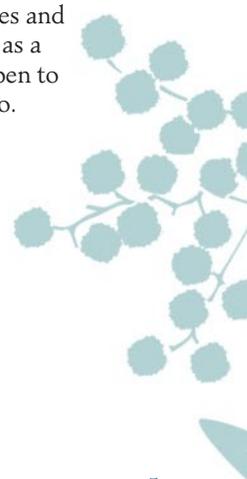
In this Discussion Guide, I encourage our parishes, schools, families and young people to join in the discussion about ecological conversion as a dimension of our faith. May we be moved to give thanks and be open to an interior conversion of heart, as Pope Francis has invited us to do.

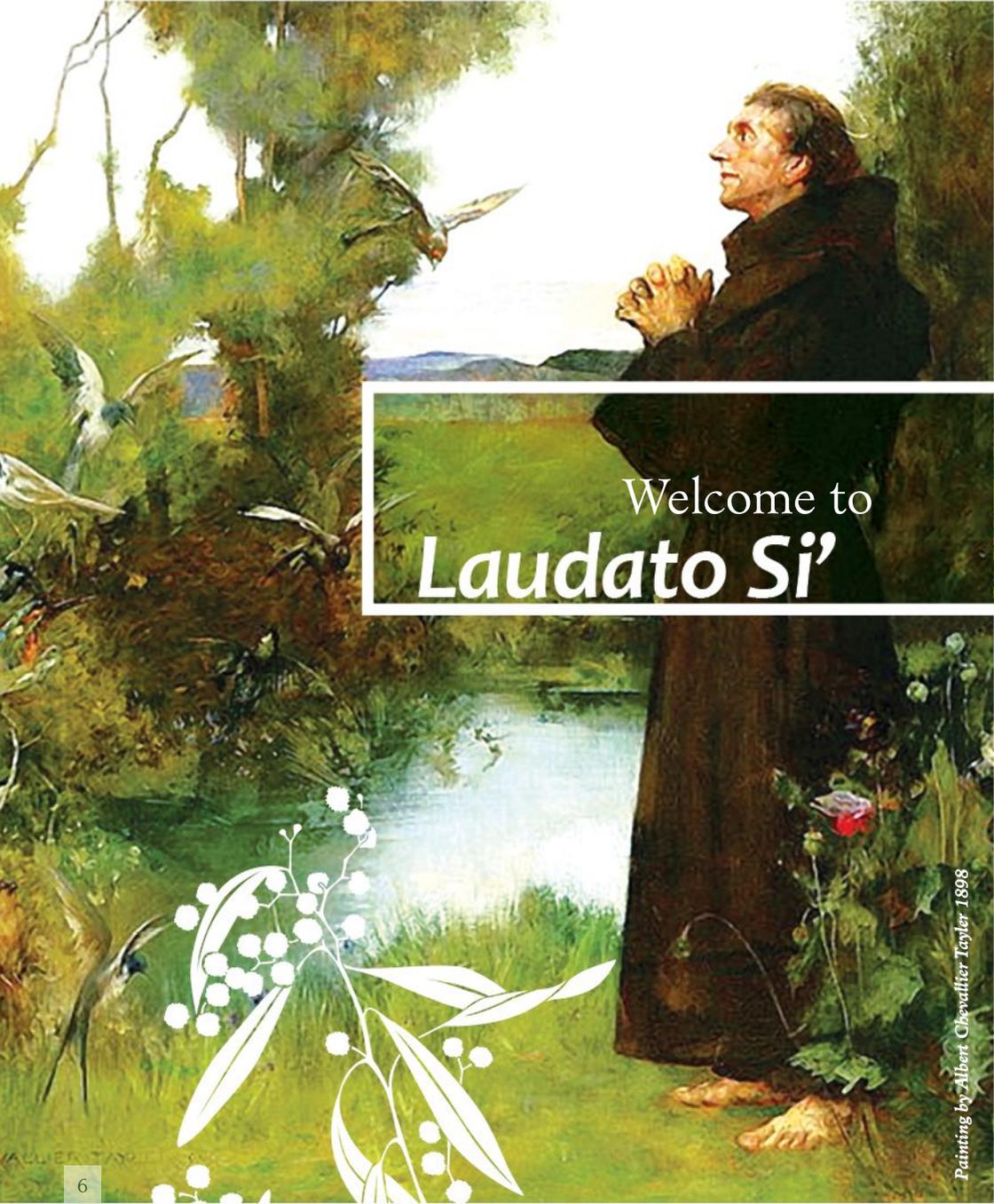


+ Peter A Comensoli

**Most Rev Peter A Comensoli**

Bishop of Broken Bay





Welcome to  
**Laudato Si'**

Painting by Albert Chevallier Topley 1898

The release of Pope Francis' much anticipated encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*, has generated enthusiastic discussion within the Church and in the public square about the ecological issues facing the world.

Underpinned by the credibility of his witness and a universal, charismatic appeal, Pope Francis has placed his message on the environment in contemporary considerations of global warming, environmental sustainability, and worldwide inequality.



Meaning "Praise be to you," an expression borrowed from a canticle of St Francis of Assisi, *Laudato Si'* deftly connects

the environment to issues of peace, justice, and the common good, indeed to the right to life itself. As such, it is a document that extends beyond the singular issue of climate change and concerns the reverence of our whole world as the created gift of God.

Pope Francis writes, "I urgently appeal . . . for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need conversation which includes everyone" (LS 14).

To encourage this conversation and to promote awareness of Pope Francis' striking message of hope, the new Office for Evangelisation of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay has prepared this small group discussion guide as a companion to

the Encyclical. It aims to engender personal reflection and community discussion of the environment as a concern of our faith.

Now a part of Catholic Social Teaching, *Laudato Si'* speaks of the importance of consciousness-raising but also invites personal initiative in combatting environmental degradation and situations of human and social diminishment to which it is intimately connected.

In short, Pope Francis calls for an ecological conversion of the heart that sees all things in their relationship to God and our neighbour, a conversion of heart that leads us to prayerful and committed action in our local communities and beyond.

We hope that this discussion guide stimulates your response to *Laudato Si'* and spirited dialogue within your family, parish, school and in the community at large on these most urgent of issues. "May you be praised!" for entering into this discussion with the joy of faith, the confidence of hope, and the fervour of love as we seek to be exemplary stewards of God's magnificent Creation.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Daniel Ang". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Daniel Ang**

Director, Office for Evangelisation  
Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay  
Email: evangelisation@dbb.org.au



HOW TO USE THIS  
*Discussion*  
*Guide*



This discussion guide is intended as a companion to the Encyclical. Corresponding to the format of *Laudato Si'*, the guide is comprised of an introduction and six chapters. Each chapter has between five and ten questions to prompt both individual and group reflection and discussion.

For small group study, three options are proposed, and your parish or group should choose that which best suits its circumstance.

- **For the time-limited**, you might choose to identify one or two chapters on topics that are of particular interest and focus on these. Otherwise, you might select and discuss only the most challenging of the questions from each of the six chapters.
- **For the fast-moving** or those accustomed to group discussion, you might like to consider three 1½ hour gatherings grouping chapters 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 with pre-reading of upcoming chapters in-between gatherings. Alternatively, you might consider three 2 hour sessions with Session 1 comprising of a general introduction of the Encyclical and the environmental issues of the day. Session 2 might discuss paragraphs 1-100 (Introduction-Chapter 2) and Session 3 might cover the remaining paragraphs 101-246 (Chapters 3-6).
- **For the leisurely or unhurried**, a group which would prefer to explore the Encyclical steadily and in depth, you might prefer six 1 hour sessions covering a chapter per session with pre-reading of the relevant chapter prior to each gathering.

However you engage with the Encyclical or configure your group, we wish you the grace of hearing God's call to deeper conversion and social co-responsibility.

For further assistance in making the conversation about *Laudato Si'* a reality in your family, parish, school or group, or to provide feedback on your experience of unpacking this Encyclical, please contact [evangelisation@dbb.org.au](mailto:evangelisation@dbb.org.au)



# Introduction

(PARAGRAPHS 1–16)

Pope Francis opens *Laudato Si'* by affirming the abiding concern of the Church for the environment which cries out as “among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (LS 2). In penning this Encyclical, the Pontiff seeks to appeal not simply to members of the Church but to all people of good will, to enter into dialogue with them about the present state and future prospects of the earth, our common home. Drawing on the teachings of his predecessors since the Second Vatican Council, as well as the mysticism of his 13<sup>th</sup> century inspiration, the ascetic friar of Assisi, Pope Francis invites “the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change” (LS 13).

🌿 In the opening paragraphs of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis traces the invitations of preceding popes to a global “ecological conversion”, to an appreciation of the natural environment as something more than a resource for our immediate consumption. *In what way(s) is care of the environment a broader social concern, connected to human life and the development of human society?*

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 Pope Francis names a number of obstructionist attitudes that impede positive action in the midst of environmental crises. Among these are identified a denial of the ecological problems; indifference; nonchalant resignation; and blind confidence in technical solutions (LS 14). *In what ways have these attitudes been evident among individuals, governments or corporations? Why do you think such attitudes to environmental issues persist?*

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 Pope Francis remarks “change is impossible without motivation and education” (LS 15). *What are the most powerful motivating factors for our common ecological conversion and more responsible stewardship of the environment? What is your personal motivation for re-thinking your relationship to the natural environment?*

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 Quoting Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodoxy, Pope Francis writes that as Christians we are called “to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale” (LS 9). *Challenged to think spiritually, ethically and ecumenically, what does “accepting the world as a sacrament of communion” mean for you?*

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A photograph of two children, a boy and a girl, in school uniforms looking down at plants in a garden. The boy is on the left, wearing a light blue polo shirt. The girl is on the right, wearing a blue and white checkered dress with a white collar. They are standing in front of a garden bed with several plants supported by bamboo stakes. The background shows more greenery and a wooden structure.

**CHAPTER ONE:**

# *What Is Happening To Our Common Home*



## (PARAGRAPHS 17-61)

This Chapter aims to draw on the results of the best scientific research on the environment as a means of listening to the cry of creation with deep compassion. Pope Francis invites us “to become painfully aware, to dare to turn 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).

This first chapter addresses such themes as:

### Pollution, Waste and the Throwaway Culture

[20-22]

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### Climate as a Common Good

[23-26]

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### The Issue of Water

[27-31]

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### Loss of Biodiversity

[32-42]

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### Decline in the Quality of Human Life and the Breakdown of Society

[43-47]

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### Global Inequality

[48-52]

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### Weak Responses

[53-59]

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### A Variety of Opinions

[60-61]

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 Pope Francis speaks at length about the scarcity of good quality fresh drinking water and sanitary services among the world's poor (LS 27-31). *Why has this situation come about? What are the challenges and possibilities for safeguarding access to water as a basic and universal human right?*

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 Pope Francis employs a powerful turn of phrase when he declares that the earth, our home, “is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth” (LS 21). *Can you think of local examples of environmental degradation or visual blight? What can, or should, be done about such issues in our local communities?*

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 Five times Pope Francis names a “throwaway culture” as a root cause of the ecological crisis (e.g. LS 22 & 43). *What images come to mind when you hear the phrase “throwaway culture”? What are the effects or consequences of such a culture of consumption and waste? In what ways have you been complicit to or else resisted this way of life?*

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 *Laudato Si'* identifies the earth itself as “among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor” (LS 2). Noting that the human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together, Pope Francis encourages us to hear “both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (LS 49). *Meditating upon these words, what are these cries? How audible are they and how might we speak for that and those without a voice?*

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 *In what ways do the poor suffer most from inaction on climate change and disregard for the environment (LS 48)? In what ways are poverty and global inequality environmental issues?*

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 *Why does Pope Francis believe “we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation” (LS 48)?*

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**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** *In what ways have you acted as “lord and master” over the earth? In what ways have you been an active agent of stewardship and care for the environment?*

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 *Why does Pope Francis think the response to the world’s environmental crisis has been weak (LS 53)?*

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*“On many concrete questions, the Church has no reason to offer a definitive opinion; she knows that honest debate must be encouraged among experts, while respecting divergent views. But we need only take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair. Hope would have us recognise that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems” – Laudato Si’ 61*



 In critiquing international political responses to the ecological crisis, Pope Francis decries “too many special interests” that undermine the common good (LS 54). *What are these “special interests”? What interests hold too much sway at global summits on the environment? Whose interests are under-represented and how might we be the voice of the marginalised?*

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 From his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis recalls “whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market, which become the only rule” (LS 56). *What is your reaction to the Pope’s description of the economy as a “deified market”? In what way(s) have economic powers become deified? What is required in order to restore right relationships between humanity, God and the created world?*

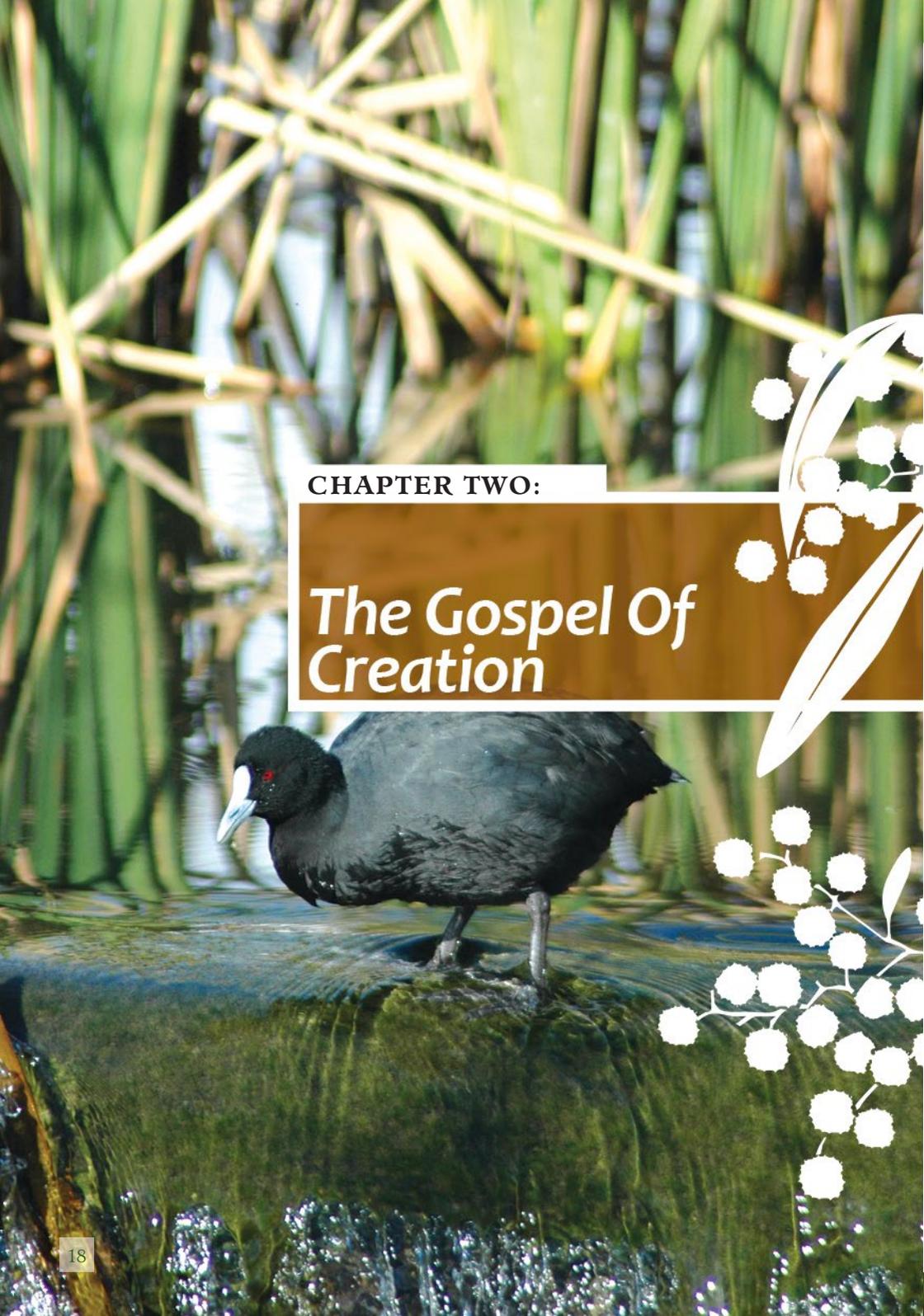
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CHAPTER TWO:

# *The Gospel Of Creation*



## (PARAGRAPHS 62-100)

In this second chapter Pope Francis begins with a call for intense and fruitful dialogue between science and religion. He then explains how the biblical accounts of creation reveal the truth of the relationship of human beings to God and to the world. He draws from both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, recognising the specific purpose of each creature in God's creation, all of which invite our awe and wonder.

The chapter concludes by affirming the “sublime communion” we share with one another and the environment as “a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone” (*LS 95*).

It includes the following sections:

### The Light Offered by Faith

[63-64]

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### The Wisdom of the Biblical Accounts

[65-75]

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### The Mystery of the Universe

[76-83]

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### The Message of Each Creature in the Harmony of Creation

[84-88]

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### A Universal Communion

[89-92]

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### The Common Destination of Goods

[93-95]

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### The Gaze of Jesus

[96-100]

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 How does Pope Francis interpret Genesis 1:28 which grants to humankind “dominion” over the earth (LS 66-67)? How do you interpret this biblical text?

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**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** Do you do more “tilling” or “keeping” in your relationship with the earth? (LS 67, cf. Genesis 2:15)

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 What does Pope Francis mean when he says “Creation is of the order of love. God’s love is the fundamental moving force in all created things” (LS 77)?

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**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** *Have you personally experienced the presence of God in the gift of creation? Re-read paragraph 84 then recount a palpable experience of discovering God in nature. Why does Pope Francis later affirm that the natural world has profound meaning for our sacramental and spiritual lives, in encouraging us to discover God in all things? (LS 233-242)*

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 Quoting the Bishops of New Zealand, Pope Francis notes that the way we interact with the environment is an ethical issue for our actions impact upon the lives of others. To make his point, Pope Francis recalls the commandment “Thou shall not kill” and asks us what it means when “twenty percent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive” (LS 95). *How are you challenged by this statement and how might your consumption of natural resources impact upon others, even those you may not see?*

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🌿 “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 each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth” (LS 92). *How do you instinctively react to the earth being referred to as “mother” or to the sun as it is called “brother”? What is the significance of such familial language, as used by St Francis of Assisi and now Pope Francis?*

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🌿 *What is your reaction to Pope Francis’ assertion that there is a “social mortgage on all private property” (LS 93)? What does he mean by this?*

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**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** *Can you think of a situation that would prompt you to limit your consumption or give up or share your private property for the benefit of the common good?*

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 Why does Pope Francis assert that “A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings” (LS 91)? Do you agree?

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 What was Jesus’ attitude toward creation and how does he live in harmony with creation as revealed in the New Testament (LS 96-100)?

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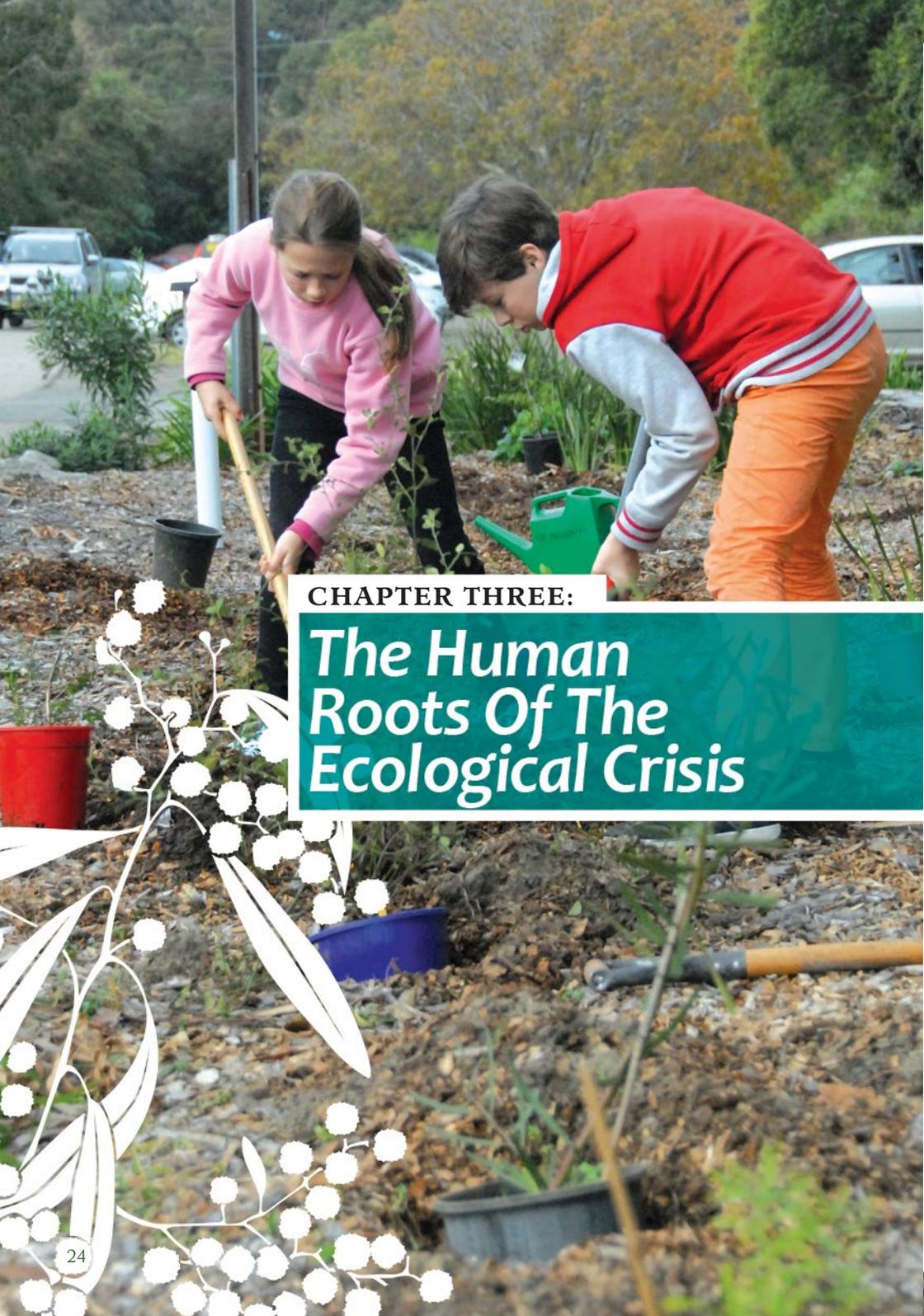
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**CHAPTER THREE:**

**The Human  
Roots Of The  
Ecological Crisis**



## (PARAGRAPHS 101-136)

This Chapter analyses the current situation of ecological crisis “so as to consider not only its symptoms but also its deepest causes.” It addresses the role of technology and a particular paradigm or mode of thinking that Pope Francis identifies as underlying the environmental degradation we are experiencing. He argues that humanity cannot place blind faith in its own technological solutions to the ecological problems that it has created while also warning of the dangers of relativist thinking and an exclusive anthropocentric worldview that renders the environment merely an instrument of human will. As such the third chapter of *Laudato Si'* canvasses the following themes:

### Technology, Creativity and Power

[102-105]

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### The Globalisation of the Technocratic Paradigm

[106-114]

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### The Crisis and Effects of Modern Anthropocentrism

[115-121]

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### Practical Relativism

[122-123]

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### The Need to Protect Employment

[124-129]

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### New Biological Technologies

[130-136]

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🌿 At the outset of this third chapter, Pope Francis states that “technological products are not neutral” (LS 107). Much later in the Encyclical, he asserts that “purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act” (LS 206). *In what ways do our interactions with technology and consumption of products shape our hearts and relationships with others?*

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🌿 Pope Francis challenges us to “recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur” (LS 114). *What are the values and great goals we could recover by a simpler, more restrained and more humane form of living? Of what would we have to let go to discover a more sustainable and socially just way of life?*

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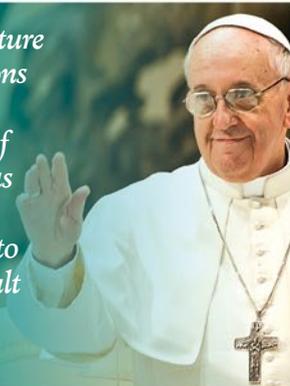
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*“Neglecting to monitor the harm done to nature and the environmental impact of our decisions is only the most striking sign of a disregard for the message contained in the structures of nature itself. When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected” – Laudato Si’ 117*



**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** In the quote preceding – *Laudato Si'* 117 – Pope Francis starkly underlines the integrity and interconnectedness of all created things. Each element of nature refracts a ray of the truth, dignity, beauty and wonder of God, especially that which is most fragile or seemingly insignificant. Using this paragraph, prayerfully engage in an exercise of lectio divina. *What words or phrases speak powerfully to you as you meditate on the text? What connections do you make? To what actions are you being called?*

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 Pope Francis speaks of the dangers of practical relativism in which human beings place themselves at the centre of reality and all else is seen “as irrelevant unless it serves one’s own immediate interests” (LS 122-123). *What are some of the consequences for the environment and human beings that result from this kind of thinking?*

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 Pope Francis speaks of the need to ensure all people have work for it is “a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth” (LS 128). *How might we balance technological progress with the human vocation to work? What do you think of Pope Francis’ proposals about the need to foster an economy which favours “productive diversity and business creativity” (LS 129)?*

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 In addressing the causes of, and contributors to, ecological crisis, Pope Francis identifies problems associated with the fragmentation of knowledge and the isolation of information that results from technological specialisation (LS 110, 138). To employ a phrase fitting for our subject, the Pope is suggesting “we cannot see the forest for the trees”. Pope Francis counsels in response that “our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God” (LS 119). *In what ways is the isolation of information preventing us from seeing the ‘big picture’ with regards the environment and our neighbour, especially the poor? What effect do fragmentation and compartmentalisation have on our appreciation of the interrelatedness of all things and people, and indeed of the sovereignty and grandeur of God?*

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 In his challenge of global inequality, Pope Francis points out the unacceptable contrast of “a sort of ‘superdevelopment’ of a wasteful and consumerist kind” and “ongoing situations of dehumanising deprivation” in the world (LS 109). *Name examples of “superdevelopment of a wasteful kind” that you have observed, or are aware of, as well as any examples of “dehumanising deprivation” that make a claim on our consciences. What can we do as individuals, as parishes or groups to close the gap between these realities of superdevelopment and deprivation, both locally and on a global scale?*

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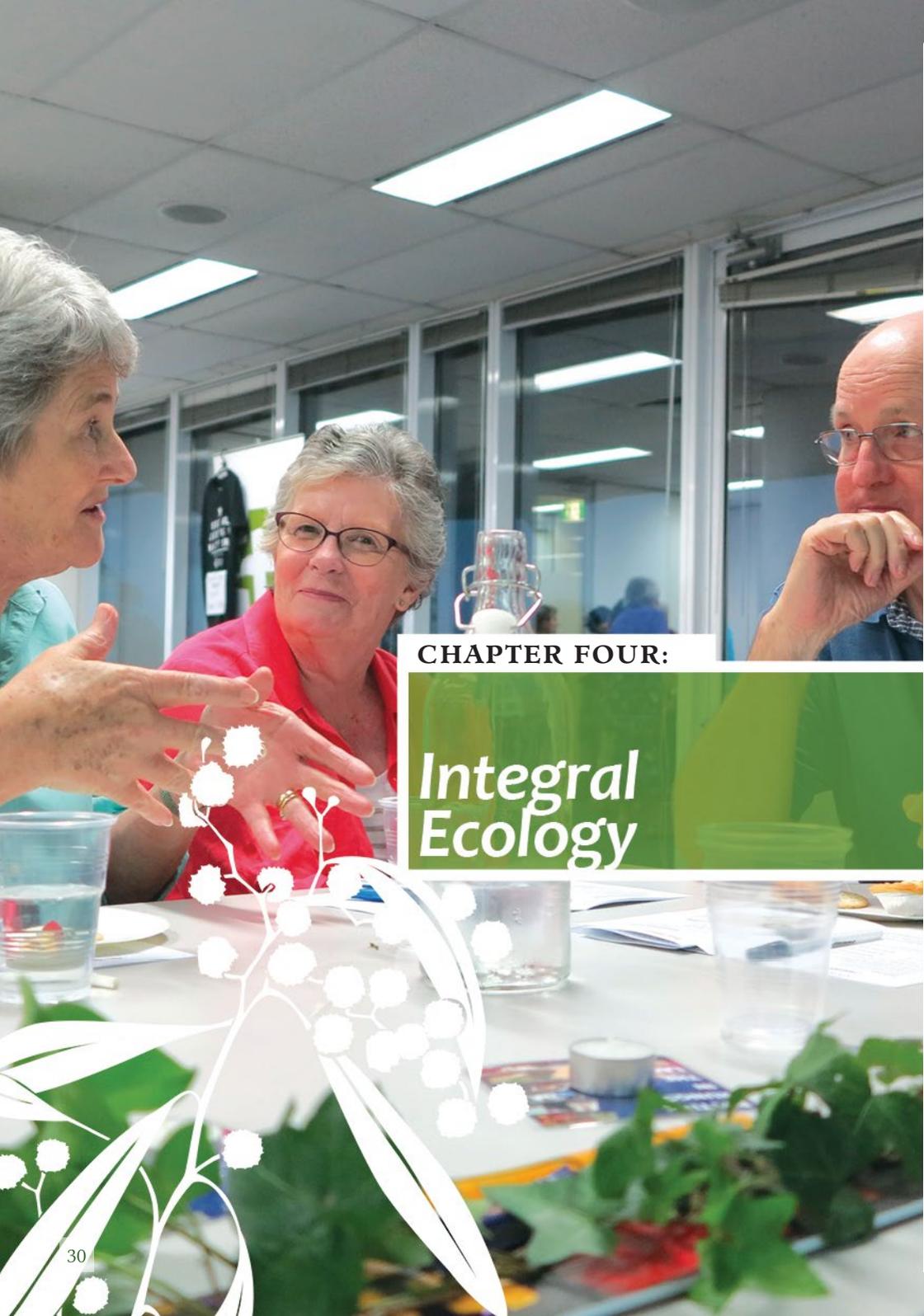
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**CHAPTER FOUR:**

**Integral  
Ecology**





## (PARAGRAPHS 137-162)

In this Chapter, Pope Francis makes a radical proposal in the face of the global challenges of environmental and social degradation. He puts forward an “integral ecology” as the means towards a sustainable, more reverential and just way of life. If we have been prone to a mentality which treats the environment in a utilitarian way rather than in its intrinsic relationship to humanity, most especially the poor, then a new integral and integrated vision must be the way of the future.

The natural environment, economy, culture and daily realities of the poor and marginalised must be understood as interconnected, and we must seek “comprehensive solutions, which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. 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). This enriching and challenging chapter contains the following sections:

Environmental, Economic and Social Ecology

[138-142]

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Cultural Ecology

[143-146]

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Ecology of Daily Life

[147-155]

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The Principle of the Common Good

[156-158]

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Justice Between the Generations

[159-162]

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🌿 Recognising that we are a part of nature and not apart from it, Pope Francis identifies the strength of our social and political institutions, the degree of our civic harmony, protection of cultural treasures, and living conditions and infrastructure as all relevant to the health and prospects of our ecosystem (LS 139-154). *If found to be fragile or inadequate, how might each of these factors impact on our natural surrounds and the quality of life experienced by ourselves and others?*

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🌿 In *Laudato Si'* 158, Pope Francis mentions four key aspects of Catholic Social Teaching: the principle of the common good, solidarity with all peoples, a preferential option for the poor, and the universal destination of the world's goods. *How familiar are you with these terms? How might you apply these principles to the environmental issues of our day?*

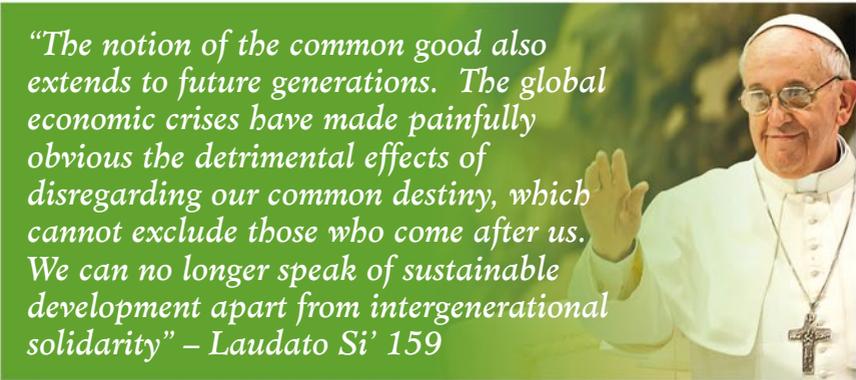
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 In *Laudato Si'* 144, Pope Francis also laments a loss of our cultural diversity as a globalised economy exerts a “levelling effect” upon societies. *Why is Pope Francis concerned with diverse cultural identities, and how is this diversity relevant to environmental responses at a local level?*

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 In treating the environment holistically and in relation to humanity, Pope Francis also comments on the built environment and the challenges of modern living (LS 147-154). *What ills does he describe and what solutions does he offer? Considering your own context, what are your thoughts on the effects of the built environment on your relationships, the natural ecology and our society as a whole (e.g. contemporary problems regarding housing affordability)?*

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 Pope Francis affirms the importance of recognising Indigenous communities, their cultural traditions, and their sacred connections to the land (LS 146). *What wisdom can we glean from the first Australians, our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, in our care of the natural environment as our common home?*

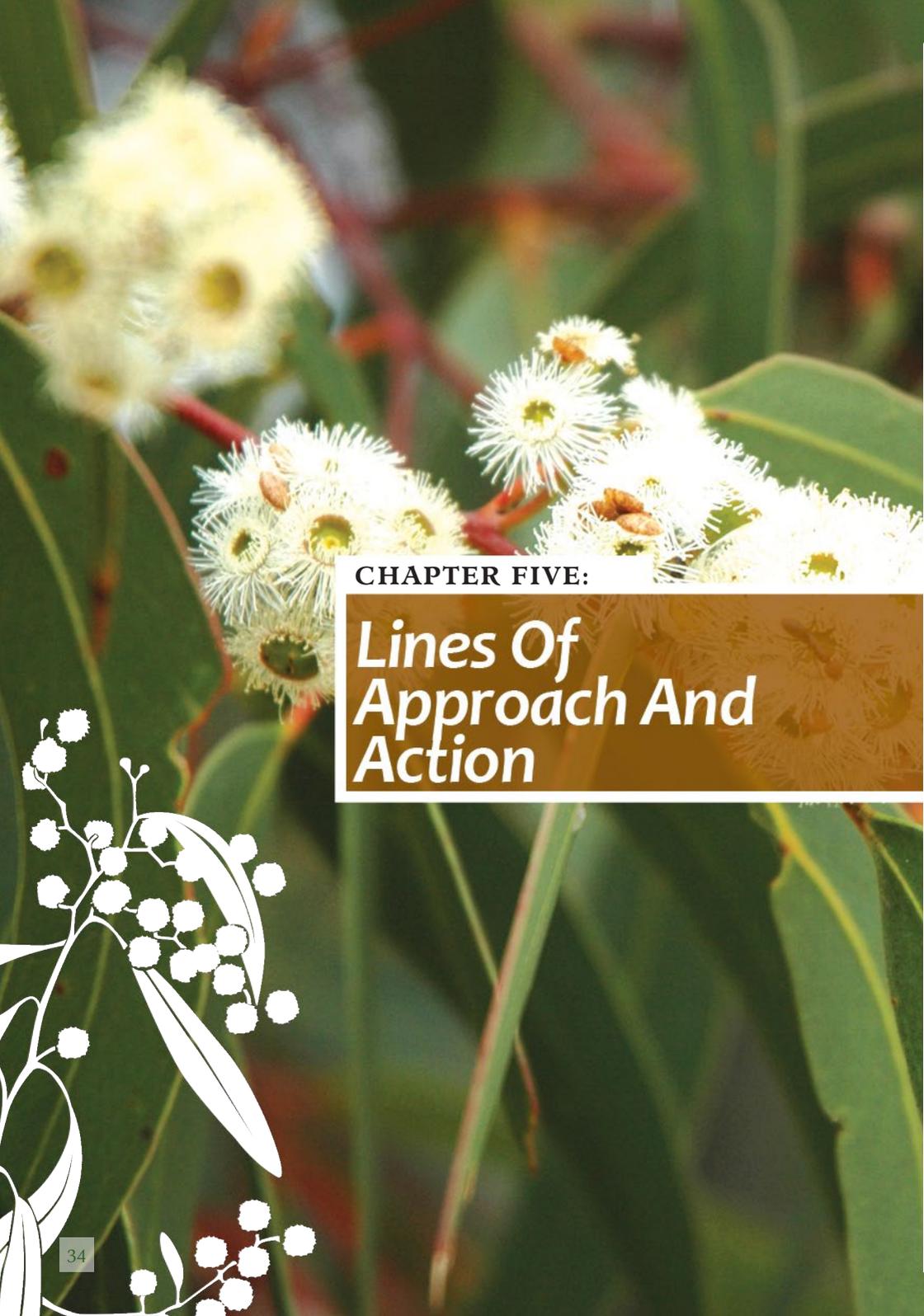
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CHAPTER FIVE:

# *Lines Of Approach And Action*



## (PARAGRAPHS 163-201)

This Chapter addresses the question of what we can and must do to better care for our common home. For Pope Francis, diagnoses and analyses are not enough. We need proposals for dialogue and action which would involve each of us individually no less than international policy. Such proposals will “help us to escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us” (*LS* 163). The Pontiff notes that it is imperative that practical proposals not be developed in an ideological, superficial or reductionist way. For this, dialogue is essential and this becomes the refrain of each subsection of this penultimate chapter. “There are certain environmental issues where it is not easy to achieve a broad consensus . . . The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics. But I am concerned to encourage an honest and open debate so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good” (*LS* 188).

Sections include:

### Dialogue with the International Community

[164-175]

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### Dialogue for New National and Local Policies

[176-181]

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### Dialogue and Transparency in Decision Making

[182-188]

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### Politics and Economy in Dialogue for Human Fulfilment

[189-198]

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### Religions in Dialogue with Science

[199-201]

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 Throughout the Encyclical, Pope Francis implores the world to engage in dialogue on the environment. *What are some practical ways that we can engage with the broader community on this subject? With whom should we communicate and what is the potential or hope of such a conversation?*

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 While Pope Francis speaks of the need for individual action, and rigorous regulations, procedures, and controls at the national, regional and municipal levels, he considers “a global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems” (LS 164). *Why is there a need for global agreement to tackle climate change? Are you hopeful that international agreement can be reached and agreed targets will be honoured? Why or why not?*

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 *As an individual, parish or group, what can be done at the local level to lessen your environmental impact? How might you advocate for the environment within the wider community or even with local elected representatives or leaders?*

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 Pope Francis notes that “the Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics [but is] concerned to encourage an honest and open debate so that particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good” (LS 188). *Why do you think the Church articulates its position on political, economic and environmental concerns? How can you relate these issues to your faith, to the Gospel given in Jesus Christ?*

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 Pope Francis declares that “A technological and economic development which does not leave in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life cannot be considered progress” (LS 194). *In light of the teachings of Laudato Si’ as well as the present and impending needs of our world, what would true and authentic progress look like to you?*

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**FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:** *In what ways have the forces of the economy and contemporary culture challenged the precepts of your faith? In relation to the environment, can you think of particular tensions in your life between the dominant culture of consumption and your sense of living faith?*

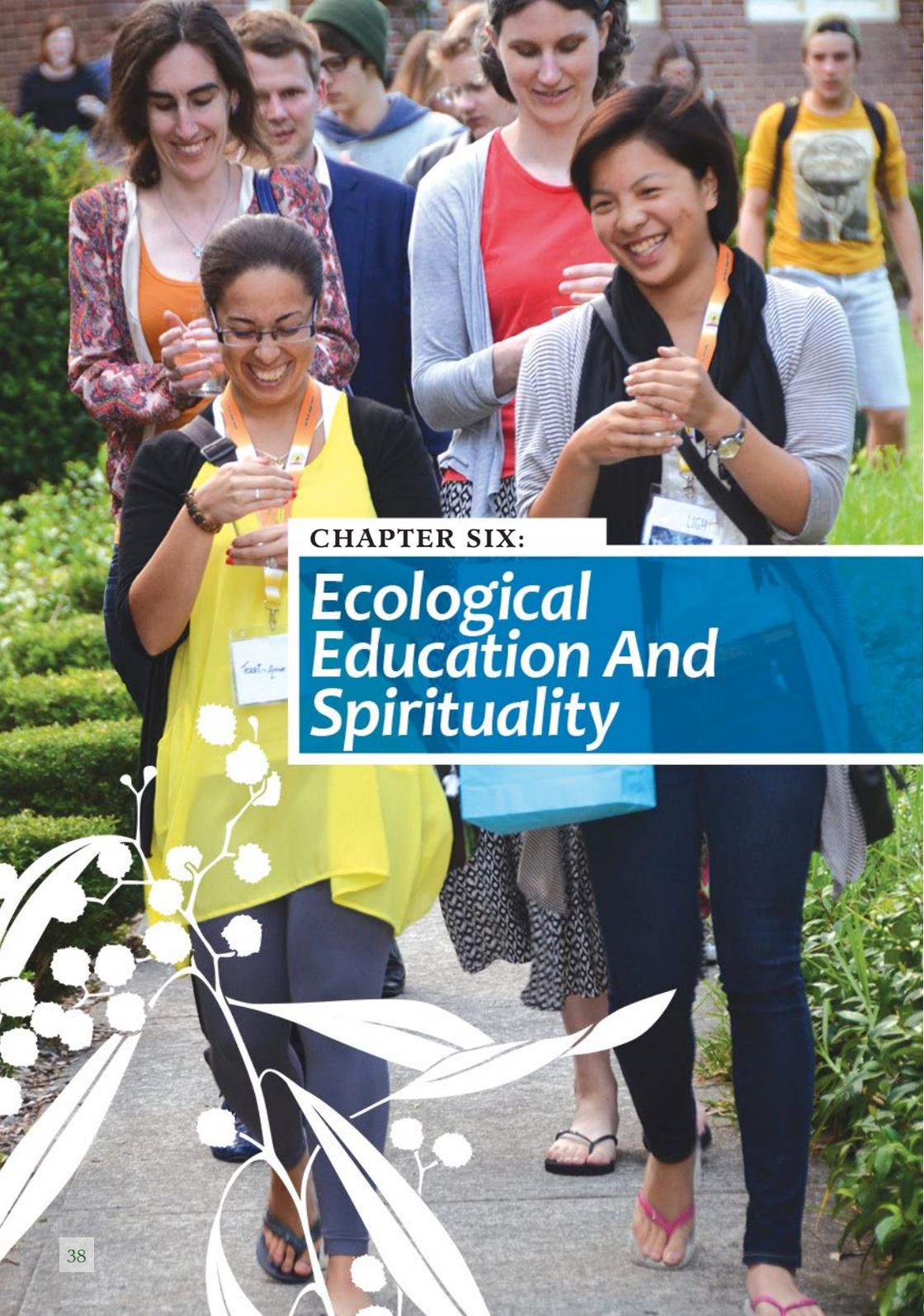
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**CHAPTER SIX:**

# Ecological Education And Spirituality



## (PARAGRAPHS 202-246)

The final Chapter of *Laudato Si'* speaks to the heart of ecological conversion – the need for a new environmental education that reshapes our habits and behaviours. In the introduction to his Encyclical, Pope Francis declared, “change is impossible without motivation and a process of education” (LS 15). *Laudato Si'* closes by advocating an ecological education that involves not simply sharing of information or consciousness-raising but that facilitates “the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning” (LS 210). By this way, an ecological conversion can be brought about in a variety of settings in the Church and world, “at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis” (LS 213).

The concluding sections of the Encyclical are:

### Towards a New Lifestyle

[203-208]

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### Educating for the Covenant Between Humanity and the Environment

[209-215]

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### Ecological Conversion

[216-221]

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### Joy and Peace

[222-227]

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### Civic and Political Love

[228-232]

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### Sacramental Signs and the Celebration of Rest

[233-237]

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### The Trinity and the Relationship Between Creatures

[238-240]

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### Queen of all Creation

[241-242]

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### Beyond the Sun

[243-246]

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 Pope Francis raises the need of education aimed at creating an “ecological citizenship” that extends beyond information to embrace the instilling of good habits (LS 211). *How might you bring about this type of education in your community, family or workplace?*

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 Pope Francis has proclaimed a Jubilee Year of Mercy from December 2015 to November 2016. In what ways might we show mercy to the constitutive elements of the environment? Pope Francis has implored us to “ask forgiveness when we have caused harm” (LS 213). *In this light, how might we also ask for forgiveness from (and show mercy to) the poor who are most impacted by environmental degradation?*

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 *Laudato Si'* summons us to a “profound interior conversion” (LS 217). *What do you consider to be the steps in this process of conversion? Recognising that ecological conversion also requires a conversion of community (LS 219), how might you play a part in bringing about an ecological education and conversion in your local context, whether that be the community of the parish, school, family or home?*

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 In encouraging the responsibility that each person bears towards the environment, Pope Francis notes “an integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” (LS 230). *What simple, daily gestures are you able to offer as witness to an integral ecology in your own life?*

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 *What connection does Pope Francis make between the Eucharist and all creation (LS 236)? How should our response to the Eucharist shape our response to the environment?*

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 *How do the relationships within the Holy Trinity serve as a model or paradigm for the relationships between God, the natural world, and humanity (LS 238)?*

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 Pope Francis closes his profound Encyclical with an invocation to hope (LS 244). *What fills your heart with hope as you consider the environmental issues of our time? What are the reasons for your hope? How might you live this hope through your present and future actions?*

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 *Having now read Laudato Si', what word or phrase spoke to you most profoundly? How is this word or phrase calling you to deeper conversion and a change in action?*

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**FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION:** *What was the most challenging aspect of Laudato Si'? Why was this so and what action or change did this aspect invite in your life?*

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## Exploring *Laudato Si'* Online

<http://www.dbb.org.au> The website of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay includes a download link to the full text of *Laudato Si'* as well as a helpful summary of the Encyclical.

<http://catholicearthcare.org.au> Catholic Earthcare is the ecological agency for the Catholic Church in Australia, having been established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in May 2002. Catholic Earthcare's purpose is "to enable a loving and sustainable relationship with the natural world through environmental education, research, national networks, advocacy and transformation."

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/social-teaching/issues/157-environment> The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC) was set up by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in 1987 as the national justice and peace agency of the Catholic Church in Australia. This web page includes links to important ecological documents and peak environmental agencies.

<http://www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-and-justice/peace-ecology-and-justice> The Columbans are a missionary society of priests who work in cooperation with lay people and Columban Sisters to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This web page links to ecological resources and environmental advocacy campaigns.

<http://www.faithecolony.net.au> The Faith Ecology Network (FEN) was begun in 2003 by the Columban Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice to provide an inter-faith response to the care of God's creation. Volunteers from different faith groups join together to host regular public forums, engage in environmental

awareness campaigns, provide ecological learning resources, and encourage environmental action at the local faith community level. FEN is an Australian hub for strengthening an interfaith dialogue between science and religion.

[www.arrcc.org.au](http://www.arrcc.org.au) Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is a multi-faith, member-based organisation committed to taking action on climate change. Inspired by religious belief, its members conduct environmental campaigns, and make available climate action kits, tools for reflection, factsheets, links and video resources.

<http://catholicclimatemovement.global> Concerned about human-made climate change, the Global Catholic Climate Movement is made up of almost 100 Catholic organisations. This website includes information concerning climate change facts, practical things to do to limit our human impact on the environment, and useful environmental prayer resources.

<http://www.environment.gov.au> The Department of the Environment implements Australian Government policies on the environment, heritage, water and climate action. This comprehensive website includes Australia's 2030 emission reduction target, renewable energy target, climate change research, reports on the health of the Great Barrier Reef, the plight of endangered species, and issues such as coal seam gas drilling amongst scores of other concerns.

<http://www.unep.org> The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

# WAYS FOR PARISHES to Implement the Spirit of *Laudato Si'*

 Pope Francis speaks of the need to engage in dialogue around issues concerning the environment. Why not form a group to discuss and implement the teachings of *Laudato Si'*?

 Pray for our leaders and communities to take up the commitment to care for creation and the poor. Remember those living in poverty and the environmental issues of our time in the Prayer of the Faithful

 Form an Earthcare group to engage in practical care of the parish surrounds. You can learn more about Catholic Earthcare by visiting this site:  
**[www.catholicearthcare.org.au](http://www.catholicearthcare.org.au)**

 Sponsor formation opportunities on the subject of an integral ecological spirituality

 Audit energy consumption and possible environmental improvements to parish infrastructure. Chart and publish the environmental footprint of the parish for community awareness and discussion

 Seek out ways to reduce, reuse and recycle. Establish a working group to guide such initiatives and invite others into participation

 Consider a relationship with a parish in the developing world to raise cross cultural awareness in your community and to fundraise for particular social and environmental projects abroad

 Invite parishioners to carpool or walk to Mass when possible

*What other practical ideas can you think of at the parish level to care for the environment?*

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## WAYS FOR FAMILIES to Implement the Spirit of *Laudato Si'*

 Pope Francis states that a full one-third of all food is wasted and ends up in landfill. Be mindful of purchasing habits, place of origin of goods (their transport footprint) and overpackaging of foodstuffs. Consider the ethical dimension of food production including fair compensation to producers

 Make decisions as a family that take into consideration the poor, donating to charitable causes and raising awareness of those who suffer in poverty or are most impacted by environmental degradation

 Minimise the use of high-draw appliances such as hot water units, airconditioners and heaters and consider getting rid of second fridges and freezers

 Discuss how pro-life, environmental and social justice movements are closely related and affirm the dignity of the human person and the priority of the common good

 Take the “web challenge” by charting family wealth, carbon and water footprints. Determine actions as a consequence of your results. Visit the websites: [www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com), <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/agc/calculator/index.html>, and <http://www.hunterwater.com.au/Save-Water/Water-Usage-Calculator.aspx>

*What other practical ideas can you think of in the context of family life to care for the environment?*

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# WAYS FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS to Implement the Spirit of *Laudato Si'*

 Get involved with groups that support humanitarian and environmental development such as Catholic Earthcare, Caritas and Catholic Mission

 Take a reusable water bottle wherever you go, reducing plastic waste

 Evaluate your media use. Cultivate a relationship with the natural environment and prioritise personal relationships and personal outreach to those living in your local neighbourhood

 Consider public transport, cycling or walking in preference to the car. Carpool whenever possible

 Engage in practical everyday behaviours which limit environmental impact such as turning off lights, minimising airconditioner use, taking shorter showers, recycling, composting, purchasing second-hand goods, and limiting over-packaged and pre-prepared foods

 Choose to live simply and adopt a spirit of gratitude and care for God's creation in daily life

*What other practical ideas can you think of to care for the environment?*

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