

- POPE FRANCIS ASKS: “**What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?**” His answer? It’s “**up to us**” (160).
- OFFERS A WIDE-RANGING VISION: Pope Francis is offering a **hopeful vision of renewal**. He’s **inviting everyone** to a **wide-ranging conversation** about how **we can best care for “our common home”** (3).
 - *Laudato Si* **challenges everyone**, whether on the right or on the left.
 - It **challenges** us to **resist an economy of exclusion** (46).
 - It **challenges** us to remember that **people are not the problem, it’s the throwaway culture that’s the problem**.
 - This is a **rich document** to be **absorbed over time** through a process of **dialogue and discernment**.
 - It is a **call to action in a spirit of hope**. “Injustice is not invincible” (74). Each of us is called to take **concrete steps to better care for the gift of God’s creation**. “An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” (230).
 - “The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics”, but wants to “encourage an honest and open debate” (188). “Humanity still has the ability to **work together in building our common home**.” (13)
- SPEAKS AS A SPIRITUAL & MORAL LEADER: Pope Francis is **calling** each of us to **more fully respond** to this **urgent spiritual and moral issue**. “[T]he ecological crisis is ... a summons to profound interior conversion” (217). He’s **inviting each of us to renew our relationships** with the created world, with one another, and with God (66).
 - He’s calling us to **grow closer to God** by **growing in humility** in the face of the results of human activity unmoored from God’s design (224).
 - This is a joyful, hopeful call. He’s proposing “**a way of living life to the full**” (223).
 - *Laudato Si* is rooted in **Scripture** and **longstanding Catholic teaching**. Pope Francis repeatedly points to the work of **St. John Paul II** and **Pope Benedict XVI**. He looks to **St. Francis** “for his **joy, his generous self-giving, his openheartedness**.” (10) The title is taken from St. Francis’ “Canticle of the Creatures.”
- EMPHASIZES OUR CONNECTEDNESS: Pope Francis emphasizes our interconnectedness and interdependence.
 - We’re connected **with each other, with the created world, and with those who will come after us** (70, 159-62).
 - “We must regain the conviction that **we need one another**, that we have **a shared responsibility for others** and the world, and that **being good and decent are worth it**” (229). This is what the Catholic understanding of **solidarity** is all about (14).
 - “We live in **a common home** which **God has entrusted to us**” (232). We’re called to stand together with the poor and vulnerable (10, 49).

UPDATED USCCB LEAD MESSAGES

- A SPIRITUAL AND MORAL ISSUE : Pope Francis is speaking as a **pastor** offering **moral guidance** rooted in **central Catholic teachings** about **care for others** and **care for God’s creation**. (2,6,8, 9, 62-64) “Authentic human development has a moral character” (5).
 - CARE FOR OTHERS: **The poor** suffer most when we don’t **responsibly care for God’s creation. It’s up to us to help them**. (48-52; cite to USCCB Global Climate Change document) (17,48-52)
 - Pope Francis knows that **more fully caring for God’s creation** will help **real people right now**, especially the **poor and vulnerable**. (17,48-52)
 - There is an “intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet.” (16)
 - The worst impacts of climate change “will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades.” (25)
 - Pope Francis reminds us that “we are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other.” (208) He calls us to **live out solidarity with others in concrete ways**.
 - This is about helping our **kids and grandkids**. Responsibly caring for the natural world **will help families just like yours and mine**. (160) Every day, environmental impacts **affect the lives of countless people right here at home and around the world**. (25)
 - CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION: **God gave us this world, and He asks us to take care of it**. The natural world is a **gift**. Let’s stop and think about what kind of world we want to **leave our kids and grandkids**. (2,64,159)
- CATHOLIC DISTINCTIVENESS: **Catholics bring a distinctive and important voice to this conversation**. (62-64)
 - INTEGRAL ECOLOGY is the heart of the encyclical. It links **care for others** and **care for God’s creation**. It is a call for **integrity** in how we live our lives, and a recognition of our **interconnectedness**. (5,6,10,137ff.; Ch 4, titled “An Integral Ecology”).
 - “We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather **one complex crisis which is both social and environmental**.” (139)
 - **Human ecology** begins with protecting human life from its beginning to its natural end. **Natural ecology** recognizes that our faith calls us to protect and care for God’s creation. We recognize the **strong link between respecting human dignity** and **care for the natural world**. (§120 – abortion; 70, 136)
 - “When the exercise of social and personal virtues is weakened in a pervasive way, it results in general imbalance, even environmental imbalance. That is why it is not enough to speak only of the integrity of our ecosystem. **We**

must also have the courage to speak about the integrity of human life, of the necessity to promote and integrate the great virtues.” (170)

- Concern for the protection of nature is **also incompatible with the justification of abortion.**” (120; also 117)
- **The family** “help[s] to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings.” (213)
- **We’re called to cooperate with God’s design** in our relationships with the natural world and with one another. When we get these **intertwined** relationships right, **we grow closer to God.**
- Authentic development begins with recognizing the **dignity of the human person.** We know that **population isn’t the problem: it’s the throwaway culture that’s the problem.** (50,120)
- Catholics are called to **participate in public life** and **work for the common good.** (14 - v. indifferentism; 64)
 - “Human ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good.” (156)
 - Pope Francis focuses on the common good understood as “a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.” (158)
- We’re a **global church** with **experience** with what’s going on **in communities around the world.** We’re committed to responding to the **concerns of those on the margins:** the **poor,** the **young,** and **others at the peripheries.** (25)
- Pope Francis offers a **strong critique of the unfettered market,** which needs to be rooted in the common good. (109, 129, 190, 191)
 - We’re called to **reject consumerism** and **rightly order our economic lives.** (§§56,93 – proper understanding of the right to private property; §189 – politics and economics at service of human life, not other way around, §190)
 - “The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economics and political life” (109), keeping us from recognizing that **“by itself the market cannot guarantee integral human development and social inclusion.”** (109)
 - “Environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits. The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces” (190, citing the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*).
- We’re called to **resist a technocratic paradigm that doesn’t accept limits.** Technology unmoored from morality can be destructive. “We have to accept that technological products are not neutral.” (107; also 105-106)
- These are **core Catholic moral teachings,** and we’re called to **respect them. Care for God’s creation is woven throughout the Bible,** and has been emphasized by **recent popes and the U.S. bishops.** (Introduction, §§3-6 – St. John XXIII, St. JPII, Pope Benedict XVI; 8-9 Patriarch Bartholomew I; 10-12 St. Francis, §67 – dominion v. domination).

- The encyclical is an exercise of Pope Francis' teaching authority. It **affirms core Catholic moral teachings** on care for others and for God's creation.
 - **It offers prudential judgments, "intelligence applied to our actions"** (US bishops, 2001), on particular issues in light of those core moral teachings.
 - Catholics are called to **consider such prudential judgments prayerfully, humbly, and with open hearts and minds.**
 - **Invoking** the role of prudential judgment **doesn't allow us to dismiss the encyclical out of hand.** (188)
 - Our **unique perspective** means **we need to be a part** of this conversation.
- **TIME TO ACT:** Pope Francis is offering hope, **encouraging** us all to care for others and for the gift of God's creation. It's time to work together to **better protect the created world.** Let's build a **culture of stewardship.** (3, 55)
 - Faith and reason go hand in hand. **The Church respects the role of science.** Scientific knowledge should be used to promote human flourishing and to protect the poor. (62, 199-201)
 - **The scientific consensus** on the link between **human activity and recent climate change** is **strong** (23) – as strong as the scientific consensus on the link between **cigarettes and cancer.** It would be imprudent not to act on this knowledge.
 - **On climate change:**
 - Climate change is "**a global problem with serious implications**, environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the **principal challenges facing humanity in our day.**" (25; see 23-26)
 - "**The Church does not presume to settle scientific questions or to replace politics.** But I want to encourage an **honest and open debate**, so that **particular interests or ideologies will not prejudice the common good.**" (188)
 - **Even if you disagree, the moral case for acting to protect the created world remains.** Let's not let disagreement over this distract from **the moral case** that Pope Francis is making regarding **care for God's creation.**
 - Pope Francis knows he doesn't have all the answers, but he recognizes **it's time to reinvigorate this important conversation.**
 - **This is a call to action.** Each of us are called to take concrete steps – from reducing consumption to working for political change – to better care for creation.

- **The US military and the business community agree that climate change is happening**, and they're preparing for it.
- What can we do? This **is a teaching document, not a set of policy proposals**. First, let's prayerfully respond to Pope Francis' call for a **change of hearts**. Let's try our best to **live rightly within the world we've been given, and with each other**.
 - Pope Francis calls for public action, as well as personal spiritual conversion and a change of heart. He calls for an examination of conscience. (Ch 6)
 - **Our "throwaway culture"** drives many of our environmental problems. (20-22) We can resist this by taking **small steps toward simpler, fuller lives**. This will help us **grow closer to God** and **each other** (212, 223).
 - **Small everyday actions matter**. We can all take action **at home and in our communities**. (10,22, 202-203)
 - We can live out the **Sabbath**. (237)
- **Our businesses and communities can work together** to find sustainable energy solutions. This will **foster innovation** and **create tens of thousands of jobs**. (191,192, 128, 229)
- We must **advance responsible international and local policy**.
 - **Sustainable development** means that **economic prosperity, protection of the created world, and inclusion of the poor and vulnerable** should be pursued together. "Protecting the environment **need not compromise legitimate economic progress**." (Cardinal Wuerl) (13,191-192)
 - **128, 129**
 - Responsibly caring for the natural world is a **global challenge and it needs a global response**. **These conversations are already happening**, and they'll be improved if we're part of them. (164)
- This is a chance to **witness to our faith**.