

## ***Laudato Si* and its Meaning for the C.P.P.S.**

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In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis makes a special appeal to all people to take full responsibility to protect our common home. In particular, the Pope invites all to deal with issues pertaining to the promotion and protection of human life and dignity, justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Since all these issues are fundamental elements of our identity and mission as a Congregation<sup>1</sup>, we find the document to be an essential guide for our life and ministry.

The Pope begins by analyzing the reality, the causes and the effects of the current environmental crisis and he suggests necessary steps to be taken to confront the crisis. The intense amount of pollution in various forms claims millions of premature deaths, especially of the poor. The irresponsible exploitation of natural resources leads to a great loss of biodiversity causing imbalances in the ecosystem. Some micro-organisms, animal, and plant species run the risk of complete extinction. The ever increasing global warming is the source of great climatic changes which in turn affect the social, economic and political life of the people. It is the marginalized who are affected most due to their total dependency on subsistence ways of living. Many people are constrained to leave their natural homes in search of other life possibilities inside or outside their countries. The urbanization problem in many developing countries and the current migration crisis around the world are some of the symptoms of the natural and social degradation taking place in the world.

Basing his teaching on various religious, scientific and philosophical convictions, the Pope offers a coherent anthropology as the motivational ground for taking care of both the natural and the social environment. The human being was created with an infinite dignity by God. Human life, is sacred and thus it should be protected against every kind of destruction. All created beings are

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C.P.P.S Normative Text, C3.

interconnected and are dependent on one another. Mankind was given the stewardship role to develop, protect and preserve the world for the common good now and for the generations to come.

Although modern technology has improved the standard of living, it has also been responsible for both environmental and social degradation. The lack of conscience to accompany the modern technological advancement has led to the tendency of looking at the reality without the sense of responsibility and appreciation. Consequently, human life and the nature in general are being regarded simply as objects of utility to be exploited at will. Due to the excessive anthropocentrism, God has lost His unique place in the human conscience. The unjust exploitation and distribution of natural resources have increased poverty and have created great inequality among people. Unemployment, social exclusion, increased violence, drug trade, human trafficking and organized crime, are some of the social evils resulting from social degradation.

Since peace, justice, and the integrity of creation are interconnected themes, the struggle to heal the environmental damage should go hand in hand with the struggle to heal the broken human relationships. Every kind of scientific, social, or economic development program should respect and promote the rights and dignity of all people without exclusion. A series of things need to change on local, national, and international community in terms of legislation and regulations related to environmental issues. However, in order to achieve permanent solution, the right ecological education and spirituality are much needed in families, schools, catechetical programs, and in houses of formation. The education given should be capable of bringing true change and transformation of the people. It should provide them with the right way of thinking and the right attitudes towards human life, society, and nature. A healthy spirituality is needed in order to motivate the people from within and should cultivate among them the sense of our common origin, our mutual belonging, universal fraternity, solidarity, sharing, and compassionate care for the poor and the environment.

This spirituality should promote sound virtues against the spirit of individualism, consumerism, self-centeredness, and unhealthy competition which characterize the modern world.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. How is the ecological crisis real in your local context?
2. The work of the Church is not only to remind others to take care of the nature but she should also do something to protect mankind from self-destruction. (Cf. *Laudatosì*, 79; *Caritas in Veritate*, 51). What do you do concretely to defend life against the culture of death?
3. Pope Francis expects that seminaries and houses of formation become centers which educate the candidates to appreciate simple life and to become sensitive to the needs of the poor and the need of environment<sup>2</sup>. How does the formation program in your unit prepare the candidates theoretically and practically to respond to the cry of blood and to the cry of nature?

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Laudato Si*, 214.