**Laudato Si’ summary**

June 5, 2021

But to be clear, the best way to fully understand Laudato Si’ and Pope Francis’ teachings isn’t by reading a Laudato Si’ summary; it’s by reading and studying the [184-page encyclical letter](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html). To truly grasp Pope Francis’ messages, you’ll need to read Laudato Si’ more than once.

But it also can be helpful to review a Laudato Si’ summary from time to time and remind yourself how Pope Francis, relying on thousands of years of Catholic teaching, calls on all of us to live out our faith by caring for our common home.

Below, the [Global Catholic Climate Movement](https://catholicclimatemovement.global/) has compiled a handful of helpful Laudato Si’ summaries that, when put into action, will help you bring Pope Francis’ encyclical to life in your community.

We’re also sharing one of the best one-page Laudato Si’ summaries (both sides of a page in this case) that we’ve seen. The below text is thanks to [Kevin Cotter of focusoncampus.org](https://focusoncampus.org/authors/kevin-cotter).

**Laudato Si’ Summary – General Summary**

Pope Francis’ encyclical Laudato Si (“Praise be to you”) is a worldwide wake up call to help humanity understand the destruction that man is rendering to the environment and his fellow man.

While addressing the environment directly, the document’s scope is broader in many ways as it looks at not only man’s effect on the environment, but also the many philosophical, theological, and cultural causes that threaten the relationships of man to nature and man to each other in various circumstances.

This document is in many ways the epitome of Pope Francis. It is an unexpected topic. It presents Gospel truths. And, it provides a challenge for every believer (and non-believers too). From the outset, Pope Francis states the goal of the document: “In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home” (#3). Normally, papal documents are addressed to the bishops of the Church or the lay faithful. But, similar to Pope Saint John XXIII’s Pacem in Terris, Pope Francis addresses his message to all people.

The goal of the dialogue: “I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all” (#14). The above is at the heart of the document, but Pope Francis also has a very striking call to conversion for those in the Church as well.

“The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience”

**CHAPTER ONE – WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR COMMON HOME**

**Goal:**“Theological and philosophical reflections on the situation of humanity and the world can sound tiresome and abstract, unless they are grounded in a fresh analysis of our present situation, which is in many ways unprecedented in the history of humanity. So, before considering how faith brings new incentives and requirements with regard to the world of which we are a part, I will briefly turn to what is happening to our common home” (#17).

**Message:** “But a sober look at our world shows that the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly. We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty with something which we have created ourselves” (#34).

**CHAPTER TWO – THE GOSPEL OF CREATION**

**Goal**: “Why should this document, addressed to all people of good will, include a chapter dealing with the convictions of believers? I am well aware that in the areas of politics and philosophy there are those who firmly reject the idea of a Creator, or consider it irrelevant… Nonetheless, science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both” (#62).

**Message:**“We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us…. Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God’s image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures.

The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). ’Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations” (#67)

**CHAPTER THREE – THE HUMAN ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS**

**Goal:** “It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us. Should we not pause and consider this? At this stage, I propose that we focus on the dominant technocratic (efficiency, production, and wealth accumulation) paradigm and the place of human beings and of human action in the world” (#101).

**Message:** “It can be said that many problems of today’s world stem from the tendency, at times unconscious, to make the method and aims of science and technology an epistemological paradigm which shapes the lives of individuals and the workings of society. The effects of imposing this model on reality as a whole, human and social, are seen in the deterioration of the environment, but this is just one sign of a reductionism which affects every aspect of human and social life. We have to accept that technological products are not neutral, for they create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities along the lines dictated by the interests of certain powerful groups” (#107).

**CHAPTER FOUR – INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

**Goal**: “Since everything is closely interrelated, and today’s problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis, I suggest that we now consider some elements of an integral ecology, one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions” (#137).

**Message:**“We urgently need a humanism capable of bringing together the different fields of knowledge, including economics, in the service of a more integral and integrating vision. Today, the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves, which leads in turn to how they relate to others and to the environment” (#141).

**CHAPTER FIVE – LINES OF APPROACH AND ACTION**

**Goal**: “So far I have attempted to take stock of our present situation, pointing to the cracks in the planet that we inhabit as well as to the profoundly human causes of environmental degradation. Although the contemplation of this reality in itself has already shown the need for a change of direction and other courses of action, now we shall try to outline the major paths of dialogue which can help us escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us” (#163).

**Message**: “Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan. Yet the same ingenuity which has brought about enormous technological progress has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries.” (#164)

**CHAPTER SIX – ECOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND SPIRITUALITY**

**Goal:**“Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal” (#202).

**Message**: “In calling to mind the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, we come to realize that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change” (#218).

**More Laudato Si’ summaries:**

* [**Catholic Climate Covenant: Laudato Si’ Summary & Action Steps**](https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/laudato-si-summary-action-steps)
* [**The Jesuit Post: An Overview of Laudato Si’**](https://thejesuitpost.org/2015/06/an-overview-of-laudato-si/)
* [**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Laudato Si’: On Care For Our Common Home**](https://www.usccb.org/offices/general-secretariat/laudato-si-care-our-common-home)
* [**CAFOD: Pope Francis’ encyclical: your questions answered on Laudato Si’**](https://cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Pope-Francis-encyclical)
* [**America Magazine: Top 10 Takeaways from Laudato Si’**](https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2015/06/18/top-ten-takeaways-laudato-si)
* [**St. Francis of Assisi in North Carolina, USA: Pope Francis – Laudato Si’ chapter summaries**](https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/pope-francis-laudato-si-summaries/)