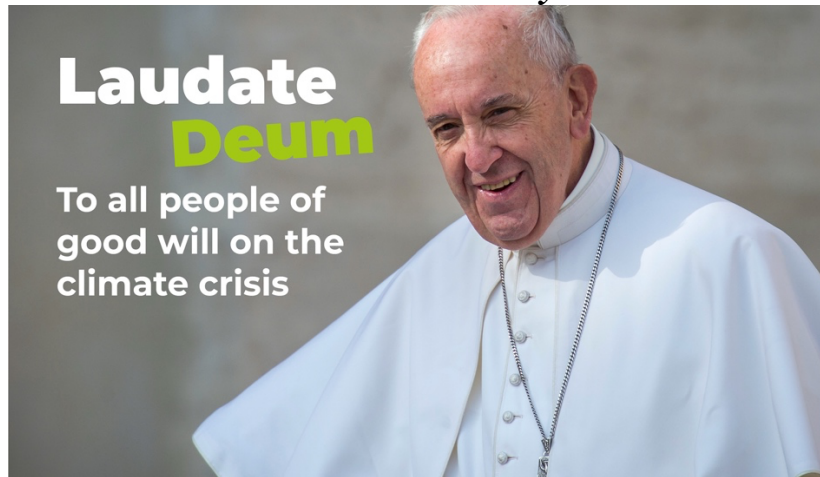


Laudate Deum (Praise God)
Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, 04.10.2023
- A Summary



Preamble (1-4)

St. Francis exclaimed “Praise God for all His creatures.” Jesus said, ‘Consider the lilies of the field (Mt 6:28-29), are not five sparrows sold for two pennies?(LD 1). How can we not admire this tenderness of Jesus? Eight years have passed since the publication of Laudato Si (LS), but our responses have not been adequate.

The world is nearing the breaking point:

We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc. (LD 2). This issue is intimately related to the dignity of human life and it is an example of *structural sin* (3).

1. The Global Climate Crisis (5-19)

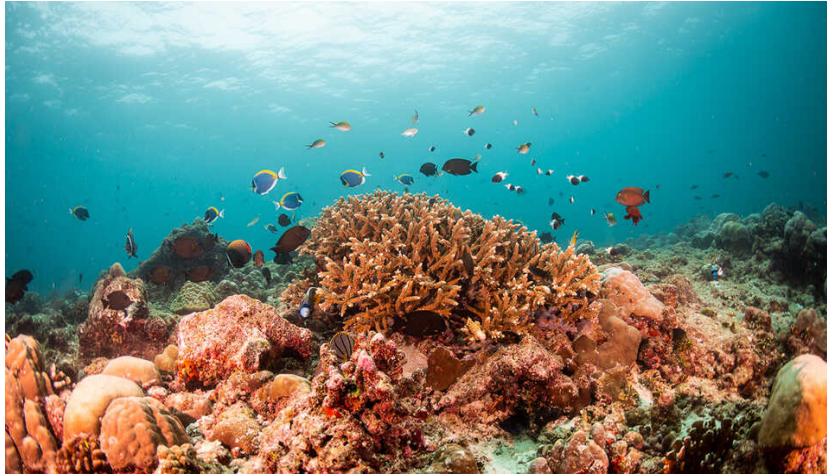


There are floods and droughts, heat and snowfall in various parts of the world. The intensity of them will be great if the temperature increases 1.5 degrees or 2 degrees in respect to industrial time (5). In a few years many populations will have to move their homes because of these facts (6). The global warming is not the fault of the poor having too many children – the emissions of the rich per person are vastly greater than those of the poor (9). It is heard that non-use of fossil fuels will reduce the number of jobs but in reality the climate change has made millions of people jobless (10).

Human causes:

The greenhouse gas emission that was stable, began to accelerate with industrial development (11). Since 1850 the global temperature has risen by 1.1° C and at this rate we will reach the ceiling of 1.5 degree C within ten years (12). But the great economic powers are not concerned about it (13). The change in average surface temperatures is the result of the increase of greenhouse gases (14).

Damages and risks:



Irreversible damages have already happened such as: the temperature and the acidification of the oceans have increased and their oxygen level has decreased (15) and the decrease in the continental ice sheets (16).

What is being asked of us is to assume responsibility to leave behind a good legacy when we pass from this world (18). The Covid-19 pandemic has made explicit that human, other forms of living beings and environment are interconnected and events in one part of the world has repercussions in another parts (19).

2. A Growing Technocratic Paradigm (20-33)



Thinking about technology:

- The technological paradigm is due to the thinking that technological developments bring truth, goodness and limitless flow of resources (20) and Artificial Intelligence starts with the notion that human is limitless (21).
- But in reality, the resources which are necessary for technological instruments such as lithium, silicon etc., are not unlimited; the Non-human resources are preyed upon (22).
- The technological capacities have given to those with knowledge and richness, dominance over the whole world. This dominance is extremely risky (23).

Rethinking our use of power :



- All technical capability do not represent true progress as technology has been used to decimate population and drop atomic bombs.
- The development of technology has not been accompanied by a corresponding development of ethics, culture or spirituality for teaching the self-restraint use of technology (24).
- The world that surrounds us is not an object of exploitation but are part of it, included in it (25). Technocratic paradigm has destroyed the interaction and the harmonious relationship that has been between human beings and the environment (27).
- We need to recognize that our power and the progress are turning against us (28).

The ethical goad:



- The public opinion for a project is won by creating a false illusion that there will be economic growth, employment etc., but often such projects create great damage (29), as for an example the project for the deposit of nuclear waste(30).

- The drive behind these projects is the desire for maximum economic gain at minimum cost (31).
- The mistaken notion of ‘meritocracy’ (birth based privileges and advantages) consolidates privileges to a few with power (32).
- We cannot be guided just by economics, but must in our conscience ask: “What is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of my time on this earth? And what is the ultimate meaning of all my work and effort?” (33).

3. The Weakness of International Politics (34-43)



For the attainment of solid and lasting advancement of love, justice and solidarity preference should be given to multilateral agreements between States(34). Multilateralism is *not a world human authority* but *effective world organizations*, equipped with the power to provide for the global common good, the elimination of hunger and poverty, and the defence of fundamental human rights (35).

The existing multilateral agreements are not effective and they have to be reconfigured and recreated taking into account the new world situation such as:



- The capacity of the Civil society organisations to create effective dynamics which the UN cannot. The role of Civil society organisations in the process of Ottawa convention for the elimination of anti-personnel mines is an example(37);
- Globalisation has favoured the cultural interchanges, mutual knowledge and integration of people. It offers hope for multilateralism ‘from below’ and not simply by the elites of power. The people and the activists throughout the world together, can create pressure on the sources of power, on the climate crisis (38);
- In the postmodern culture there is new sensitivity towards the vulnerable and less powerful people. Connected to this, *Frattelli Tutti* insists on the primacy of human

person and his/her dignity. It is another way of encouraging multilateralism for the sake of resolving the real problems of humanity (39).

Why reconfiguration of the existing multilateral agreements:



- It is not aimed to replace politics but recognising other emerging forces to resolve concrete problems (40). The old diplomacy, with its centuries old experience, can become part of the solution, if it can reconfigure itself to respond to the present world (41).
- To go beyond the maintenance of *balance of power* and to create globally effective rules/structures to promote human rights, social rights and the protection of our common home (42).
- Procedures put in place decades ago, do not seem to be effective and new mechanisms for decision making and enforcement are necessary.
- In this mechanisms, there has to be spaces for conversation, consultation, arbitration, conflict resolution and supervision. *It is no longer helpful to support the institutions that preserve the rights of the more powerful* (43).

4. Climate Conferences: Progress and Failures (44-52)



- *The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* is a treaty that was made in the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference. The parties to this treaty are called the Conference of the Parties (COP) who meet annually. Only some of their conferences have been effective.
- The COP3 held in Kyoto, Japan(1997) set the goal to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions by 5% with respect to 1990 and to aid the developing countries to cover the costs towards this, but this was not realised (44-45).
- COP19, held in Warsaw, Poland decided to create a mechanism for loss and damage(the polluter pays the climate affected countries) but it was not realised (46).
- COP21 in Paris, France(2015)set the objective to keep the temperature increase within 2 degree C, and if possible within 1.5 degree but there is no mechanism to ensure its implementation and to sanction for nonfulfillment (47-48).
- In the COP27, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt 2022 there was progress on the discussion on loss and damage but it could not arrive at concrete mechanism for enforcement (50-51). *COPs could not make progress because countries put their national interest above the global common good (52).*

5. What to Expect from COP 28 in Dubai (53-60)



The upcoming COP 28 will be in UAE (30 November -12 December,2023) which is a fossil fuel producing country. It has to make progress or it would be suicidal and expose humanity to the worst impacts of climate change (53). If human beings can overcome their petty interests, this COP could be a change of direction to show that past efforts were worthwhile (54).

Progress has been made towards an increase in clean energy, but it has not been decisive enough (55). Appearing to be concerned is not enough! We must move beyond that. Though we should not reject technical remedies such as carbon capture, we cannot simply seek a technical remedy to each individual environmental problem as they are connected to human and social problems(56-57).

COP 28 must lead to energy transition targets that are efficient, obligatory and readily monitored. Only such outcome can enable the international politics to recover its credibility (59). The participants have to consider the common good and the future of their children.

The powerful should ponder on the question: *What is the use of holding on to power without ability to take action when it is urgent and necessary (60).*

6. Spiritual Motivations (61-73)



- An authentic faith in God shed light on our relationship to others and with creation (61).
- Human persons must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibrium that exists among all the creatures(62). The universe shows the richness and the radiance of God. Hence we should not remain indifferent when creatures disappear (63).
- Jesus Himself often stopped to contemplate the beauty of nature and invites us to be attentive to that beauty (64).
- The universe unfolds in God and there is a mystical meaning in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop and in a poor person's face (65).

God unites the human to all his creatures whereas the technocratic paradigm isolates us (66). The unique and central value of human amongst God's creatures can be sustained only in a "*situated anthropocentrism*" which means that human life is incomprehensible and unsustainable without other creatures(67).

Everyone is asked to make the world more beautiful for which :



- The most effective solutions have to come from the national and international politics (69).
- There are no lasting changes without cultural changes and no cultural changes without personal changes (70).
- Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence are creating a new culture (71).

- A broad change, in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model, can bring a significant long-term impact (72).

'Praise God' is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies."

(Claretian JPIC General Secretariat, Rome)