

Top 10 things you need to know about Laudato Si'

by Fr James Martin SJ

1 A spiritual perspective

- The encyclical is an overview of the environmental crisis from a religious point of view
- Until now the dialogue about the environment has been mainly framed by political, scientific and economic language.
- Now the language of faith decisively enters the discussion

2 Effects on the poor

- Disproportionate effect of environmental change on the poor is strongly highlighted
- The worst effects of climate change are felt mainly in developing countries

3 Technological mindset criticised

- Technocratic mindset where technology is seen as key to human existence
- There is an unthinking reliance on market forces in which every technological advance is embraced before thinking how will it affect our world.
- Christian spirituality by contrast offers a growth marked by moderation
- And a capacity to be happy with little

4 Authoritative teaching

- Laudato Si' is now added to the body of the Church's social teaching

5 Christian biblical roots

- Discussions about ecology can be grounded in the bible and church traditions
- The encyclical introduces the Gospel of Creation
- The call to care for creation which extends as far back as the Book of Genesis
- Humankind was called to till and keep the earth
- Sadly we have done too much tilling, not enough keeping

6 Everything is connected

- We are all linked to creation
- We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it
- But our decisions have an inevitable effect on the environment
- A blind pursuit of money that sets aside the interests of the marginalised and poor and the ruination of the planet are connected

7 Embrace of Science

- Pope Francis does not try to prove anything about climate change
- The Encyclical accepts the best scientific research available today and builds upon it
- It draws on both Church teachings and contemporary scientific findings from all fields to help modern day people reflect on important questions

8 Selfishness and indifference criticised

- Pope Francis criticises those who ignore climate change
- Why are people ignoring the problems of climate change, and especially its effects on the poor?
- Why are so many of the wealthy turning away from the poor?
- Do they see themselves as more worthy?
- Frequently, decision makers are for the most part removed from the poor with no real physical connection to their brothers and sisters
- Selfishness also leads to the evaporation of the notion of the common good

9 Global dialogue and solidarity

- The Holy Father refers to the findings of Bishop's Conferences in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas
- All people should be included in the debate about our common home

10 Ecological conversion

- We face an urgent crisis
- The encyclical is addressed to everyone on the planet
- It offers a new way at looking at things
- We can be confident that God is with us as we strive to change course and move towards an ecological conversion where we can listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor

WHAT THE POPE IS CALLING FOR IS CONVERSION