



# Caring for Creation in Our Daily Lives

*"Laudato Si', mi Signore—"—"Praise be to you, my Lord." These are the words that open Pope Francis's encyclical on ecology and care for God's creation. These words, quoting St. Francis of Assisi's beautiful canticle, remind us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.*

## Quotes and Reflection Questions

*"The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God." (Laudato Si', no. 86)*

What does nature teach us about the Creator? Has your own experience of the created world helped you to pray or communicate with God?

*"I urgently appeal . . . for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (no. 14)*

Pope Francis calls for dialogue that includes "everyone." Who should be included in the conversation who may currently not be? With whom are Catholics called to dialogue about the future of our common home?

*"Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society." (no. 91)*

Integral ecology links care for people and care for God's creation. How is our concern for our fellow human beings connected to our concern for the environment?

*"Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it." (no. 23)*

What changes can we make to our lifestyles, production and consumption to better care for one another and creation?

## How You Can Respond

Each of us are called to take concrete steps—from reducing consumption to working for political change—to better care for creation.

1. Become more aware of our connectedness. Care for one another and creation includes understanding that "everything is connected" (no. 91) and that the economy, politics, community involvement, and technology all affect the future of the planet and humankind. How can we become more aware of our connectedness?

2. Changes to lifestyle and consumption habits can make a big difference. For example, get a re-usable water bottle, take shorter showers, walk, bike or take public transportation instead of driving, recycle, compost food waste, and buy energy efficient appliances.

3. Make changes institutionally at your parish, school, or workplace. For example, start recycling and composting, use washable dinnerware in cafeterias, share electronically instead of printing, do an energy audit, and install solar panels.

4. Support local efforts to solve environmental problems. Community groups around the country are working to make city, county, and state-wide changes that can make a big difference. Find out what is going on locally and get involved.

5. Contact your members of Congress to share Pope Francis's message and urge action to address climate change.



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Quotes and Discussion Questions, taken from *"Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home: Discussion Guide"* (Washington, DC: USCCB–JPYD, 2015) 7, 8, 10. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-discussion-guide.pdf>.

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