

Religion and Society, Unit 4, Area of Study 2
Significant Challenge: *The Global Ecological Crisis*
Catholicism's Response





Acknowledgment of Country

Poem *Praying* by Mary Oliver

It doesn't have to be
The blue iris, it could be
Weeds in a vacant lot, or a few
Small stones; just pay attention,
then patch
A few words together and don't try
To make them elaborate, this isn't
a contest but the doorway
Into thanks, and silence in which
Another voice may speak.



This significant challenge, '*The Global Ecological Crisis - Catholicism's Response*' a challenge to **theology** and **ethics**

Re-expressing the Unit Outcome in Terms of the Challenge 'The Global Ecological Crisis - Catholicism's Response'

*On completion of this unit the student should be able to **discuss the interactions within Catholicism and between Catholicism and wider society in relation to arguably this most significant challenge facing humanity, namely the Global Ecological Crisis.***

*The student will evaluate the influence of the **stance Catholicism** is taking and its supporting responses in relation to this challenge.*



Specific resources referenced for this Study

Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor: Social Justice Statement 2021

Care for Our Common Home: An Australian Group Reading Guide to *Laudato Si*, Garratt Publishing, Melb. 2015

Ecological Spirituality: Caring for our Common Home, Garratt Publishing, Melb. 2022

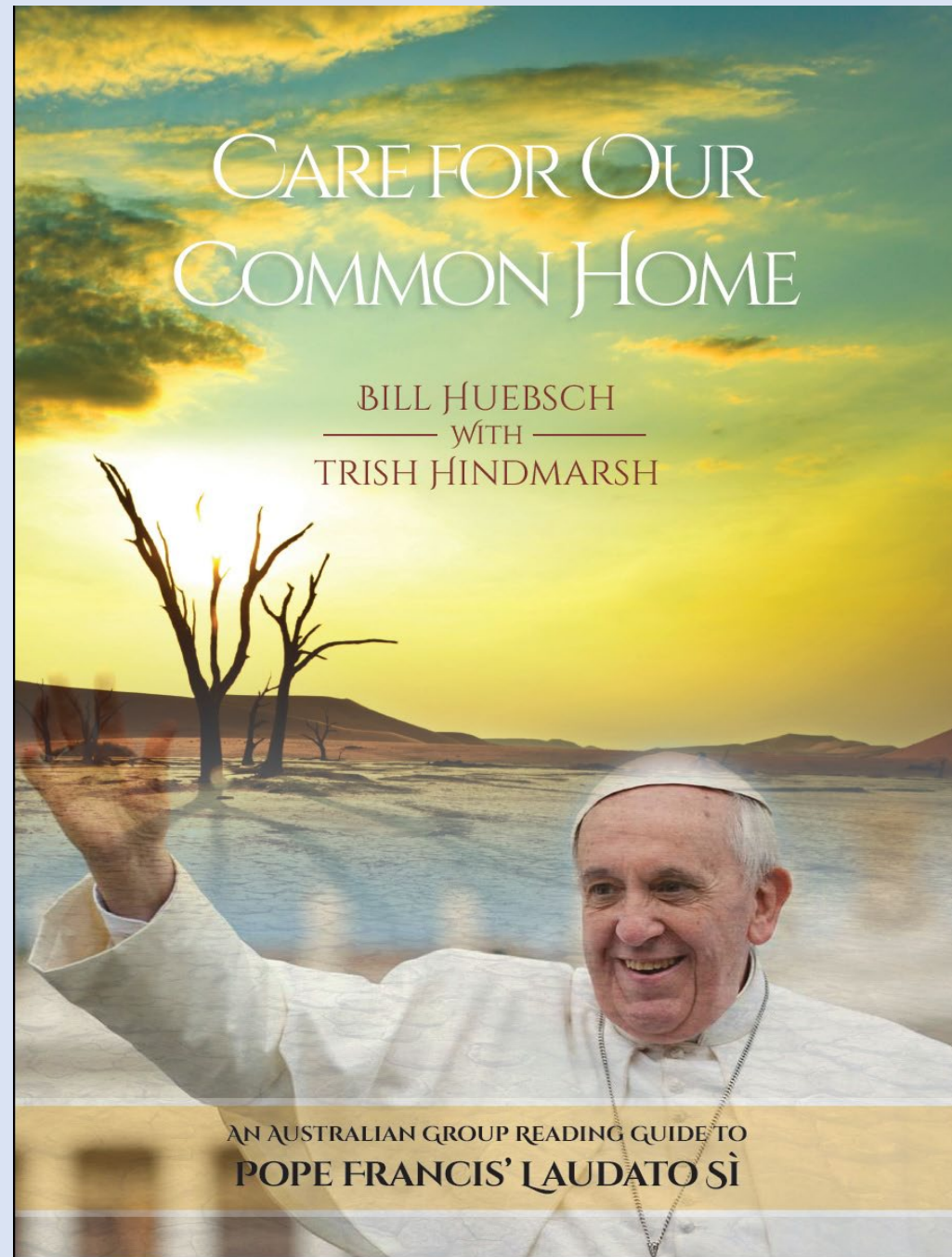
On the Climate Crisis: An Australian Reading Guide to *Laudato Deum*, Garratt Publishing, Melb. 2024

The Australian Bishops Conference have responded to *Laudato Si* with a major *FREE* online resource. (Available at: <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>)



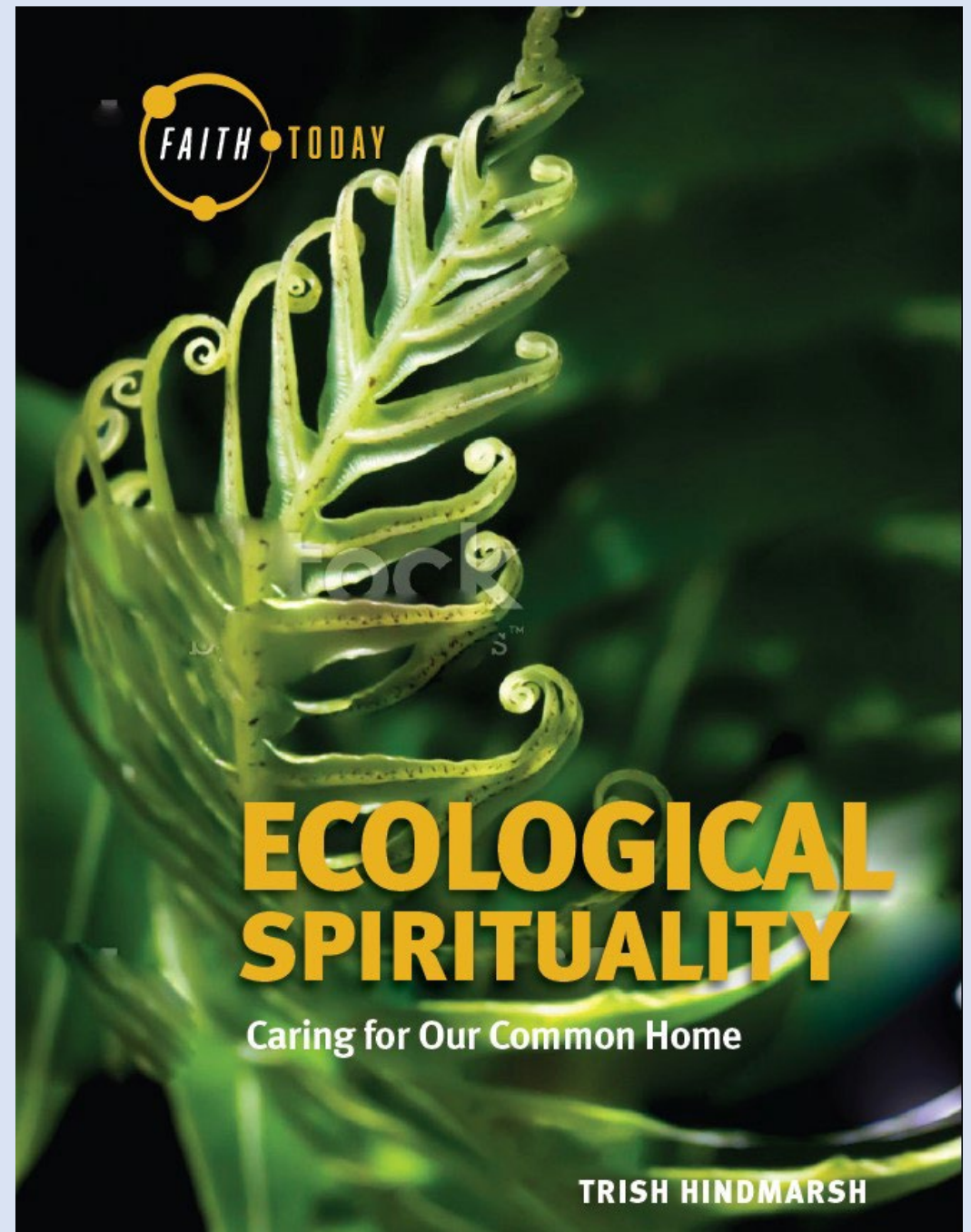
Laudato Si Guide: *Care for our Common Home*

Garratt Publishing Melb \$9.95
(Abbreviation **LS Guide**)



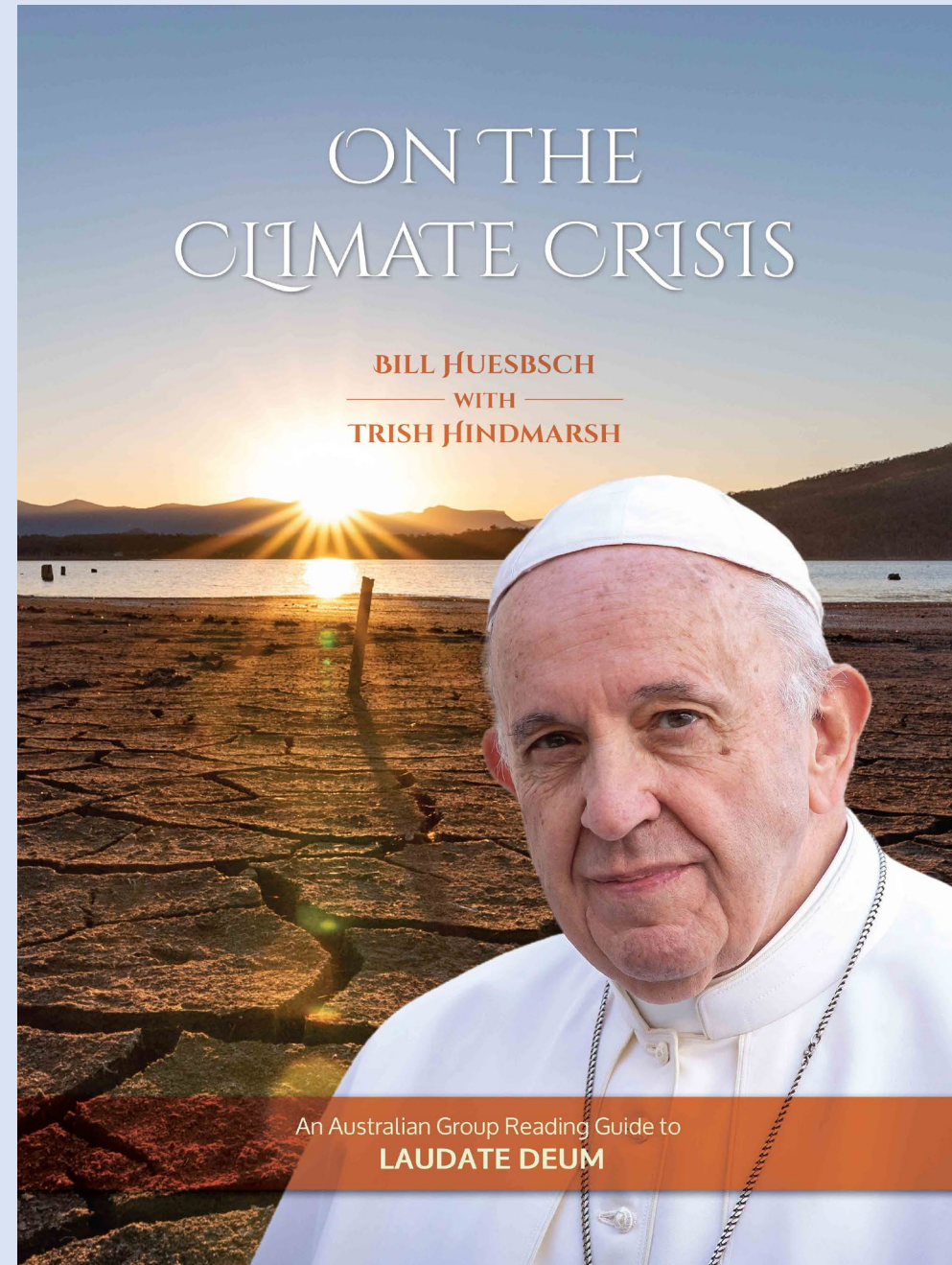
Ecological Spirituality: *Caring for our Common Home*

Garratt Publishing, Melb.
\$29.95
(Abbreviation **ES Guide**)



On the Climate Crisis: *An Australian Reading Guide to Laudate Deum*

Garratt Publishing, Melb.
\$9.95
(Abbreviation **LD Guide**)



Key Knowledge Point 1

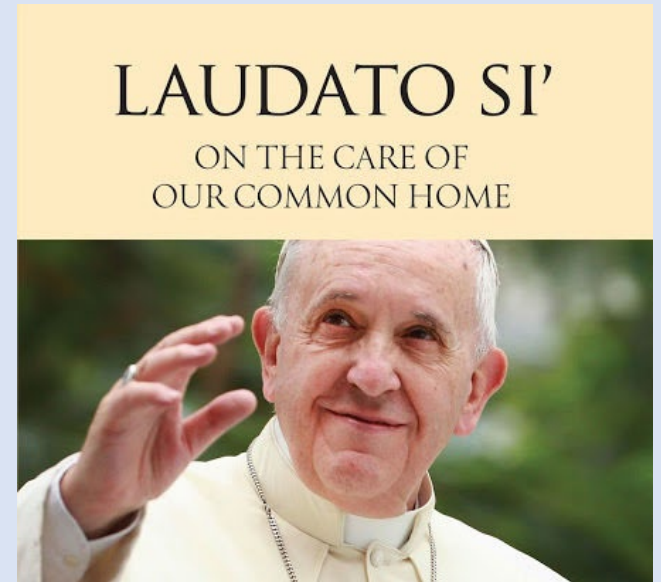
-a significant challenge involving at least one of the categories of theology, ethics and continued existence

*Theology: Catholicism recognises the Biblical roots of ecological awareness and the partnership between God the Creator, humans and the whole of creation. Catholic theology teaches that God is the loving Creator of all that exists, and Creation mirrors God's creative love. In the light of contemporary science, scripture scholarship and theology, Catholic beliefs about Creation, ecology and environmental responsibility are being studied through the new theological discipline, **'eco-theology'**.*

*Ethics: The survival of the planet is the foundational **ethical challenge** humanity faces, because the survival of all life depends on the health of planet Earth. Humans, endowed with free will, are charged with the responsibility to 'Care for our Common Home'.*

The ecological crisis is real and 'cries out'

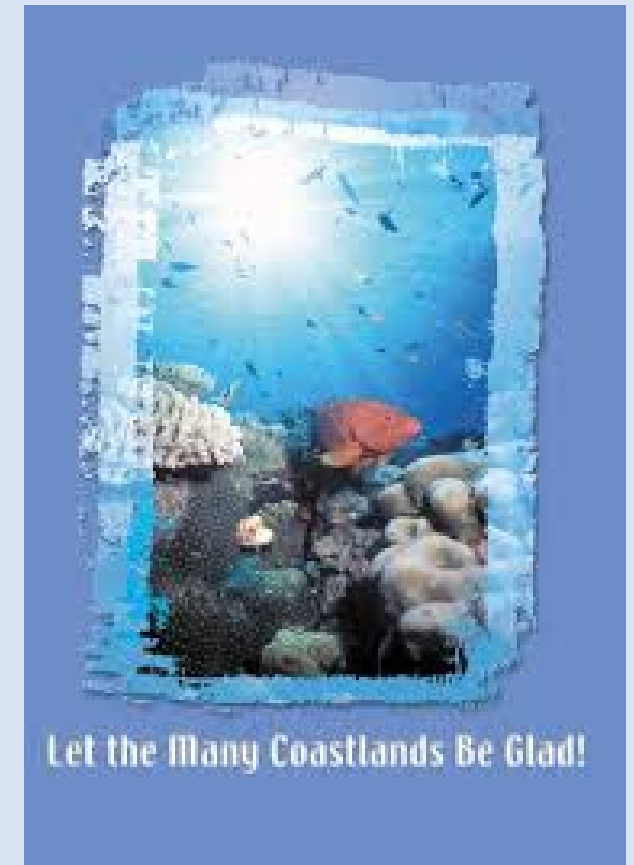
2. This sister (Earth) now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. (Pope Francis Laudato Si, 2)



The Crisis, 'Planetary Catastrophe' (John Paul II)

The Queensland Catholic Bishops' in their Statement 'Let the Many Coastlands be Glad', on World Oceans Day, 2004, wrote:

In his 1999 New Year Message, the Pope warned that "the danger of serious damage to land and sea, and to the climate, flora and fauna, calls for a profound change in modern society's typical consumer lifestyle, particularly in the richer countries." Again, on 17 January 2001, (General Audience, Vatican) he drew attention to the continuing environmental deterioration of the planet, describing humanity's disregard for the integrity of creation as "humiliating...the earth, that flower-bed that is our home". Prophetically, in this address, the Pope called the world's Catholics to an "ecological conversion" to avoid planetary "catastrophe".



Key Knowledge Point 2

-the broader context of the particular significant challenge

This area of challenge has the most universal application of all human challenges, no matter what our geographical area, culture, position in society or way of life. All life is ultimately dependent on the health of planet Earth to survive

All human disciplines (both academic and practical) need an ethic to inform their work, together with research aims that foster respect and enable Care for our Common Home. Catholic ecological teaching can provide such an ethic.

Hence the importance for students to have the opportunity to study the ecological crisis humanity faces, and respond to it.

Key Knowledge Point 3

-when the significant challenge occurred or is occurring

The ecological crisis we now face has its roots in the Industrial Revolution and has accelerated since then to reach crisis point in our 21st century. Pope Francis has reaffirmed that this crisis has 'human origins'.

Key Knowledge Point 4

-The source(s) of the ecological crisis coming from within Catholicism and/or from interactions within a society in a certain historic or ongoing context

The Catholic Church was slow to recognise this crisis until Vatican Council II and since. However, the Church is now a leading exponent, due largely to Pope Francis recognising Climate Science and Creation theology, and his consistent teachings, especially in his encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015) and his document, *Laudate Deum* (2024).

The Church through recent Popes, calls its members and all humanity to the imperative for action for change, Pope Francis building on the work of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

Catholic eco-theologians and activists globally have taken up the challenge and environmental responsibility is now considered an integral part of the call of Baptism to Love God the Creator, Love One another and Love the Whole of Creation.

The Australian Catholic Plenary Council (2019-2021) states that each diocese and parish must respond with action. (Decree 8)

Key Knowledge Point 5

-how specific aspects of Catholicism were or are involved.

Beliefs:

‘Catholics believe that the Bible sets out to give religious truths, not exact scientific data.....we have to look to science for these. We believe that, however the universe came into existence, however the human race began, God is the creator of the universe and of the human race. In this belief we find the origins of our conviction that , as Christians, we have an ethical duty to respect the gifts of creation, to give thanks for them, and to use them in accord with the will of God, as best we can interpret it.’

(Christians and their Duty towards Nature, Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops, 1991)

-*Laudato Si* as a Papal encyclical forms part of the official magisterium (beliefs and teachings) of the Catholic Church.

-The Nicene Creed states the Catholic belief that God the Father is the 'Creator of Heaven and Earth'.

-The Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church **(337-340)** states its beliefs about the origin and beauty of Creation, humans' place in it and responsibility for it.

337 God himself created the visible world in all its richness, diversity and order.

338 Nothing exists that does not owe its existence to God the Creator.

339 Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection.

340 God wills the interdependence of creatures.

341 The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator and ought to inspire the respect and submission of man's intellect (sic) and will.

343 Man (sic) is the summit of the Creator's work, as the inspired account expresses by clearly distinguishing the creation of man (sic) from that of the other creatures. [Cf. Gen 1-26]

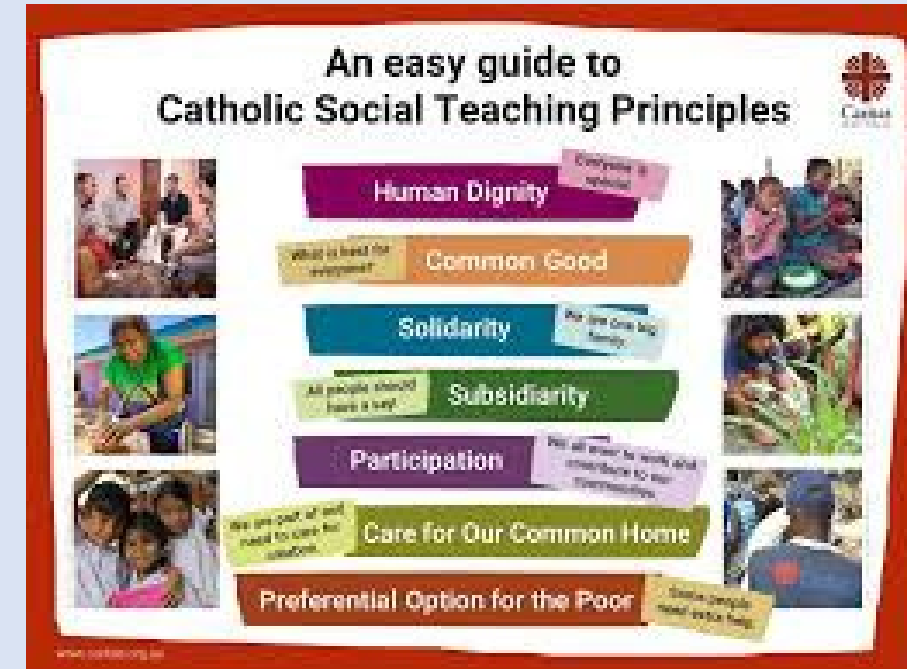
344 There is a solidarity among all creatures arising from the fact that all have the same Creator and are all ordered to God's glory.

Ethics:

Catholic ethical principles are enshrined in official Catholic Social Teaching, which are modern interpretations of the Gospel for our time.

An over-arching Catholic ethical principle is 'The Common Good of all'. As *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor* states on pg 11,

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that there is also “a good that is linked to living in society: the common good. It is the good of ‘all of us’.” A commitment to the common good leads us to take action to ensure conditions in which everyone, including future generations, can meet their needs and reach their potential. Every person, and every creature, is loved by God who made us and wants the good of all of us.



Pope Francis and the Catholic environmental ethic (*Laudato Si*)

94. The rich and the poor have equal dignity, for “the Lord is the maker of them all” (Prov 22:2). “He himself made both small and great” (Wis 6:7), and “he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good” (Mt 5:45). This has practical consequences, such as those pointed out by the bishops of Paraguay: “Every campesino has a natural right to possess a reasonable allotment of land where he can establish his home, work for subsistence of his family and a secure life...

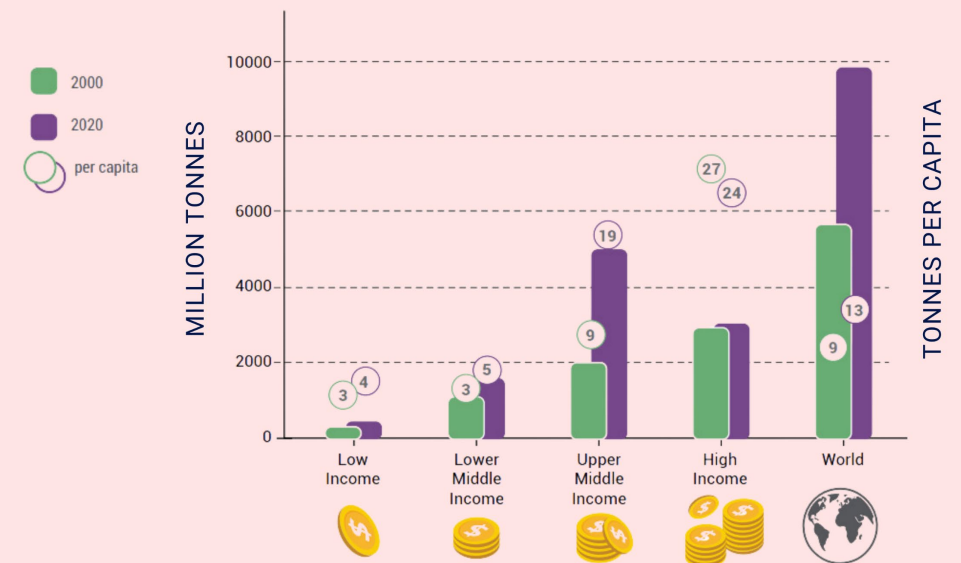


Pope Francis further explains a Catholic Environmental Ethic

95. The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all. If we do not, we burden our consciences with the weight of having denied the existence of others. That is why the New Zealand bishops asked what the commandment “Thou shall not kill” means when “twenty percent of the world’s population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive”.



Inequality in material use between countries must be addressed as a core element of any global sustainability efforts



GLOBAL RESOURCES OUTLOOK 2024 REPORT

Rituals

Eucharist. This central Catholic ritual has a cosmic dimension and profound links to Creation

The following are examples of prayers of thanks and adoration from the Catholic

Eucharistic Prayer:

-Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you are the one God, living and true. Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light.

-Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all to the joyful vision of your light. Countless hosts of angels stand before you to do your will; they look upon your splendor and praise you, night and day. United with them, and in the name of every creature under heaven, we too praise your glory, as we say, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

-Father in heaven, it is right that we should give you thanks and glory: you are the one God, living and true. Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all to the joyful vision of your light.



The Eucharistic liturgy uses Sacramental Elements from the natural world:

Bread, water and wine, nourishing elements from the natural world, are used in the Eucharist, as the priests prays at the Offertory:

*Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.*

*By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.
Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink.*



Pope Francis wrote: *In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: "Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world". (Quoting St John Paul II) The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation.(Laudato Si, 236)*

Other Sacramental Rituals of Catholicism:

-Water is used as sign of new life and cleansing in Baptism.

-Oil as a sign of anointing, strengthening and healing in Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, Anointing of the Sick.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven.” – James 5:14-15



Blessings of homes, marriages and sacred objects use blessed water.



The Liturgical Year: Season of Creation

The ecumenical 'Season of Creation' in September ends on Oct 1, Feast of St Francis of Assisi, and is now an integral part of the Catholic Liturgical Cycle along with Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas. It is observed globally by many religious denominations.

An Opening Prayer for ritual during this Season:

God of the land, the sea, the sky:

Creator of all that is seen and unseen.

*Open our hearts to the rhythm of Creation
in the swells of the ocean, the movements of
air and wind, the breath of all living things.*

*Open our eyes to the fragile beauty of the
biodiversity of which we are a part.*

Open our ears to the sounds of life around us.

*Open our minds to the awareness of our deep
relationship with all your Creation.*



**TO HOPE AND ACT
WITH CREATION**

SEASON OF CREATION 2024

The firstfruits of hope
(Rom 8:19-25)

Found at: <https://laudatosimovement.org/season-of-creation/>

Sacred Stories

From the Bible: The Creation Narratives (Genesis 1)

The Parables of Jesus: drawing on images and metaphors from the natural world, eg. The Parable of the Sower (Matth 13:1-9); the Kingdom likened to a Mustard Seed (Matth 4:30-32); the weather as a 'sign of the times' (Luke 12:56).

From the Tradition: Life stories of significant people in Church History.

Examples include:

Francis of Assisi, Hildegarde of Bingen, and Meister Eckhart from Medieval Catholicism. Teilhard de Chardin, Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann, Australian Indigenous Catholic elder and educator. Modern 'Martyrs of Ecology', eg Sr Dorothy Stang, killed for her support of Amazonian tribal peoples against illegal loggers in 2005.



***God is the newest thing there is,
The youngest thing there is,
God is the beginning
And if we are united to God
We become new again.
Meister Eckhart***

Social Structures.

Chapter 5 in *Laudato Si*, 'Integral Ecology' explains the relationship between all social structures, the web of life and human interactions as a complex, an 'integral ecology'. Catholics are called to an 'ecological conversion'. Catholicism itself is called to this; its authenticity and credibility as a world religion on mission in the world are at stake. The Pope wrote:

217. "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast". For this reason, 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.

On the Practical Level:

The practical social structures the Catholic Church has put in place include those mentioned in more detail below through the universal **Laudato Si Action Platform**, taken up on all six continents in parishes, and other Catholic organisations.

The Australian Plenary Council and the **Synods on the Amazon (2019)** and the **Synod on on Synodality (2023/24)** further recognised ecological issues as central to Catholicism and their outcomes will need to find increasing practical expression in the Church's future social structures.

Spaces, Places, Times and Artefacts

Sacred Spaces: St Clemente in Rome, Sagrada Familia in Barcelona

are examples of Catholic spaces (Churches) that celebrate Creation. Reconciliation

Gardens in grounds of Catholic institutions acknowledge Aboriginal spirituality.

Use of outdoor spaces for rituals/liturgies celebrating Creation. Church and parish community gardens.

Images and sculptures: eg. Statues and Icons of St Francis, St Patrick, St Brigid

Artefacts: Celtic Cross. Slide presentation and enactment of

Stations of the Forest, mourning the death of nature through human

greed and materialism. Ref: [Columban Missionaries - Sharing Gospel Joy](#)

Times: Easter celebrating Christ's death and resurrection ;

The Season of Creation in September; Feast of St Francis Oct. 4th.



Catholic Basilica de la Sagrada
Familia in Barcelona:
Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi
paid tribute in stone to the Creator
God and to Christ the Word who
was there 'at the Beginning'.
(John Ch 1)



Spiritual Experiences

- The liturgy is a celebration of God the Creator and Creation.
- The arts are a medium for expressing Creation Spirituality, eg Poetry- the Psalms, Gerard Manly Hopkins' poetry.
- Centres for contemplation and meditation, eg. The Centre for Contemplation (Fr Richard Rohr OFM), and Josephite centres of spirituality across Australia, offer opportunities for growing in ecological spirituality.
- Pilgrimages eg. The Camino of St James in Spain.
- Religious orders have pioneered ecological models for sustainable living, hospitality and retreats. (starting with the earliest monasteries).

Symbols

Catholicism is a sacramental religion, using elements from the natural world to signify the Gifts that are God-given, for example, Water as cleansing and life-giving (Baptism); Bread as the source of life, and wine for joy and refreshment (Eucharist); Oil (Anointing of the Sick).

Reference: *Jesus and the Natural World* by Denis Edwards, Garratt Publishing, Melb.



Texts

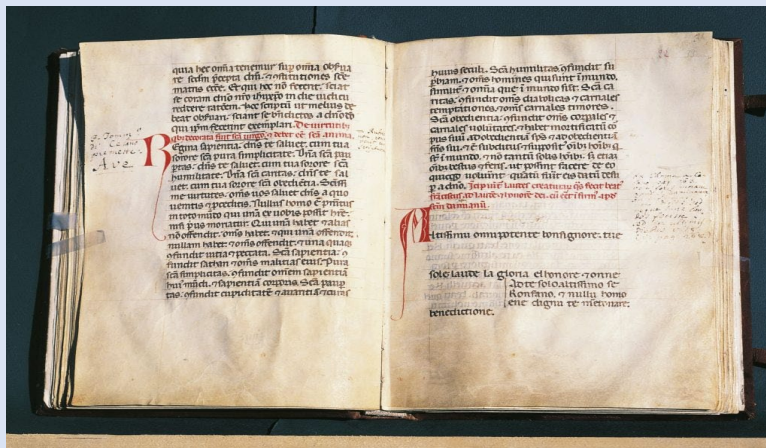
-Biblical texts eg. the Creation narratives, the Psalms, Jesus' Parables, the Book of Revelation, give praise to the Creator and Creation.

Laudato Si (72)

The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, “who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures for ever” (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:3-5)

-The writings of saints and scholars, including Medieval women saints, eg. Hildegarde of Bingen, are ecological treasures.

-The Canticle of Creation by St Francis of Assisi is the inspiration for Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (2015) and also his Motu proprio, *Laudete Deum* (2023)



The oldest existing copy of The Canticle of the Creatures by St Francis (1225) held in Assisi, is in Rome during 2025 for its 800 years celebrations

The Stance and Supporting Responses Adopted by Catholicism in Relation to the Ecological Crisis

- Catholicism officially accepts that the global environmental crisis caused by climate change is real and catastrophic. Further that this crisis is the result of human activity that has profoundly affected Earth's ecological systems. (Ch 2 in *Laudato Si*).
- The Church teaches that it is a duty of all humans and a requirement of Christian Baptism to 'Care for our Common Home'. Further, care for Earth and care for the world's poorest and most suffering people are inextricably joined. Both suffer from human greed and reckless exploitation of Earth.
- In responses to this fundamental stance, Catholics are called to an 'ecological conversion' that recognises environmental responsibility as an essential component of their Baptismal commitment.



Alternative Stance

All the Baptised do not share the Church's official stance. Some, a powerful minority, remain Climate Change deniers, and oppose Pope Francis' teaching and the teaching of both John Paul II and Benedict regarding ecological conversion.

Pope Francis writes several paragraphs in *Laudete Deum* 6-14, describing this denial and concludes that the science is irrefutable:

I feel obliged to make these clarifications, which may appear obvious, because of certain dismissive and scarcely reasonable opinions that I encounter, even within the Catholic Church. Yet we can no longer doubt that the reason for the unusual rapidity of these dangerous changes is a fact that cannot be concealed: the enormous novelties that have to do with unchecked human intervention on nature in the past two centuries. Events of natural origin that usually cause warming, such as volcanic eruptions and others, are insufficient to explain the proportion and speed of the changes of recent decades. The change in average surface temperatures cannot be explained except as the result of the increase of greenhouse gases. 14

Many Catholics remain ignorant of this aspect of Church teaching. It has not been widely promoted in parishes and via Sunday homilies. The clergy lack formation in this area of Catholic belief.

However, In their processes and documentation, both the Australian Plenary Council (2021) and the global Synod on Synodality (2024) have strongly reiterated the call to 'ecological conversion' as a central aspect of Catholic Faith.

The Reasons for the Stance and Supporting Responses

(a) **Theological Reasons:**

Creation is God's Gift to humanity to care for and share with all God's handiwork. (Universal Catechism of the Catholic Church 279)

It is sinful to degrade and abuse God's Creation and deny the rights of all life to thrive by share Earth's bounty.

"to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God." (Pope Francis. World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Sept. 2016 [Message of the Holy Father for the celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation \(1 September 2016\) | Francis](#))

(b) **Spiritual Reasons:**

A genuine Catholic spirituality cannot exclude a sense of awe and wonder, gratitude and praise for God's Creation, leading one to action for the environment. (Laudato Si, 220)

(c) **Ethical Reasons:**

It is the good and right thing to do to care for our 'Common Home' and realise it is given to all, for the benefit of all. Humans have no 'absolute' right to the goods of the Earth, destined to be respected, and shared by all, for the good of all. (Laudato Si, 67)

The ethical choice is stark



*I have set before you
life and death,
blessing and cursing.
Therefore choose life,
so that you and your
descendants may live.
(Deut. 30:19)*

Catholicism's Supporting Responses

- Catholicism's public, tangible response is through the 'Laudato Si Action Platform', promulgated by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. It is the global implementation phase of *Laudato Si*.
- This is a targeted, universal invitation for Catholics to respond in practical ways to the call to 'ecological conversion', including 'Care for our Common Home'.
- The Platform could be called a '7,7,7 Plan', as it targets 7 groups within the Church, over 7 years (2021-2028) and it names 7 focus areas for attention.

[Laudato Si Action Platform Team \(@lsap_eng\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)).

Seven Catholic Targeted Groups for the Laudato Si Action Platform

- *Families*
- *Dioceses*
- *Schools*
- *Universities*
- *Hospitals and Health Care services*
- *Businesses and farms*
- *Religious Orders.*

The 7 Focus Areas for Responses



Caring for the Earth - Living Laudato Si'



**LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2021**

"It is time to act..." the planet is "at the brink" and humanity has to avoid the "path of self-destruction". Pope Francis, Earth Day 2021.

Laudato Si' Goals

1. Am I hearing and responding to the cry of the earth?

- Reducing reliance on fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas).
- Using power from renewable non-polluting sources (solar, wind).
- Minimizing fossil fuel-based road and air travel.
- Reducing plastics and packaging, trying to buy in bulk.

2. Am I hearing and responding to the cry of the poor?

- Making lifestyle changes which will care for the world's poorest.
- Purchasing goods and using energy which support sustainable, ethical and fair production.

3. Am I considering and acting on ecological economics?

- Moving finances and investments from banks, superannuation and shares that fund fossil fuels or other activity harmful to the planet.



Laudato Si' Goals

4. How am I faring with adopting a simpler lifestyle?

- Adopting the 5 Rs. Refuse what you don't need, Reduce what you do need, Recycle, Re-use and Rot (compost)
- Eating less meat, poultry and fish and more plant-based foods.
- Buying locally grown foods and locally made products.
- Growing more trees and plants and my own food.
- Walking cycling, using public transport more often.

5. Am I educating myself and others towards integral ecology to further my awareness and action?

- Learning more about climate change, biodiversity loss and the threat of extinction and teaching others.
- Getting reputable information from independent sources (not those influenced by fossil fuel interests or other vested interests).

6. How am I faring in developing ecological spirituality?

- Focusing on the wonders of the natural world.
- Praising and thanking God for creation.
- Respecting culture and ecological spirituality of indigenous peoples.

7. Am I engaging in and participating in community action for care of creation?

- Supporting public action on climate change and environment.
- Calling on political and industry leaders for stronger action on carbon emissions and environmental protections.

Adapted from Laudato Si' Week and ARRC

- Living the Change websites



**LAUDATO SI'
WEEK 2021**



**Catholic
Earthcare
AUSTRALIA**

A PROGRAM OF  **Caritas AUSTRALIA**

The Influence of Catholicism's Stance and Supporting Responses on the Challenge

- Catholicism is the world's largest Christian religion. Its Pope has global reach as one of the most influential spiritual and moral leaders. The Church's official stance towards the environmental crisis matters and the Church is well represented at COP conferences.
- The Pontifical Academy of Sciences conducts its own research and hosts regular meetings of climate change scientists. Its work informs the Church's response and contributes to the growth of scientific and religious knowledge and awareness.

Ref. [Global experts and leaders convene for Vatican climate summit - Vatican News](#)

- The work of Catholic scholars is widely acknowledged as advancing scientific and theological knowledge, eg Franciscan biologist and theologian Elia Delio, physicist Brian Swimme, and priest palaeontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ. They call into question the cosmology and anthropology of traditional beliefs about Creation, in the light of both contemporary, credible science, and their Catholic faith. Their work is not yet included in official Catholic Church documentation, but they are widely read and studied both inside and beyond Catholicism.

(Ref. Noosphere Conferences. [Centre for Human Energy Brian Swimme - Search Videos](#)

The Influence of the Responses on Catholicism as a Religious Tradition

- Thousands of Catholic organisations round the world have responded to Pope Francis' challenge and formed their own *Laudato Si Action Plan* (shown on global map: [Laudato Si' Action Platform - Google My Maps](#))
- There has been constant teaching from the Popes and of Catholic Bishops' Conferences on the environment. eg. *The Philippine Bishops' Statement, 'What is Happening to our Beautiful Land?' (1988)* was revolutionary in its impact. Pope Francis saw these teachings as critical contributions to Catholic belief and practice, frequently quoting them in *Laudato Si*.
- Adoption by Religious Orders, (for example. [Laudato Si' Action Plan - Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, Sydney](#))
- Catholic martyrs for ecology, eg. Sr Dorothy Stang killed in the Amazon for her solidarity with the tribal peoples against the logging of their traditional lands. ([Sister Dorothy Stang honoured in Rome | The Catholic Weekly](#))
- The Vatican's global online 'Laudato Si Movement', with 1,000 member groups
(Found at: <https://laudatosimovement.org>)
- 366 Australian Catholic Schools, 85 parishes and 185 households have Catholic Earthcare accreditation (2024)

On Wider Society:

- Participation in the COP meetings
- The encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015) and *Laudate Deum* (2024) are addressed to all humanity not just the Church.
- Collaboration with secular and religious organisations, eg. World Council of Churches, the Orthodox faiths, and The United Nations.
- Global research carried out through the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences in Rome. It has several Nobel Laureates among its member scientists, and informs Church and global thinking about Climate Change.



School-based assessment

A Suggestion: Some of the Case Studies, practical examples and information included in the *Cry of the Earth Cry of the Poor* Catholic Social Justice Statement and the three resource Guides cited above could provide a basis for developing student evaluation exercises.

One example: (**Life Story found on Pg 29 in LD Guide**):



(a) Explain how the account *My Zero Waste Story of 'Overturning Tables'* by young Catholic woman Alice Carwardine, demonstrates the **stance** of Catholicism towards ecological responsibility, championed by Pope Francis.

(b) Show in your response which of the seven Goals of the '*Laudato Si* Platform' (**pg 61 in the ES Guide**) are illustrated here in Alice's account of her own 'ecological conversion'.

OR

(b) Show in your response how at least two of the nine 'Aspects of Religion' (**Beliefs, Ethics, Rituals, Sacred Stories, Social Structures, Spaces, places, times and artefacts, Spiritual Experiences, Symbols, Texts**) are most obviously at play in this story of Alice's personal ecological conversion.

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