

**CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF JHB:  
JUSTICE AND PEACE MINISTRY:  
HOLY FAMILY PARISH- SPRUITVIEW:  
LAUDATO SI, AWARENESS WEEK:  
THEME- RAISING HOPE IN HUMANITY:**

(IF YOU WANT PEACE- WORK FOR JUSTICE)

**DATE: 01 - 06- 2025**

**LAUDATO SI, AWARENESS PRESENTATION:**

Laudato Si, mi' Signore- Praise be to You, my Lord.

These were words of St Francis of Assisi- our patron saint of Ecology, from which Pope Francis titled his encyclical and from whom, he took his name Pope Francis.

St Francis of Assisi is known for a variety of such notable quotes, even quoted in homilies.

When Pope Francis issued Laudato Si, Encyclical- he re-called the words of St Francis of Assisi which are an urgent invitation for us to consider advocating and embracing new attitudes that can heal the world. This Encyclical letter was issued on Pentecost, the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 and published by the Vatican on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 2015. This is a landmark document, sorely dedicated to Creation- Care for our common home- Earth.

Around 2010- 2015 and even before, concerns about Global warming were intense- Pope Francis as a world and spiritual leader was prompted to do something. His devotion to Care- Compassion- Forgiveness- Hope- Justice- Love- Mercy- Peace- Resilience- true care for the environment and the poor, coupled with deeper Faith and Loyalty to God made it possible for him to make a call and sustain it. Pope Francis became a shepherd of Ecological Conversion.

Pope Francis as an advocate for Climate Change Action, actively engaged in diplomatic efforts and used his moral authority to encourage world leaders to adopt and sign the Paris Agreement which none had much interest in it before he became a Pope. He was the official party to the agreement and helped changed the discourse around climate change and re-enforced its moral imperative.

Laudato Si, set out seven goals- which aim to address the environmental crisis and promote a more sustainable and just world and also create new thinking about our relationship with the Earth and each other, rooted in Faith and Compassion.

The goals are: 1) Cry of the Earth. 2) Cry of the Poor. 3) Ecology of Economics. 4) Promotion of Simple Lifestyles. 5) Ecology of Education. 6) Ecology of Spirituality. 7) Community Participation and Action.

These goals help us re-cultivate our interconnectedness with all our relationships. There are four fundamental relationship we must nurture, i.e relationship with God- with ourselves- with each other and with creation. If one of these falls into disorder, the rest inevitably follow. And Pope Francis emphasizes this point that the ultimate source of the problems we are facing today is that- we have fallen out of right relationship with God. When we lose sight of the Creator, our attitudes and actions towards Creation, environment and other people become distorted. Therefore, our relationship with environment can never be isolated from our relationship with God and with others.

On the flip side- there's Hope because once we get One Right, the rest follow suit.

As communities, we have a responsibility in our own areas, to raise awareness about environmental justice but also act to prevent most of the issues, e.g.- Stop illegal dumping because that makes our areas dirty- infested with insects and rodents- expose us to pollution which leaves us prone to diseases. We cannot normalize this as a community: Littering is another- littering is bad behaviour and lack of grooming, we need to call each other out and leave no room for such bad behaviours. So, as much as we raise awareness, we must take action to stop it. No one wants to look dirty and as such no one must make our spaces dirty. Let's also promote 3R's- Reduce: Re-use: Recycle: This helps with unnecessary wastage. Let's talk to each other. Laudato Si encourages us to talk to 10 people about Laudato Si to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Let's start talking and correcting all the wrongs!!!

St John Paul II, Pope called for a paradigm shift in our Ecological Conversion. He called for a bold cultural revolution and radical change in the conduct of Humanity. Without such conversions, we won't deal with the real problems but simply treat the symptoms.

Pope Francis said- "Environmental Justice will happen when accompanied by authentic social and moral progress. There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things to safeguard moral conditions for authentic Human Ecology. Damage to environment and social are due to the same evil that, there are No indisputable Truths to guide our lives and this renders human freedom limitless. Our society today is marked by consumerism, extreme relativism, lack of necessary moral framework from which to approach challenges. The absence of truth leads to corrupt culture, universally valid principles can no longer be upheld, laws are seen as arbitrary impositions or obstacles to be avoided".

Let's adopt integral ecology and return to natural law, moral realism and adequate anthropology. If we don't, our scientific advances- amazing technical abilities- astonishing economic growth will definitely turn against man, if also not accompanied by authentic social orientation and moral regeneration.

This week has been a hope-filled period leading to fuller celebration of 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Laudato Si, which takes place next Saturday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of June '25 at the Chancery Hall- Cathedral Place. We are all invited to come and be part of this milestone- "A Decade of Ecological Conversion".

There will be prominent guests including Fr Peter Knox of Jesuits as a main guest speaker, Secretary-General of SACBC, Fr Hugh O'Connor, the Laity and Youth representatives. There'll be a plenary to come with new actions and commitments which will chart the new path for the Next Decade of Ecological Conversion and Legacy of Pope Francis.

Therefore, let's understand our interconnectedness with Creation, cleaner and healthy environment, healthy society and integration of Creation into the life of the church.

Human Environment and natural environment deteriorate together.

Let's combat Human and Social degradation as a cause of Environmental degradation.

**"Many things have to change course, but it is we human-beings above all who need to change"**  
- Pope Francis.

**"Start doing what is necessary then do what is possible, suddenly you'll be doing the impossible"**  
- St Francis of Assisi.

**Laudato Si, mi' Signore- Praise be to You, my Lord.**

**Thank You and May God Bless us, Always.**

