



We Mercies

## Care for Creation

As you take the next step, remember the traditional custodians of the land

### LAUDATO SI CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME



You can download a copy of the **pope's** encyclical from Mercy World website.

Pope Francis's much awaited encyclical on our care for our common home is easy to read in that its style is attractive, at times poetic, yet hard-hitting in its message. It is not an academic treatise, as papal encyclicals often seem to be. It is a living document.

It is divided into an Introduction and then six chapters. The Introduction is inspiring. The first Chapter *What is happening to our common home* presents the current scientific consensus on the degradation of the environment and what is causing this. Francis himself has a science background and his description is believable. Much of it may be familiar to us from our own reading and experience.

Chapter 3 examines *the human roots of the ecological crisis*. He says we are enthralled with a technocratic paradigm, which promises unlimited growth, but which is based on the lie that there is an unlimited supply of earth's resources. Chapter 4 pleads for an *integral ecology*. We are faced with one complex crisis that is both social and environmental. This demands an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.

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(ed. Anne McLay)

However, the encyclical is essentially a plea for a dialogue between faith and science. Conversion of heart is needed if conversion of behaviour is to occur. Chapter 2 is called *The Gospel of Creation*. In it, Francis argues that faith convictions can motivate us to care for nature. He sees the universe as a continuing revelation of the divine. *The earth is essentially a shared inheritance whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone*. In Chapter 6, he connects ecological education and spirituality.

Chapter 5 marks out *Lines of approach and action*. Francis calls for dialogue on environmental policy in the international, national and local communities. This dialogue must include transparent decision-making and serve human fulfilment not just economic interests. It also involves dialogue between religions and science working together for the common good.

(Much of the above is taken from the National Catholic Reporter's *Readers' guide to Laudato Si* written by Fr Thomas Reese S.J. For the full guide, check [nronline.org](http://nronline.org). There is a brief account of the contents and a number of discussion questions for each chapter).



A statue of St Francis looks out over Assisi.