



## James Martin's Top Ten Things You Need to Know About 'Laudato Si'



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### Spiritual perspective

The encyclical provides an overview of the environmental crisis from a religious point of view. Previously the dialogue has been mainly framed in political, scientific and economic language. Now the language of faith decisively enters the discussion.

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### Effects on the poor

The disproportionate effect of environmental change on the poor is strongly highlighted in almost every page of the document, with many examples.

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### Critique of the "technocratic mindset".

From this perspective, technological development is seen as the key to human existence with an unthinking reliance on market forces: technological advances are embraced before thinking through how it will affect our world. Christian spirituality in contrast offers a growth marked by moderation and a capacity to be happy with little.

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### Authoritative teaching

Pope Francis explicitly states that *Laudato Si'* is now added to the Church's body of social teaching (continuing a tradition which in the modern era dates back to Leo XIII's *De rerum novarum* in 1891).

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### Christian / Biblical roots

Discussions about ecology can be grounded in the Bible and Church tradition. Chapter 2 shows how the call to care for creation extends back as far as the Book of Genesis where mankind was called to "till and keep the Earth" – but sadly we have done too much tilling and not enough keeping.

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### Everything is connected

*Laudato Si'* offers a systematic approach to the problem. Pope Francis links us all to creation: we are part of nature, included in it and in constant interaction with it. But our decisions have an inevitable effect on it. The blind pursuit of money ignoring the marginalised and poor and the ruination of the planet are connected.

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### Embrace of science

The encyclical accepts the best scientific research of today and builds on it. It draws on both church teaching and contemporary scientific findings from all disciplines to help modern-day people reflect on important questions.

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### Selfishness and indifference critiqued

Pope Francis critiques those who ignore climate change and especially its effect on the poor. Why are so many of the wealthy turning away from the poor? Not only because some view themselves as more worthy than others, but also because frequently decision-makers are 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.

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### Global dialogue and solidarity

Pope Francis draws on the experiences of people from all around the world. The Pope calls into dialogue all people about our common home.

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### Ecological conversion

This encyclical is addressed to everybody on the planet and calls for a new way of looking at things. We face an urgent crisis where the earth begins more and more to look like an "immense pile of filth". However the document is hopeful: because God is with us, all of us can strive to change course: we can move towards an ecological conversion, listening to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth. In religious language, the Pope is calling for conversion.