

“WE ARE NOT GOD. THE EARTH HAS BEEN HERE BEFORE US AND IT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US”¹

ON THE VIRTUE OF CARE FOR CREATION – OUR COMMON HOME



With the promulgation in 2015 of ‘LAUDATO SI’: ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME’, [LS] the prophetic encyclical letter of Pope Francis, a greater and keener awareness of the urgency to care for our environment and planet Earth had reached most corners of the globe. Yet the care for the earth and environment has been integral to Christian living since the beginning of its history as recorded in the Bible. However, too many Christians had and have too often ignored the fact that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all Creation.

Pope Francis corrected this error by stating that if one reads the stories of our creation in the Book of Genesis carefully, we will understand that “human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour, and with the earth itself.” [LS#66]

Still, this singular state of harmony came to an end when humankind started ‘...presuming to take the place of God and refusing to acknowledge (its) creaturely limitations.’ [LS#66] The result was that humankind ‘... distorted (its) mandate to “have dominion” over the earth (cf. Gen 1:28), to “till it and keep it” (cf. Gen 2:15). As a result, the originally harmonious relationship between human beings and nature became conflictual (cf. Gen 3:17 – 19). [LS#66]

Despite the brokenness of the relationship with our Creator God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself, we are a people of faith. Therefore, it is our vocation to seek reconciliation with, integrity of and justice and peace for the whole of God’s Creation.

¹ LAUDATO SI’ ENCYCLICAL, paragraph 67

As we head to the polling stations, we should bear in mind that Pope Francis enjoins us to not separate care for creation from care for the poor because they are two sides of the same coin. “Heed the cry of the earth and the cry of poor!” is our Holy Father’s instruction. This means that we need to verify which of the political parties understand and actually act upon heeding the cry of the environment simultaneously with the desperate cry of the poor and vulnerable in our societies. Or whether both the earth and the poor are victims of greed, corruption or visions – or delusions - of economic prosperity for some, but never for all.

To watch a video on the principle of the Care for Creation, use the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F3EWkbX-8gu>.