

Mercy MOMENTS



The big picture

Ten Green Commandments #6 - Develop an Integral Ecology

In this Green Commandment, Pope Francis reminds us that action to save the natural world from ecological devastation must be integrated. There is no one cure, one way or single approach for success. If we accept the central tenet of Laudato Si, 'we are all connected', then solutions must be multi-faceted and targeted at all levels of the problem.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) reminds us of the reality of our interdependence: The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creatures are self-sufficient (#86).

The Butterfly Effect, the notion that a butterfly flapping its wings in New Mexico can create a hurricane in China, dramatically highlights the reality of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life. Plants, animals, birds, insects, the land, the seas, the atmosphere, human beings – what impacts on one part of the created world affects all of the others.

Laudato Si calls for an approach which:

- honours the expertise of all branches of Science
- respects indigenous cultures as dialogue partners and critical knowledge sources of integral ecology

- accepts the wisdom of all religious traditions
- transcends national and economic interests
- preserves all created species
- looks at the interplay between the physical, social, communal, moral and economic aspects of life

St Francis of Assisi is recognised as an exemplar of integral ecology – he embodied the connectedness between the natural world, society, the poor and the attainment of peace. St Francis lived a simple life. You could argue that he didn't face the serious issues of today's world – pollution, weapons of mass destruction, global warming, overpopulation, genetic engineering to name but a few. Yet his example reminds us of the importance of a worldview or way of seeing. St Francis saw the big picture – the dignity of all creation. He was not deaf to the cry of the poor. He spent time in nature listening to its heartbeat. He trod softly on the Earth and his life is a testament to the power of one person to make a difference – no matter the opposition or obstacles.

Developing an integrated ecology demands a St Francis approach, a St Francis mindset, a St Francis heart for the world. Pope Francis urges us all to see and understand that the complexity of our ecological crisis demands a cooperative and integrated solution. We are indeed all in this together.



If everything is related then the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life (Laudato Si #142).

REFLECTION

We are called to act! Can we see a need in our own ministry and home where we can begin to make a difference?

- REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). Laudato Si' [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

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