

## For the Earth and future generations

### Ten Green Commandments #7 - Learning a new way of dwelling in our common home

It was the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who said, 'Change is the only constant in life' and we certainly live in a time of enormous change.

While COVID-19 has highlighted many things... the best and worst of politicians, the fear of missing out, the anxiety of lockdown, the health of a nation resting in the hands of individuals collectively taking action, wearing masks, singing from windowsills, sharing excess and the knowledge that we are all in this together, it has also created beneficial change. It has slowed us down and given the Earth pause to breathe and renew. This is a wonderful gift to the natural world and one we need to continue.

Laudato Si' highlights the impact of human driven detrimental change on the natural world: we have cleared forests, degraded soil, diverted rivers, hastened extinction, diminished biodiversity and changed the climate.

Pope Francis calls for renewed efforts for beneficial change:

*Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone (202).*

The agents of beneficial environmental change are ordinary women and men, making significant changes in lifestyle, habits and priorities.

What Pope Francis has been asking for is a future in which "all people can prosper personally and economically in harmony with the gifts God has given us in nature."

*The future of humanity does not lie solely in the*

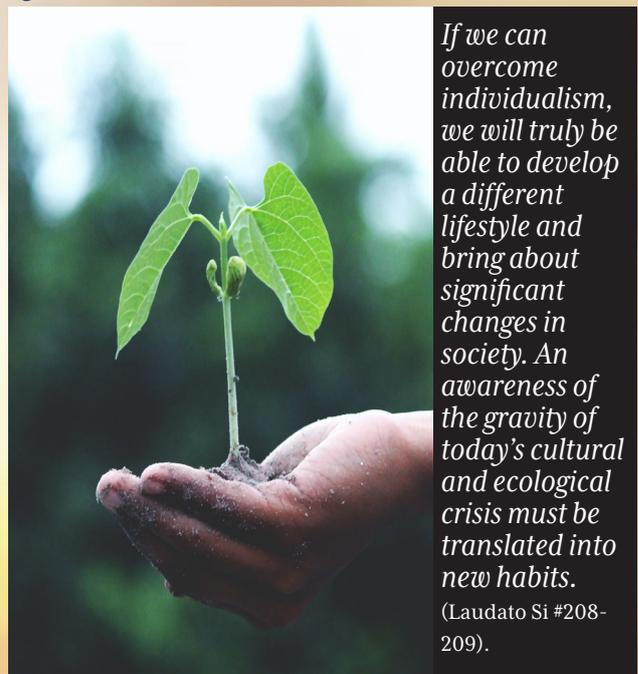
*hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change (Pope Francis at the World Meeting of Popular Movements, Bolivia).*

This beneficial change is not just necessary – it is urgent and global. Pope Francis addresses Laudato Si' not just to Catholics but 'to every person on the planet' because everyone must stand up and address the dire health of the planet.

Pope John Paul II says:

*being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith (World Day of Peace message - January 1, 1990).*

Today there is a demand for a worldwide response to help safeguard the Earth for future generations.



*If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits. (Laudato Si' #208-209).*

### REFLECTION

What will you keep from this time of pandemic and what will you leave behind?

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](http://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.