

Living Our Faith: A Response to Laudato Si', *On Care for Our Common Home*

In the first article of the Lenten Study to Rupert's Land News, Bishop Geoff Woodcroft gave an overview of the message from the Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on care for our common home to the world-wide Church and all persons. Last week's article was by Ven. Paul Lampman on "Living Our Common Vocation: A Response to Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home"

Introduction

Living Our Faith: A Response to Laudato Si', *On Care for Our Common Home* is based on the third chapter of Laudato Si' titled "The Human Origins of the Ecological Crisis." In his search for understanding the human roots of ecological crisis, (Laudato Si') Pope Francis makes a claim that a certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry to the serious detriment of the world around us. (LS 101)

Pope Francis calls his readers to pay attention to the dominant technocratic paradigm and how power, when abused, injures the beauty of creation. The Holy Father provides some insight on the options for the alternative if we choose to act as responsible stewards of the whole of God's creation.

Life Experience

Pope Francis begins by applauding the steady progress of Science and Technology that consistently improves quality of human life. While we celebrate such advances, its prowess brings humanity to a crossroads raising concern for well-intentioned global citizens.

Pope Francis argues that God's intention is that humanity benefits from the long-term wave of change provided technoscience is well directed. "It is right to rejoice in these advances and to be excited by the immense possibilities which they continue to open up before us, for science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity" (LS 81).

The Pope calls us to use power invested in us for the good of all, not just a few. The more powerful one becomes, the less he or she progresses in goodness and truth that automatically flows from technological and economic power as such. The fact is that "contemporary man has not been trained to use power well," (LS 84) because our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values, and conscience.

The Holy Father is disturbed by the risk of handing over power to individuals that fail to see it as a responsibility. (LS 85) But human beings are not completely autonomous. Our freedom fades when it is handed over to the blind forces of the unconscious, of immediate needs, of self-interest, and of violence. There is rampant misuse of power which results in actions of destruction of property, loss of life and pollution of the environment.

Pope Francis warns us on the negative effects of Globalization and the technique of possession, mastery and transformation. He is concerned about formlessness and complete manipulation of what comes before us as human beings. He wants us to faithfully intervene in nature and be in tune respecting the possibilities offered to us. (LS 86)

Pope Francis addresses the technocratic paradigm that tends to dominate economic and political life. He urges that there are many nations whose economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings (109) Such is evidenced in developing countries where resources are depleted and exploited leaving local people in misery, deplorable poverty, polluted lands, rivers and lakes. Yet, if advanced technology is well applied in relation to economic and development, such people would end up with quality life and a brighter future.

Pope Francis ends the topic of human roots of ecological crisis with a discussion on the crisis and effects of modern anthropocentrism. He decries the belief that sees no value in human beings, life and nature. He stresses that all human life including the unborn is important and valuable since all people are made in the image of God.

Pope Francis carefully balances the need for practical relativism, the need to protect employment, new biological technologies with human responsibility since we are stewards of all creation. Also, we are each other's keeper and whatever is done must reflect the value for all creation.

A Response: Living Our Faith

Baptism calls us into one body with Christ. We are drawn to God's love that is true to all God's creation. In Christ, there are no Jews or Gentiles. We become the other's keeper while on our journey of faith. We learn to see Christ in everyone, and to see God in all of creation. We are called to use the knowledge, power, privilege, relationships, and our experience to enable the other to become better as they make *us* better.

As for Christians, we believe in God the Father (Creator) Son (Redeemer) and Holy Spirit (Sanctifier). We promise to abide in God's saving power and love for the world. As God's people, we are empowered to guard and protect what God has entrusted with us as we wait for the second coming of the Lord. May you be blessed as you remain true to your faith.

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