



**With Sr Patricia Mulhall
And**

Sarah Gardner Lobo

ZOOM MEETING HELD ON 7th April 2021 AT 7:30PM

“Laudato Si” Chapter 3 - Paragraphs 101 - 136

Participants: 19

Contributions

SEE - JUDGE - ACT

GROUP 1

Paragraphs 101 - 136

It's difficult to promote an ecological revolution when the church is giving such a bad example – power is held in a small number of hands. The church needs to change. We are advocating treating plants and animals better, but women need to be treated as equals in the church.

We are tempted towards power and control. Big businesses and the church are attracted by power.

Paragraph 114

Science and technology are not neutral. We rush into everything too much and need to slow down. We need to decentralise. Franciscans should be leading the way by being obedient to the Holy Father.

Laudato Si' touches on all the things we should be focussing on. Humans naturally want to be at the centre of everything.



Paragraph 105

In 1965, after the Second Vatican Council, Romano Guardini, a German theologian, talked of all the things mentioned in Laudato Si'. The church is aware of the problems.

Women's place in the church is important. It should not be taken for granted that men should be in charge.

It doesn't seem as if the church is moving very fast, but it is like an elephant, slow but nothing will stop it!

We must take comfort from the fact that the church is directed and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Short term thinking – too many leaders in industry go into positions for short terms so look for quick rewards. There is no incentive for setting long term goals and so there is no blueprint for the future. When everything runs out, there will be proof that short termism does not work, and we need to be there to pick up the pieces.

Paragraph 123

Relativism is horrifying as it leads to selfishness and people taking advantage of each other with no responsibility for the good of others. The weak are exploited in so many ways. The answer lies in our Catholic Faith. Jesus always directed his attention towards individuals.

Paragraph 123

Relativism brings up a litany of things for us to reflect on including child abuse and the abandonment of the elderly. Children neglect their aging parents who are heartbroken and feel ignored and not needed.

Human trafficking and blood diamonds cause deep wounds in our society.



Paragraph 128

Huge sympathy for workers have been on standby for a year due to the pandemic.

Ora et labora (pray and work) – the Benedictine motto is very ecological.

This is a difficult chapter and the start of the trouble can be found in colonialization.

Don't dismiss technology – so much is being done with technology in ICU's in hospitals, and Zoom has been a wonderful way of meeting online.

"Tablets were around in Moses' time"

Paragraph 113

People are starting to question the value of so much technology. We need to get back to human connections.

Paragraph 136

"As we have seen in this chapter, a technology severed from ethics will not easily be able to limit its own power." We are heading for disaster if we don't take this to heart.

ACTIONS

As individuals and small groups we need to look at what we can do.

We should look at nature to find small ways to see how we should progress.

We can create Ecology Education Groups in our Parishes which can be ecumenical. John's church collected and recycled aluminium foil and raised funds for people who needed help.

CAFOD has an initiative to find ways to care for our common home.



Finding new ways to elect our political representatives is another way to bring about change.

We can find ways to use technology to help and grow closer to people.

“We need to SPEAK OUT. As Margaret Mead said: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

GROUP 2

We haven’t really left the Garden of Eden but we keep eating the fruit of Eden not replenishing it responsibly. God told Adam and Eve (and the whole human race) to use what be created and to preserve and make it fruitful.

Paragraph 124

Any approach to an integral ecology, which by definition does not exclude human being, needs to take account of the value of labour, as Saint John Paul II wisely noted in his Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*. According to the biblical account of creation. God placed man and woman in the garden he had created not only to preserve it but also to make it fruitful. Labourers and craftsmen thus ‘maintain the fabric of the world’ Developing the created world in a prudent way is the best way of caring for it, as this means that we ourselves become the instrument used by God to bring out the potential which he himself inscribed in things. ‘The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and a sensible man will not despise them’ (Sir 38:4).O

Chapter 3 was very intense with a lot to take in, making us feel sad and inadequate. We really need to take hold of ourselves and do something about it. When we go shopping, we should rather buy loose things instead of buying prepacked food. We are spoiling the earth and not doing anything about it. Feeling guilty and inadequate.

Because of our greed and waste there are lots of people suffering.



The uprising in Yemen and Saudi Arabia have left many people homeless and starving. In the Congo there are 47 million people at risk of famine/starvation.

Are we doing enough for the refugees?

Humans put themselves at the centre of everything and do not think about anything else.

Paragraph 129

To continue providing employment, it is imperative to promote an economy which favours productive diversity and business creativity.

Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving our world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the areas in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good.

The big farmers supply all the big retailers and supermarkets and the local farmers are battling. We must support our local farmers. Some local farmers are supplying and delivering bottled milk, fresh bread. Good examples are Milk and More and the Wiltshire Farms. Today everything lasts longer because of all the preservatives put in food which are so bad for us. Mely gave a good example of how she has been put off eating canned sardines. We must look after our bodies and use natural products.

Paragraph 120

Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties.

It is so sad that so many people don't think there is anything wrong with aborting a baby. If they can't see how wrong and vicious it is how can they look after the rest of creation.



Progress in science is good but has its own social and moral dilemmas eg invitro fertilization.

Moral and Ethical Committees need to be better regulated – Human Embryo Act – The Act constitutes a major review and update of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology – to ensure that all human embryos outside the body – whatever the process used in their creation are subject to regulation.

Paragraph 123

The culture of relativism is the same disorder which drives one person to take advantage of another, to treat others as mere objects, imposing forced labour on them or enslaving them to pay their debts. The same kind of thinking leads to the sexual exploitation of children and abandonment of the elderly who no longer serve our interests. In the absence of objective truths or sound principles other than the satisfaction of our own desires and immediate needs, what limits can be place on human trafficking, organized crime, the drug trade, commerce in blood diamonds and the fur of endangered species?

In North America/Canada many indigenous farmers had to migrate to the cities and live in shanty towns because they were dispossessed of their land where they lived and were experienced in growing maize. Thanks to a Bishop who fought their cause many of these indigenous farmers were given back their lands.

Human trafficking – no thought to the suffering – traffickers just live for the money – they treat others s mere object for commercial use.

We are a throw away culture.

The book “The Soul of Money” by activist, Lynne Twist tells of the vision of *Pachamama Alliance’s Work* – to empower Indigenous people of the Amazon rainforest to preserve their lands and culture and using insights gained from that work to educate and inspire individuals everywhere to bring forth a thriving, just and sustainable world.



We must make sure our young people do not make the same mistakes we have made.

It is not all doom and gloom – there is a lot of people working and fighting for change.

Women are leading in lots of ecological progress.

A good movie to watch – “SORRY WE MISSED YOU”.

“Sorry we missed you” is a film by Ken Loach that won the Palm D’Or 2019.

It gives an account of a self-employed delivery driver who was on zero hours contract and even working many hours he still did not make enough money to pay off his debt - from the crash of 2008. The film highlights the conditions of the self-employed who have few ‘safety nets’ such as holidays, sick pay, guaranteed work...

Workers at companies like Deliveroo and Amazon are being exploited and are still fighting their cause.

Monopoly can be in the hands of a few – eg Facebook and Instagram but there are many others fighting for worthy causes eg.

Jimmy Wales believes enriching the mind is more important than profits.

Abigail Disney is the billionaire (heiress of Disney empire) who has given away millions of her fortune and is encouraging other billionaires to do the same for good causes. She has set up a ‘billionaires club’ with that in mind - getting them to give away much of their money while also calling on governments to tax the billionaires much more! She is railing against bosses taking salaries and bonuses that are 1,000 times their workers pay.

We must live in Hope – be aware, pray and talk to people about preserving God’s creation.



GROUP 3

Paragraphs highlighted: 111, 113, 117, 119

Reflection points

What world are we leaving for our children / grandchildren? Will they have a better life than we have had? This is the expectation we had as we were growing up, but will it be true for them?

We seem to have a dominance of the ME generation – my rights rather than community service. How long will this last?

A certain despair around those who hide behind technology. Unable to handle face-to-face communication, they do not socialise, unable to pick up on body language. What will this do to their brain & relationships within society as a whole?

Phone technology – a two-edged sword: it dominates the social life of the young to the detriment of family life but on the other hand it helps reduce the isolation of older people living alone, especially at this time of Covid-pandemic.

The challenge of knowledge of technology: a significant lack of transparency over how to use technology; knowledge is power, keeping technical knowledge secret gives control over others, a means of negotiating a higher salary, maintaining a job, preventing others from growing. The concentration of knowledge in a few people creates a very fragile society that lacks resilience & limits innovation.

When humans take the place of God – nature rebels [117]. Climate change is an example of nature rebelling. Removing God from the picture – we get it wrong.

Abortion an example of relativism. We need to rediscover respect for the human person, without respect we cannot take care of nature.

Christ seen as the apex of creation. Are we humans at the apex too?



Technology is not bad but there is a lack of moral entity to guide us. What should we do? Focus on one aspect e.g. ethical shopping or on a whole change of lifestyle?

Human relationships have changed in the last 30-40 years. As a GP in the 50's 60's & 70's the focus was strongly on knowing the patient, their family, their homelife. This has now changed. Often unusual to see the same doctor twice, no personal relationship with the GP. Technology clearly advantageous for diagnosis and treatment but why the impersonality?

Where is the balance between the development of technology and the development of relationships? The two should be mutually beneficial. Why is this not the case – why have we rather developed a ME culture? Professions such as doctors, teachers were once seen as vocations – why is this apparently no longer the case?

There is a change in the concept of value. Today this seems to be limited primarily to economics rather than issues of quality of life, being, sacredness, history, beauty, merit, uniqueness. Even where these are recognised, they tend to be measured only in units of money. This is one of the challenges in 'valuing' the environment. Water is seen as having little value until it is rare!

An example of how Value and Vocation is distorted by money. A children's nursery was fed up with parents picking their children up late from nursery – the lateness meant their staff often had stay for an hour or more after 'Closing Time' to wait until a child was collected. They decided to implement a fine for late pick-ups from the nursery. What was the outcome? The number of children being picked up late increased. Parents who picked up their children late were unapologetic – as they had paid for the service of being late, so it was OK to be late!



NEXT MEETING

21ST April 2021

7:30 p.m.

Laudato Si

Reflect on 'What we have taken / learned from *Laudato si*' so far?'

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