



**With Sr Patricia Mulhall
And
Sarah Gardner Lobo**

ZOOM MEETING HELD ON 8th May 2021 AT 7:30PM

“Laudato Si” Chapter 4 - Paragraphs 137 - 162

Participants: 23

Contributions

SEE - JUDGE - ACT

GROUP 1:

Common themes were raised:

- Appreciating interconnectedness, Marie recited a poem by Joseph Plunkett “I see his blood upon the rose” which she thought illustrated this through Christ. Alice commented that we need to respect all human beings and their cultures.
- Waste, particularly food waste.
- Humans are not separate or above being destroyed even if we exhibit anthropocentrism.
- That preservation of all forms of culture such as art and architecture were as important as cultures of indigenous communities.
- Teaching the next and subsequent generations about greed and to value what they have not been always looking for the next expensive acquisition.
- Education and raising awareness of integral ecology.



- Paragraph 155 on gender identity and valuing gender differences not homogenizing identity.
- Urban development without sustainability or even ability to provide basic utilities. Addis Ababa 16 years development was cited as an example.
- Social change is more likely to be effective in changing the way things are done than legislation which can take years and the example cited was laws on drink driving, the public demanded them to make them happen quicker than legislation, so we should harness people power to save the environment and adopt integral ecology.

Group 2

- Prince Charles will be given a copy of *Laudato Si'* as he's known to be very interested in the environment and will enjoy reading it.
- We need to acknowledge our dignity and recognise the dignity of others.
- Stand up for ecology – act when we see bad things happening to our world!
- This is a difficult chapter and needed reading several times. A huge thank you to Sarah for explaining and clarifying it in her presentation. She and Sr Patricia are bringing the book to life and making it real.
- Paragraph 139 regarding integrated solutions was good. Before combatting the problems in the world, like poverty, human degradation, and crimes against nature, we need to abolish civil wars, terrorism, and drug wars. When we have peace, we can set about saving the natural world.
- Interconnectedness is a revolutionary idea – we are all part of it – the good and the bad parts.
- Paragraph 138 tells us that plants, animals and people all have similar genetic codes – the world's a symphony. But connections are being broken and the resulting disorder is sin.
- The more affluent we become the more separate and individualistic.
- In the past people had large families and visitors were always welcome. People tended to live and work in the same village their whole lives, so everyone knew everyone. Now we have much smaller families and keep ourselves to ourselves.
- Dispersal of people can be a good thing as we can take our family values and spread them.



- When we talk to people, we find out such interesting things about them that we never knew.
- Paragraphs 155, 156 and 157 talked about respect for the common people, the common good, and the fact that the State should defend the common good.
- Fulfilment is motivating. Work is not the centre of the universe and we should realise that.
- What we are talking about is about our faith. Jesus respected and sought out the common person. Behind this is a moral tone that is Jesus-speak. He concentrated on getting the mindset right.
- As Catholics we need to keep our moral fibre intact. We have wisdom that a lot of people do not have.
- We need to keep society on the straight and narrow – get the basics right. Work towards a world that respects and cares for the poorest people.
- Human beings before anything else – that is our starting point.
- Christian values have been internalised. Lots of people value human beings and the environment but do not have the faith. The Christian message is embedded in them even if they do not attend church.
- A video called Seaspiracy is recommended – so much harm is being done by huge fishing ships dredging the ocean floor. Overfishing affects the atmosphere and so much more. Makes you want to stop eating fish!
- Television is educating us on how we can help each other.
- There are a host of environmental films that we should watch, even though they are shocking, to get an idea of what's going on out there.
- There is hope – young people are leading the way in making people aware of what is going on and doing something about it. We must support them vocally and financially.
- The climate movement is growing, making us aware of how we can support it.
- Pope Benedict XVI quite rightly said that “in addition to a fairer sense of intergenerational solidarity there is also an *urgent moral need* for a renewed sense of intragenerational solidarity.”



GROUP 3

It is a privilege living in communities with many different peoples. Always amazed at how we can live in unity & humbled by how much our lives can be enriched from living with different people. Missionaries receive more than what they give. It is very beautiful to remain connected with others.

Paragraphs 16, 137, 138, 139: Emphasising that everything is connected.

Paragraph 141: Protection of the environment is an integral part of development.

Paragraph 144: The globalised economy has both good & bad points. Can help to remind people of their interdependence on each other, as opposed to focusing on a nationalist stance. The EU given as an example of countries working together to develop standards and adopt principles that each country can enshrine within their own legislation, standards etc best fitted to their own national situation (principle of subsidiarity). The pandemic – a time and opportunity for communities & countries to help each other.

Paragraph 145: Taken aback by Pope Francis statement that *“The disappearance of a culture can be just as serious, or even more serious, than the disappearance of a species of plant or animal.”* Reflected that a culture respects nature, people, relationships, the invasion & pervasiveness of technology can cut us off from nature, people, relationships and their value and respect for them is lost.

“The imposition of a dominant lifestyle linked to a single form of production can be just as harmful as the altering of ecosystems”.

How to counter the ‘dominant lifestyle’ of ‘monoculture/single cropping trend that tends to prevail in agriculture. The example of almond orchards discussed - main cropping area – California where they must import lorryloads of beehives to achieve pollination of the almond trees, as insufficient wildflowers & other crops present throughout the rest of the year to support a local bee population large enough to pollinate the vast area of almond trees. Similar problem seen with prawns in Thailand – where large areas of mangroves have been cleared for shrimp farming. Latter has led to pollution & prawn deaths – now starting to be



reversed as mangroves start to be replanted, see

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2016/9/22/thailand-reclaiming-mangroves-for-shrimp-production>

Difficult to change the 'monoculture' mindset – driven by economic demand from buyers. Important to Pray & Raise Awareness of the Cycle of Environmental, Social & Economic Impacts (Integral Ecology) that is triggered by this mindset.

Paragraph 149: The comment on Extreme Poverty. The Holy Family lived in poverty, but this was a dignified poverty of work, few possessions, simple food, holiness. Poverty is not the same as hunger. Street poverty is not dignified, can be exploitative, brutal, merciless, criminal gangs killing without feeling, no remorse.

Paragraph 154: Maintaining respect for our human dignity.

Paragraph 160: Statement from Pope Francis *"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us,"* raising an important question *"What is the purpose of our life in this world? Why are we here? What is the goal of our work and all our efforts? What need does the earth have of us?"* Especially the last in light of the current ecological crisis.

Paragraph 161: Doomsday predictions of what we are going to leave behind ... debris, desolation, filth? This is a wake-up call – the full-impacts of the ecological crisis are not so far away – 2050 could be very different from the present era. This is our opportunity to try to have a simple life. To make do with 3 trousers rather than 10. To consider whether we could live for some time without phone or electricity. To understand the physical, spiritual & community benefits of living simply.

Paragraph 162: *Our difficulty in taking up this challenge seriously has much to do with an ethical and cultural decline which has accompanied the deterioration of the environment. Men and women of our postmodern world run the risk of rampant individualism..."*

How to counter this trend of rampant individualism?



General Points

How can we implement Integral Ecology?

The value of each having an opportunity and/or own space/land to work & develop their talents. The importance in the Philippines of mangroves for prawn fishing and land for crops and cattle farming. An example given of a 4000 year-old tradition that worked well in India – nothing to do with Christianity. Land was divided into communal and private land – the latter owned by landlords. Communal land could be rented & worked by anyone – rent often being paid via a portion of the crop returned to the community. The availability of communal land meant that landlords had to treat workers fairly in order to induce them to work for them, as poorly treated workers could bid for communal land & quit working for a landlord. Communal land provided independence, & these people and other professions could, & often did, buy more land for the community. This communal land enabled the community to look after & support the poor provided the latter worked. In Goa, this tradition was retained, documented and adopted by the Portuguese and few beggars were seen on the streets, until land was all privatised when the State was incorporated into the rest of India. In British India, the communal system was disbanded & with no land to work & no alternative to landlords, poverty levels & street-begging increased markedly. A challenge for property rights?



Integral Ecology

Its all a bit daunting, what can I do?

- Remember that my actions, my choices influence the lives of others and the state of the planet (139)? **Everything is INTERCONNECTED**
- Research the reason WHY something is happening. When I **understand the RELATIONSHIP** [139] between my habit/behaviour & issues of waste, poverty, environmental degradation, over-consumption etc - then I can do something about it
- Acknowledge the **VALUE of each creature** [140]
- Engage in **DIALOGUE** to achieve change [Chapter 5]
- Welcome the stranger & foster in them **a sense of belonging** [152]
- Discard **ANTHROPOCENTRISM** [Chapter 3] and
- Foster "the **COMMON GOOD**" [156] (video)

Integral Ecology is Complex



In Complex systems change emerges when many individuals act together, maybe over small spatial scales and short timescales, and in so doing trigger a large-scale event



Homework Task

1. Can you identify a local good (e.g. a foodstuff, clothing), service (e.g. a Fairtrade outlet, repair service) or activity (e.g. Plastic free, Windsor) that might be put in a Parish Handbook for Activities that promote Integral Ecology / Ecological Conversion [see paras. 217, 220 & 221]?
2. As you consider the above, ask questions about the **environmental, economic, social and cultural costs & benefits** that arise from adopting the product/service/activity you have identified.

Over the remaining weeks, share with the group what you have discovered & the questions that this discovery has caused you to ask.

Then we can all share this process with our friends, family & community around us & start to spread some of Pope Francis' messages from *Laudato si.*"

Resources to look at:

1. 'Tragedy of the Commons' that Sister circulated earlier in these sessions - it is particularly appropriate for last week & forthcoming sessions.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxC161GvMPc>
2. Here is a link to a Film called '**Thank you for the Rain**'. It's about a Kenyan Farmer struggling with Climate Change who becomes a Community Activist encouraging his neighbours to plant trees and goes to the Paris Climate Change talks in 2015 to tell his story to Political Leaders at COP15. You can see a short trailer on the following link:

<https://vimeo.com/ondemand/thankyoufortherain/143747529?autoplay=1>



NEXT MEETING

19th May 2021

7:30 p.m.

Laudato Si'

Session 7

**Chapter 5: Lines of Approach and Action
Paragraphs: 163-201**

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