

Laudato Si' Presentation Talking Points

On Care for Our Common Home

by Paul Canavese

Thank you for your willingness to learn more about Pope Francis' encyclical and to share his vision with others. These talking points are provided as a companion to our Powerpoint presentation, although they can also be used separately.

Our Approach

It is challenging to summarize a 40,000 word document, and it requires prioritization. It isn't possible to include every point Pope Francis makes in the document. We have done our best to represent the main concepts Pope Francis offers, prioritizing what is most relevant to a general parish audience.

Structure of the Presentation

We have chosen not to strictly follow the structure of the document. We have organized the presentation and talking points into an overview and five main sections, with discussion questions at the end of each section. You can present this in a single session or break it up into multiple sessions.

Preparation

We strongly encourage you read the encyclical for yourself before presenting on it. While it will take some time, Pope Francis' writings are much easier

to read than other Church documents of which you may be familiar. We have referenced related sections of the document in parentheses after each point.

Make it Your Own

This resource has been created with the intention of being flexible. You are encouraged to modify the presentation and these notes to best suit your needs.

Presentation Recommendations

Following the approach used by many strong presenters, we have designed the slides to support you, rather than compete with you. They include a minimal number of words, so your audience will listen to you, rather than be reading.

You are welcome to make copies of these talking point pages to give to your audience as reference, but we strongly recommend distributing them at the *end* of your talk. Otherwise, their noses will be in the handout while you are talking.

Next Steps

Consider what your hopes are for what happens after your presentation. How can you help your people take next steps? Could they gather in small groups? Could you have a service event? Put some thought into this before you present.

A. Overview

1. Name of the Document

- Laudato Si' means “**praise be to you**” in medieval Italian.
- It comes from St. Francis' famous canticle (sung prayer) *The Canticle of the Creatures* (a.k.a. *The Canticle of the Sun*), written in the 13th century.
- The **subtitle** is “On Care for Our Common Home”

2. Overview

- **Not just “nature.”** This is a wide-ranging document, that does not just address “nature.” Pope Francis asks us to look at all creation, including people, and address a crisis of mistreatment and poverty. It critiques out-of-control consumerism and consumption, destruction of the environment, and neglect of the poor and powerless.

3. Presentation Roadmap

- After an overview, we will explore the document in five sections:
- **Our common home is in crisis.** Nature and our society is showing very troubling symptoms.
- **God and creation.** Our faith has a lot to say about creation and the crisis we are experiencing,
- **Causes of the crisis.** Pope Francis urges us to look below the surface, at what is causing the problems.
- **A new vision.** We need a new, alternative perspective to address the crisis.
- **What can I do?** Pope Francis suggests a number of concrete steps we can take.

4. Pope Francis' Papal Documents

- *The Light of Faith* (*Lumen Fidei*): June 2013, encyclical based on a draft by Pope Benedict XVI.
- *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*): November 2013, apostolic exhortation.
- *The Face of Mercy* (*Misericordiae Vultus*): April 2015, papal bull.
- *Praise Be to You* (*Laudato Si'*): June 2015, encyclical.

5. Previous Papal Statements

- **Previous popes** have made significant statements on similar topics and are quoted extensively in the document.
- **Pope Benedict XVI** was called the “Green Pope” by some because he spoke about the environment so frequently and backed it up with action. He also spoke on other themes in the document, ranging from economic to other social issues. (§6)
- **Saint John Paul II** also spoke extensively about these topics, calling for global ecological conversion and an authentic human ecology. (§5)
- **Blessed Pope Paul VI** spoke of ecological concerns as early as 1970. (§4)

6. Local Church Statements

- Many **regional documents** have been written on these same issues.
- Pope Francis quoted from a wide selection of **regional bishops' conferences** (unprecedented for a papal document), from: Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Japan, Latin America & Caribbean, Mexico, New Zealand, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, Southern Africa, United States; Episcopal commission in Argentina.

7. Document Structure

- About **40,000 words**, 25% longer than *Hamlet*. (The word cloud diagram shows words found in the document, with font size based on frequency.)
- 246 paragraphs.
- Divided into an Introduction and six chapters.
- 172 footnoted citations.

8. Papal Encyclical

- **A letter.** This document is a papal encyclical, a letter usually addressed to the Church (although this one addresses the whole world).
- **A form of papal teaching.** Encyclicals are a form of papal teaching, often on topics of faith and morals.

9. The Audience

- This document is not written to the Catholic Church, all Christians, or even all people of faith.
- **Everyone.** Pope Francis says he wishes to address “every person on the planet.” (§3)
- **Non-religious.** He knows some don't believe in God or consider religion irrelevant to the topic, but says science and politics need to grounding in meaning and purpose that come from philosophy, ethics, and religion. (§62-63, §199-200)

B. Our Common Home is in Crisis

10. Our Common Home is in Crisis

11. Our Common Home

- **A common home.** The earth is a home we share with other people and the rest of creation. (§13)
- **A shared inheritance.** The fruits of the earth are meant to benefit everyone, rich and poor. God gave it to all of us. (§71, 93-95)
- **Future generations.** Our common home was also given for future generations. What kind of world do we want to leave for our children and grandchildren? What will be left? (§159-162)

12. Nature is in Crisis

- **An unprecedented crisis.** We cannot ignore what is happening any longer. (§2, 161)
- **Pollution & waste.** We're poisoning our planet, turning it into “a pile of filth.” This causes sickness and death, especially impacts the poor, hurts other creatures, and deprives us of the earth's beauty. (§20-22)
- **Climate change.** According to “very solid” scientific consensus, we are seeing changes in the planet's climate causing grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. The poor will be hurt the most. (§23-26)
- **Water.** We are wasting and running out of natural resources. Scarcity of clean water is a particular problem, especially impacting the poor. (§27-31)
- **Loss of biodiversity.** Thousands of species die each year, as habitats are destroyed. These species provide food for us and could contain cures for diseases, but also have value in themselves. (§32-42)

13. Climate Change

- **Controversy.** Much of the controversy about this document has focused on climate change.
- **Not a “climate change document.”** Pope Francis is focusing on a much bigger picture here. Only four out of 246 paragraphs focus on climate change. (§23-26)
- **Pope Francis sees climate change as an important issue.** He says according to “very solid scientific consensus” (a recent study by James L. Powell put it at 99.99% of scientists), we are seeing climate change that is causing grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. The poor will be hurt the most. (§23-26)
- **Skeptical?** If you are a person skeptical about climate change, we encourage you to read what Pope Francis actually wrote about it. However, the rest of the document is not contingent on this topic.

14. Society is in Crisis

- **The poor are suffering.** Poor people and countries are disproportionately affected by the nature crisis, but also the direction our global society has been heading. (§48-52)
- **Decline in the quality of human life.** Despite technological and economic progress, quality of life has declined in many ways: ugly, chaotic cities, limited access to beauty and nature, and hectic lifestyles. (§43-45)
- **Breakdown of society.** Global change has resulted in many social ills: unemployment, social exclusion, inequitable distribution of resources, social breakdown, violence, drugs, and loss of identity. (§46)
- **Media and technology** can cause “mental pollution” and keep us from learning to live wisely, think deeply, and love generously. (§47)

15. Reflection

- What concerns you most about the direction the world is headed (both for nature and people)?
- What changes of concern have you seen happen in your lifetime?
- How has technology changed you and how you interact with others?
- Pope Francis quotes the Portuguese bishops, who say the environment is “on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next.” (§159) How do you see your responsibilities to future generations?

Laudato Si'

Praise Be to You

*On Care for Our
Common Home*



Not Just “Nature”

- People & social issues
- Consumerism & poverty
- Mistreatment of all creation



- **Overview**
- **Our Common Home is in Crisis**
- **God and Creation**
- **Causes of the Crisis**
- **A New Vision**
- **What Can I Do?**

Pope Francis' Papal Statements



The Light of Faith

(Lumen Fidei)

Jun. 2013 Encyclical

The Joy of the Gospel

(Evangelii Gaudium)

Nov. 2013 Apostolic Exhortation

The Face of Mercy

(Misericordiae Vultus)

Apr. 2015 Papal Bull

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- A letter to us
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Franciscus

Our Common Home

- A shared inheritance
- Future generations



Nature is in Crisis

- Unprecedented
- Pollution & waste
- Climate change
- Water
- Loss of biodiversity



The Environment is a Spiritual Issue

- Comprehensive, faith-based perspective
- St. Francis
- Not the first pope

All Creation Belongs to God

- “Creation” = God’s loving plan
- Creation is holy
- God alone owns the world
- We are not God

We Are Caretakers

- Not dominators
- We can take what we need
- Faith motivation



Humans and Other Creatures

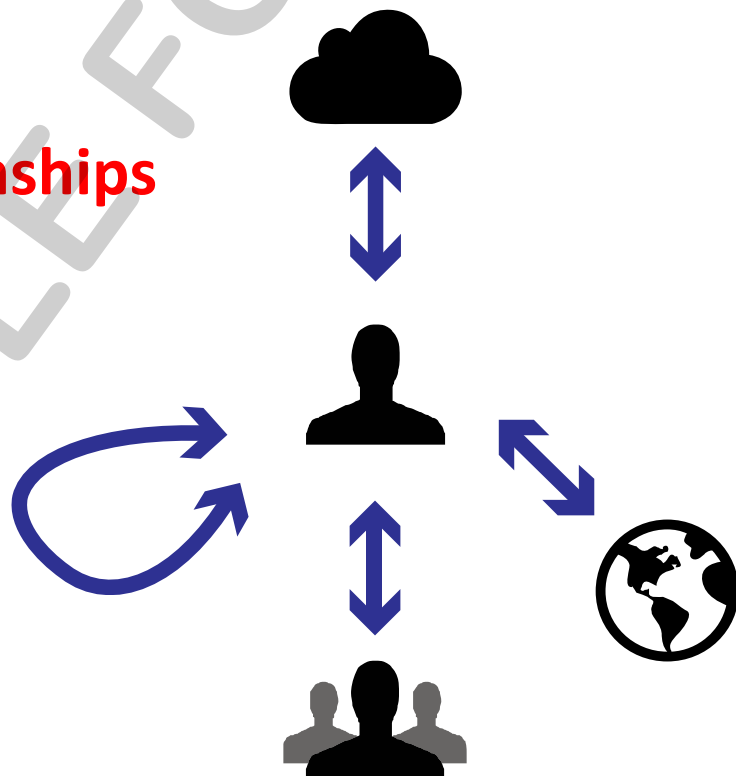
- People are unique
- Other creatures have value
- We share a universal communion



Relationships and Sin

- God—Trinity—is relational
- God made creation (us!) relational
- Broken relationships = sin

Broken Relationships



Causes of the Crisis

Unprecedented Change

- A different world
- Different assumptions and attitudes