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## **LAUDATO SÍ: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

*Laudato Sí* is an important and timely teaching document with great relevance for the peoples of Asia. Pastoral agents in the local churches of Asia need to understand this teaching in order to play their part in making it known, and interpreting its implications for local faith communities. This paper provides hermeneutic keys to assist pastoral workers to understand the encyclical and its place within the corpus of Catholic Social Teaching. It examines the context in which the encyclical was issued, its purpose and audience, the teaching authority that it holds, its methodology and main concerns, and its contribution to the body of CST. These reflections are intended to better equip pastoral workers in Asia to engage more deeply with the meaning and implications of the encyclical for the thinking and action of local churches. Through such engagement, they may be able to make contextualized contributions to the ongoing development of the local and universal social teachings.

**Keywords:** *Laudato Sí*, Catholic Social Teaching, Integral Ecology, Local Churches, Pastoral Response

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## Introduction

Pope Francis's first encyclical, *Laudato Si* (hereafter LS) on the care of our common home, was released on 18 June 2015 after many months of speculation about the date and content of the encyclical. Its official publication date is 24 May, the Feast of Pentecost. From the beginning of his Pontificate, Francis has expressed concern about creation and failings in human care for God's creation.<sup>1</sup> In taking the name Francis, the new Pope signalled clearly his concern for the poor and for creation. It is no surprise then that the encyclical's title comes from St Francis of Assisi's canticle of the creatures, and that the canticle runs like a motif through the encyclical. St Francis of Assisi himself is held up as "the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically" (LS, 10). This is the first social encyclical to focus entirely on ecology. It adds depth and detail to existing teaching on ecology and shifts the emphasis to human beings as part of creation. It advocates an integral ecology and an ethic of care for creation.

Like any social encyclical, LS must be understood within the context of the corpus of Catholic Social Teaching (hereafter CST). A series of questions can help us to understand the encyclical. We may ask why is the Pope speaking now? Who does he wish to speak to and why? What is the authority of this document — what call does it make on the consciences of Catholics? What is the methodology of the document — how does the encyclical go about its task? What are the main concerns of the encyclical? What is the contribution of this encyclical to the body of CST — what does this add to the teachings?

This international teaching needs to be disseminated and received by the local churches of Asia. This paper seeks to better equip pastoral workers in Asia to engage more deeply with the meaning and implications of the encyclical for the thinking and action of local churches. It offers some suggestions for how pastoral agents in Asia can play a part in the ongoing development of the local and universal social teachings.

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<sup>1</sup>"Let us protect Christ in our lives, so that we can protect others, so that we can protect creation! The vocation of being a "protector", however, is not just something involving us Christians alone; it also has a prior dimension which is simply human, involving everyone. It means protecting all creation, the beauty of the created world, as the Book of Genesis tells us and as Saint Francis of Assisi showed us. It means respecting each of God's creatures and respecting the environment in which we live." Pope Francis, "Homily at his Inauguration Mass," 19 March 2013. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130319\\_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato.html) Accessed 4 July 2015.

## Context: Why is the Pope Speaking Now?

Climate change is causing an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, threatening the existence of some species due to changes in habitat, and causing an increase in the global mean temperature.<sup>2</sup> In Asia, as elsewhere, the poor are the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.<sup>3</sup> Despite a strong consensus among the majority of climate scientists that climate change is real, and that human activity is a major cause, the international community has not responded effectively and climate change denial persists. The earth is approaching a tipping point.

The twenty-first conference of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) will take place in Paris 30 November – 11 December 2015. Catholic ecology groups among others hope that a fair, ambitious and legally binding global agreement can be reached to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degree Celsius (relative to pre-industrial levels).<sup>4</sup> The timing of the encyclical seems likely to have been intended to encourage Catholic action in the lead up to this important event and to keep the spotlight on the need for effective international action. The Global Catholic Climate Movement has certainly made extensive use of LS to motivate people to join its campaigning on COP21.

## Purpose & Audience: Who Does He Wish to Speak to and Why?

Pope Francis issued LS in order to call for “a new and universal solidarity” (LS, 14) in response to the “urgent challenge to protect our common home ... to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development” (LS, 13). Francis wishes to involve everyone in a dialogue about the future of the planet, because it affects everyone, and everyone has a part to play in making change (LS, 14).

Pope Francis says that he wants to address “every person living on this planet” (LS, 3) and the sincerity with which Francis wishes to

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<sup>2</sup>NASA website <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/> Accessed 4 July 2015.

<sup>3</sup>R.V. Cruz, H. Harasawa, M. Lal, S. Wu, Y. Anokhin, B. Punsalmaa, Y. Honda, M. Jafari, C. Li and N. Huu Ninh, “Asia,” in *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson, ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 2007, 469-506. <https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter10.pdf> Accessed 4 July 2015.

<sup>4</sup>Global Catholic Climate Movement website <http://catholicclimatemovement.global/climate-change-facts/> Accessed 4 July 2015.

include everyone in the conversation is demonstrated by his references to Orthodox, Protestant and Sufi thinkers as well as drawing on the sciences. It is also reflected in the two closing prayers of the encyclical, one of which can be shared by all who believe in a Creator, while the other can be shared by all Christians (LS, 246). It is evident in the inclusiveness of activities of the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences, which informed the content of the encyclical,<sup>5</sup> and in the action being taken by the Holy See as a result of it.<sup>6</sup>

The encyclical sees the Judeo-Christian tradition as having an important contribution to make, and Francis's proposals for dialogue and action are unapologetically grounded in this tradition, but his intention is to influence a broad range of actors within and beyond the church. Chapter five's lines of approach and action address the international community and its institutions, individual states, politicians, civil society at all levels, scientists, all individuals and believers specifically. In the months between the promulgation of the encyclical and COP21 Pope Francis himself has sought to influence international institutions and nation states, taking up ecological concerns in his address to the United Nations General Assembly and his address to the USA Congress.<sup>7</sup>

### **Authority: What Call Does this Make on the Consciences of Catholics?**

As an encyclical, LS is a formal teaching document that Catholics are bound to consider seriously, however not every element of the document is equally authoritative. For example, the Pope's assessment of the scientific consensus concerning climate change is a prudential judgment with which one may in good conscience disagree while the principle of the common good, which undergirds

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<sup>5</sup>For example UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon was invited to give the opening address at a summit convened by the two Pontifical Academies highlighting the moral dimensions of climate change and the need to protect the earth and human dignity <http://www.casinapioiv.va/content/accademia/en/events/2015/protectearth.html> Accessed 4 July 2015.

<sup>6</sup>For example, some, including Naomi Klein, who describes herself as a secular Jewish feminist, were surprised that she was invited to speak at a conference organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace ahead of COP21. <http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/07/02/invited-vatican-naomi-klein-makes-moral-case-world-beyond-fossil-fuels> Accessed 4 July 2015.

<sup>7</sup>The full texts of these addresses can be accessed at <http://papalvisit.americamedia.org/2015/09/25/full-text-of-pope-francis-address-to-the-united-nations/> and [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150924\\_usa-us-congress.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150924_usa-us-congress.html)

his concept of integral ecology, belongs to the doctrinal core of Catholic Social Teaching. The precautionary principle, on the other hand, is an example of a middle axiom or criteria for judgment that helps us to place universal principles in dialogue with actual realities for the sake of action, and its level of authority falls between that of a doctrinal principle and a prudential judgment.

While Pope Francis makes his position on a range of environmental issues very clear, he is not telling us what we should think, but rather inviting us into a serious moral conversation about an urgent issue of planetary importance.

### **Methodology: How Does He Go about this Task?**

Francis himself indicates his methodology in the introduction to LS. He situates his encyclical in continuity with the post Vatican II teachings of previous Popes on ecological concerns (LS, 3-6), acknowledges “the reflections of numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians and civic groups, all of which have enriched the Church’s thinking on these questions” (LS, 7), and he highlights especially the teaching of Patriarch Bartholomew (LS, 8-9) and the example of St Francis of Assisi (LS, 10-12).

Pope Francis begins his own contribution to this tradition with a contemplation of the current ecological crisis, describing key elements of the crisis drawing on the “best scientific research available today” (LS, 15). This expression indicates openness to new knowledge as it becomes available. He then reflects on the current reality drawing on the Judeo-Christian tradition “to get to the roots of the present situation, so as to consider not only its symptoms but also its deepest causes” (LS, 15). Pope Francis proposes “an approach to ecology which respects our unique place as human beings in this world and our relationship to our surroundings” (LS, 15) together with proposals for dialogue and action. In the final chapter of LS Pope Francis focuses on how ecological education and spirituality can motivate Christians and sustain their action for change.

Thus Francis demonstrates a praxis approach to theology by starting from experience and placing data about reality in dialogue with faith sources for the sake of action. In the process he utilizes an historically conscious and inductive ethical approach — he does not simply deductively apply principles to reality but rather draws wisdom from the tradition to respond to reality. Attentive readers of *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG) would have anticipated this approach given Francis’ insistence that “realities are greater than ideas” (EG, 233) and

that “there is a constant tension between ideas and realities. Realities simply are, whereas ideas are worked out. There has to be a continuous dialogue between the two, lest ideas become detached from realities” (EG, 231). Furthermore “the principle of reality, of a word already made flesh and constantly striving to take flesh anew, is essential to evangelization ... this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful” (EG, 233). Henry Longbottom, SJ notes that the use of the language of stewardship is rare in LS compared with other Catholic interventions on environmental issues, and he sees a virtue ethics approach at play — Francis appeals to *care* rather than *duty*.<sup>8</sup>

While Francis situates his own encyclical within papal CST, he clearly sees CST as a collegial effort. In LS Pope Francis quotes from the teachings on ecological issues of Bishops Conferences from every continent, especially those of non-western countries. Among twenty-one references to the teachings of local Bishops on ecological issues, only three of these references were to European teachings and two were to North American teachings. By contrast, ten of these references were to teachings from the bishops of Latina America, three from Asia and two from the Pacific. It could be argued that Asia, and to an even greater extent Africa (with only one reference) were underrepresented given their importance in the emergence of the theme of ecology in the local social teachings during the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless this represents an important shift in consciousness of the international teachings. By honouring the teachings of local Bishops in this way Pope Francis acknowledges a mutuality and reciprocity at play between the local and universal social magisterium, between universal principles and experience in context.<sup>9</sup>

### **Key Themes: What Are the Main Concerns?**

A number of key themes recur throughout the encyclical in a variety of ways. They recur so frequently that one commentator has suggested that the encyclical could have been improved by editing to reduce repetition in an already long document!<sup>10</sup> These themes recur so insistently that to gloss over or minimize them is to wilfully

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<sup>8</sup>Henry Longbottom, “Duty Free? Virtue Ethics in *Laudato Si’*,” *Thinking Faith* (2015), <http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/duty-free-virtue-ethics-laudato-si/>.

<sup>9</sup>For discussion of the sources cited by Pope Francis see Kevin Ahern, “Follow the Footnotes,” *America*, 18 June 2015.

<sup>10</sup>Paul Collins, “Francis Puts Environment Above Short Term Politics,” *Eureka Street*, <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=45065#.VZelm7IfHg>, Accessed 4 July 2015.

misrepresent the document. Together they constitute the core message of LS. They may be seen as lenses through which we can read the content of the encyclical in relation to particular issues. We can also place this international teaching in dialogue with our own local contexts by using these lenses to read the concrete realities in which we live.

These key themes, or lenses, are:

the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology, the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value proper to each creature, the human meaning of ecology, the need for forthright and honest debate, the serious responsibility of international and local policy, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle (LS, 16).

These themes are taken up in relation to a number of key issues including pollution, climate change, water quality and availability, the loss of biodiversity, the decline in the quality of human life, global inequality, and the weakness of responses so far.

In the first specific example that he cites of what is happening to our common home, Pope Francis links the operation of the economy, the throwaway culture, and the negative impact on people and the planet of pollution. He calls for a more circular model of production that would limit the use of non-renewable resources and reuse and recycle them (LS, 22).

As expected, Pope Francis, who has a masters degree in chemistry, has thrown his weight behind the climate science. Faith and reason converge in concern for the planet. Climate change is seen as a major global problem with social, economic and political as well as environmental implications, which impacts disproportionately on the poorest people and communities. Pope Francis calls on the whole of humanity to change our lifestyles, patterns of production and consumption, and indeed the “model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system” (LS, 23). He backs calls for the reduction of carbon emissions, movement away from fossil fuels, and the development of renewable energy technologies (LS, 26).

The importance of fresh drinking water, which Pope Francis names as a human right; the quality of water available to the poor; the privatization of water resources; and the water poverty of particular places such as Africa are each highlighted as urgent issues (LS, 27-30).

In addressing biodiversity, Pope Francis stresses that species are of value in themselves as well as being resources now, and possibly for the future, perhaps in ways of which we may not yet be aware (LS, 32-33). He challenges us to concern, not only by the more visible expressions of a loss of biodiversity, but also for less visible things like microorganisms, fungi and worms that are necessary for the good functioning of ecosystems. We need to understand and care for ecosystems more deeply if we are to respect the integrity of creation.

Human beings are also creatures of the earth and Pope Francis turns his attention to human ecology, especially the quality of life and the breakdown of social relations. Like previous Popes, he calls for integral human development that attends to the social and transcendent dimensions of life rather than merely material things (LS, 43-47).

The cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are deeply interrelated for Pope Francis. The poorest people and communities are often the most affected by ecological issues, and their poverty may influence behaviour that contributes to them. Any response to environmental issues must also address the social issues, inequality and poverty. He says that there is insufficient awareness of the problems experienced by the excluded and that this is "due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centres of power" are located in affluent areas and lack direct contact with the poor (LS, 49).

### **Contribution: What Does this Add to the Teachings?**

An important contribution of LS is its consolidation of ecology as a significant theme in CST. It is the first encyclical to be devoted entirely to ecological questions. It adds depth and detail to existing teachings on ecology and shifts the emphasis of these teachings somewhat. The encyclical lends greater authority to teachings on this theme which began developing in the Papal social teachings when Saint John XXIII grasped the moral significance of humankind acquiring the capacity to destroy the planet with nuclear weapons. It affirms and builds on Blessed Paul VI's engagement with issues of pollution, the energy crisis, and the need for sustainable development. It is clearly informed by the local social magisterium, and is the first social encyclical to quote the teachings from Bishops' Conference of every continent, including Asia.

LS adds specificity and detail to existing teaching on ecology. For example, it is the first encyclical to address the issue of climate

change, which Pope Francis recognizes as an urgent moral crisis requiring coordinated global action and a rethinking of current models of development and fossil fuel based energy systems. This is new and important subject matter in the social teachings, responding to the unfolding signs of the times.

A key contribution of LS is its promotion of integral ecology, which has human and social dimensions rather than being restricted to an environmental concern that sees humanity as separate from or opposed to the rest of creation. Furthermore Pope Francis specifies that human ecology is “inseparable from the notion of the common good” (LS, 156). Integral ecology insists on the interconnectedness of everything and stresses the value of creation in itself rather than as an instrumental good (LS, 140). In his address to the United Nations Pope Francis took this line of thinking further, speaking of a “right of the environment,” affirming that creation is a fundamental good and appearing to suggest that creation is itself the subject of rights.<sup>11</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the key innovation in Pope Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in Veritate* was to place integral human development, rather than work, at the centre of CST.<sup>12</sup> Benedict himself attributes this shift to Blessed Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio*.<sup>13</sup> Time — and the reception of LS — will tell if Pope Francis has taken CST into a new stage in its development with integral ecology at the centre.

LS is certainly less vulnerable to the accusation of anthropocentrism than previous teachings, stressing the creaturely nature of human beings, and a relationship of kinship and care for all creatures as brother, sister or mother. A feeling of kinship and an ethic of care are given much more emphasis than an ethic of stewardship or mere responsibility. In doing this, LS also gives greater explicit attention to the spirituality of CST than most previous social encyclicals.<sup>14</sup> While Catholics may tend to consider CST to a system of ethics, or a body of theory, CST also expresses a spirituality and can be seen as a form of praxis. A spirituality may be understood as a way of understanding God, the world, and one’s place in it, expressed in values, attitudes,

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<sup>11</sup><http://papalvisit.americamedia.org/2015/09/25/full-text-of-pope-francis-address-to-the-united-nations/>

<sup>12</sup>Sandie Cornish, “Placing Integral Human Development at the Centre of Catholic Social Teaching,” *The Australasian Catholic Record* 86, 4 (2009) 450.

<sup>13</sup>Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), 8.

<sup>14</sup>John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (1981) was a notable exception. It set out a spirituality of work.

motivations or dispositions, commitments and practices.<sup>15</sup> This emphasis, together with Pope Francis' engaging and charismatic personal presence, enhance the potential of this encyclical to touch hearts as well as reaching minds. Both a conversion of heart and principled thinking will be needed for effective response to the cry of the earth and the poor.

### **Making Sense of it in Asia**

All of the issues highlighted by Pope Francis in LS touch the lives of the peoples of Asia. To give just one example, the effects of climate change have been felt very directly in Asian countries in recent years. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events has challenged the capacity of some countries to care adequately for those affected, especially the poorest. Cardinal Bo, Myanmar's first cardinal, and Chair of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences' Office for Human Development, has pointed to events such as Cyclone Nargis, which killed more than 150,000 people in 2008 and left 800,000 homeless. Speaking before a climate change seminar organized by the FABC in August 2015, he said:

Our poor did not even know the words, global warming, but they have been the victims of climate change for the last 10 years... We stand at the crossroads of history. What were sporadic attacks on our ecosystem has now turned into chronic illness for our planet. So our gathering here needs to impress upon all of us the urgency of purpose.<sup>16</sup>

Every pastoral agent will be able to point to manifestations of the ecological crisis in one's own local context. For those whose ecological awareness has not been strong, using the key issues identified by Francis in LS as a lens for reflection may be a fruitful way of connecting this international teaching and local experience. Concrete local examples such as food security or the need for clean water can become a starting point or focus for deepening understanding of the ecological crisis and the identification of achievable local actions. Diocesan and national justice and peace offices and civil society groups may already be active on such focus issues.

The local churches of Asia have already contributed the experience of their peoples and their own theological reflections on this

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<sup>15</sup>Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton, and Ruth Webber, *The Spirituality of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia*, Mulgrave: John Garratt Publishing, 2007, 39-41.

<sup>16</sup><http://www.ucanews.com/news/asian-catholic-leaders-call-for-practical-solutions-to-climate-crisis/74098> Accessed 25 September 2015.

experience to the development of the international CST on ecology. In fact, some Bishops' Conferences in the region have been teaching on these issues for many years, for example, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' pastoral letter *What is Happening to our Beautiful Land* was written as long ago as 1988 and was quoted by Saint John Paul II in his World Day of Peace Message for 1990, and also by Pope Francis in LS. The Japanese Bishops' Conference has been vocal for a number of years on the need for renewable energy, and the danger to people and the whole of creation of nuclear plants.<sup>17</sup> They too are quoted in LS (LS, footnote 56). More recently the FABC has established a Climate Change Desk within OHD to encourage thinking and action on this crucial issue.

Pastoral agents could be encouraged to become familiar with the social teachings of Bishops and Bishops' Conferences in their own region.<sup>18</sup> LS presents an opportunity to draw attention to the existing teaching and action of the local churches on ecological issues, and to engage faith communities in Asia in taking further steps. It is an encouragement to begin to speak out, or to be even more vocal and active than previously. A recent paper from the FABC Office of Theological Concerns recommends that the Bishops take the lead in voicing these concerns and calling for action.<sup>19</sup> Pastoral agents can encourage, resource and support such action.

In LS Pope Francis notes that the majority of people on the planet profess to be believers, and that wisdom from religious sources has a role to play in the dialogue for an integral ecology (LS, 199-201). Furthermore he acknowledges that ethical principles do not "present themselves purely in the abstract, detached from any context" (LS, 199). The Office of Theological Concerns points out that Asian resources such as the religious traditions of the region, and Indigenous spiritualities, hold wisdom that can encourage and support action in Asian contexts.<sup>20</sup> Another way in which pastoral agents can respond to the encyclical is to engage in interfaith

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<sup>17</sup>See for example, this call to move to renewable energy <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/giappone-japan-japon-34567/>, Accessed 25 September 2015 and this 2011 call to abolish nuclear plants <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/eng/edoc/111108.htm>, Accessed 25 September 2015.

<sup>18</sup> See the website [www.social-spirituality.net](http://www.social-spirituality.net) which seeks to make the local social teachings of the Asia Pacific region better known. Information about teachings not already listed is welcomed at [sandie@social-spirituality.net](mailto:sandie@social-spirituality.net)

<sup>19</sup>FABC Office of Theological Concerns, "Towards Responsible Stewardship of Creation: An Asian Christian Approach," *FABC Papers* 146 (2015) 64–65.

<sup>20</sup>FABC Office of Theological Concerns, "Towards Responsible Stewardship..."

dialogue around integral ecology. This may be as simple as the dialogue of life, the sharing of faith experiences, and reflection on one another's ecological practices. The local churches of Asia have the opportunity to assist the church internationally to learn from the other major world religions.

LS has been criticized by some as being weak on action commitments, and indeed the final chapter focuses on ecological education and spirituality. In order to be able to act we need information and understanding, but we also need motivation. Pope Francis says that he is interested in how an ecological spirituality "can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world" because "a commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity" (LS, 216). He renews Saint John Paul II's call to ecological conversion (LS, 217). Similarly, the Office of Theological Concerns recommends that attention be given to the development of a theology of responsible stewardship, to eco-literacy, to more environmentally responsible practices in Catholic parishes, schools and institutions, and to advocacy together with others. Like the lines of approach and directions for action of LS, these recommendations touch "our way of thinking, feeling and living" (LS, 216). Indeed the ecological crisis calls us to renewed spirituality, to a way of understanding God, the world, and our place in it, which is expressed in values, attitudes and practices. Pastoral agents will be able to draw on LS to integrate action with prayer and faith reflection.

LS is an important and timely teaching document. It is an encouragement to and a resource for action by pastoral agents and local churches. Such actions will both require and contribute to reflection on experience in local contexts, in dialogue with Asian resources and the faith sources of the Catholic tradition, for the sake of more effective action to care for the poor and the earth as the mission of building up the Reign of God requires. Engagement with LS by pastoral agents, as well as theologians, in Asia has potential to enhance and guide such action.