

LAUDATO SI'

ON THE CARE OF
OUR COMMON HOME



POPE FRANCIS



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

**'Hunger is criminal.
Food is an inalienable right.'**

Laudato Si & Agriculture

Ethical Questions

- How can hunger be overcome?
- How can safe, affordable, nutritious and sustainable food be ensured?
- How can farm workers and small farmers around the world live and work with dignity?
- How can rural communities survive and thrive?
- How can land and other elements of God's creation be protected and used well in service to the common good?
- How do we respond to climate change?

How do we respond?

- Pope Francis says: 'we ourselves are dust of the earth' (Gen 2:7)
- So there is reciprocity ; humanity is to nourish and sustain the earth that in turn nourishes and sustains us.
- Agriculture is the practice of this reciprocity.

“human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely inter- twined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself”
(LS §66)

Integral Ecology

- When one of these relationships is broken, the others are broken also. This is what Francis calls 'Integral Ecology.' Therefore we must hear "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS 49).
- This means integrating the human and the natural, it means 'care,' there is more to agriculture than profits and losses. There must be stewardship and care.

Stewardship and care

- Agriculture commands influence over resources- the land, water, the soil; wise stewardship and faithful care is to keep the balance between human beings and resources
- “Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, or ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention” (LS §190, 56).

So the Holy Father says “by itself the market cannot guarantee integral human development and social inclusion” (LS 109).

Large agriculture interests & advanced technologies

- Pope Francis talks specifically about these new biological technologies (cf. LS 130-136). Whenever used they must be used prudently and must be used to serve others.
- Pope Francis calls for a move to 'more diversified and innovative forms of production which impact less on the environment' (LS 191).

Family Farming, small scale food producers

- “For example, there is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world’s peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing. Economies of scale, especially in the agricultural sector, end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or to abandon their traditional crops” (LS §129).

Practical, feasible suggestions

- “There are no uniform recipes, because each country or region has its own problems and limitations.”
- “Agriculture in poorer regions can be improved through investment in rural infrastructures, a better organization of local or national markets, systems of irrigation, and the development of techniques of sustainable agriculture.”
- “Truly much can be done” (LS § 180).

Conclusion

- Pope Francis has spoken of global issues, with urgency and scale. He calls for a global consensus that could lead “to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture” (LS §164).
- Pope Francis speaks of our human bond with the earth as foundational. Humanity is the factor that opens the earth up to new possibilities, in agriculture as in all human endeavors. The final question and the outcome depend on human choices: Will there be innovations and new harmonies, or will there be new imbalances and cumulative decline?
- “The external deserts of the world are growing because the internal deserts have become so vast,” says Pope Francis quoting Pope Emeritus Benedict. “For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion...Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an option or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience” (LS 217).