



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, October 15, 2023

Laudate Deum - Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis

“*Laudate Deum*” (Praise God), the new exhortation of Pope Francis about the climate crisis was published on October 4 and is a continuation of the message of *Laudato Si'* (Praised Be) in 2015.

Pope Francis explains his choice of the title *Laudate Deum* in two ways: “Praise God” for all his creatures. This was the message that Saint Francis of Assisi proclaimed by his life, his poetry and all his actions. (LD #1) “Praise God” is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God’s place, they become their own worst enemies. (LD #73)

Pope Francis writes, “Eight years have passed since I published the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, when I wanted to share with all of you, my brothers and sisters of our suffering planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home. **Yet, with the passage of time, I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point.**” (LD #2)

In his just over 20 pages, the Pope reviews the scientific data and the undeniable evidence of the climate crisis while appealing to “all people of good will” to act urgently because, **“there are no lasting changes without cultural changes**, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and **there are no cultural changes without personal changes.**” (LD #70)

The clean energy industry is ever expanding, but as the Pope writes, “Yet the necessary transition towards clean energy sources such as wind and solar energy, and the abandonment of fossil fuels, is not progressing at the necessary speed.... We must move beyond the mentality of appearing to be concerned but not having the courage needed to produce substantial changes.” (LD #55-56)

Because **“emissions per individual in the United States are about two times greater than those of individuals living in China, and about seven times greater than the average of the poorest countries,”** he writes, “we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact.” (LD #72).

The Pope makes a **strong appeal to the upcoming UN climate summit COP28**, to be held in Dubai in early December: “This Conference [COP28] can represent a change of direction, showing that everything done since 1992 was in fact serious and worth the effort, or else it will be a great disappointment.” (LD #54)

In a nutshell, the Pope reminds us that we are at a critical junction in human history (planetary history, actually). Every year of inaction gets us closer to the precipice. The stakes couldn’t be higher. **We have a moral duty and responsibility to act.**

“During this coming election cycle, Americans (including Catholics) need to hear far more about the moral duty to protect the environment, which includes standing up to industry efforts to overturn or gut environmental regulations.” (*America*, 10/4/23)