



HUMANITARIAN
FORUM & FAIR
Franciscan &
Spiritual Roots of
Laudato Si'

Friar Derrick Yap ofm

Write-up

Laudato Si' are the first words of the beautiful and mystical canticle that St Francis of Assisi composed, and Pope Francis was inspired to entitle his encyclical on Care for Creation with these same words. What was in the mind and heart of St Francis and Pope Francis as they penned their compositions?

Shall we explore the Franciscan and spiritual roots and theological foundations of *Laudato Si'* the encyclical, so that our actions to care for creation (and our brothers and sisters) become more centred on God's vision for our created reality.



Laudato Si'
The Encyclical

*on care for our
common home*





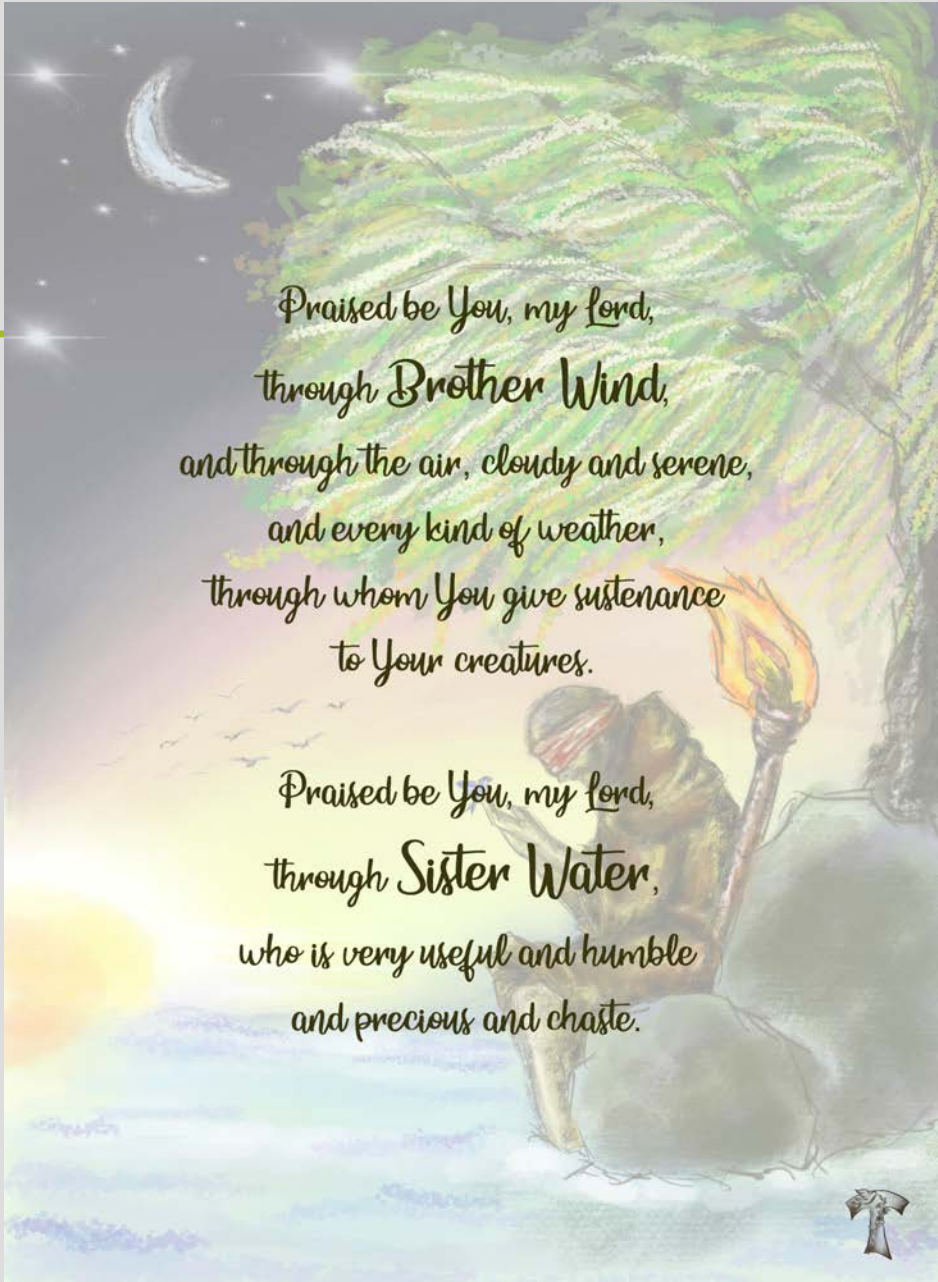
Most High, all-powerful, good Lord,
Yours are the praises, the glory, and the honour,
and all blessing.

To You alone, Most High, do they belong,
and no human is worthy to mention Your name.

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir **Brother Sun**,

Who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.

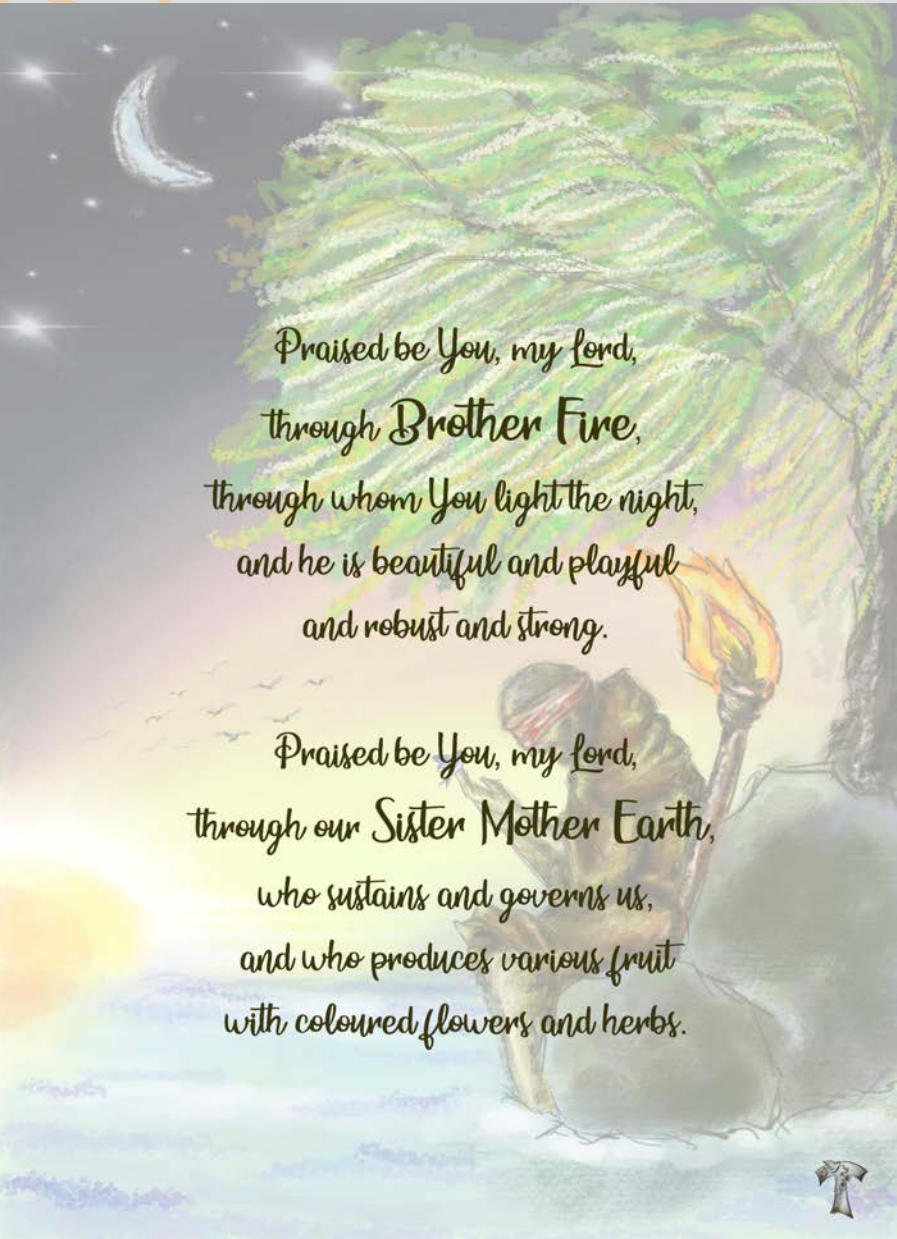
Praised be You, my Lord,
through **Sister Moon** and the stars,
in heaven You formed them
clear and precious and beautiful.



Praised be You, my Lord,
through **Brother Wind**,
and through the air, cloudy and serene,
and every kind of weather,
through whom You give sustenance
to Your creatures.

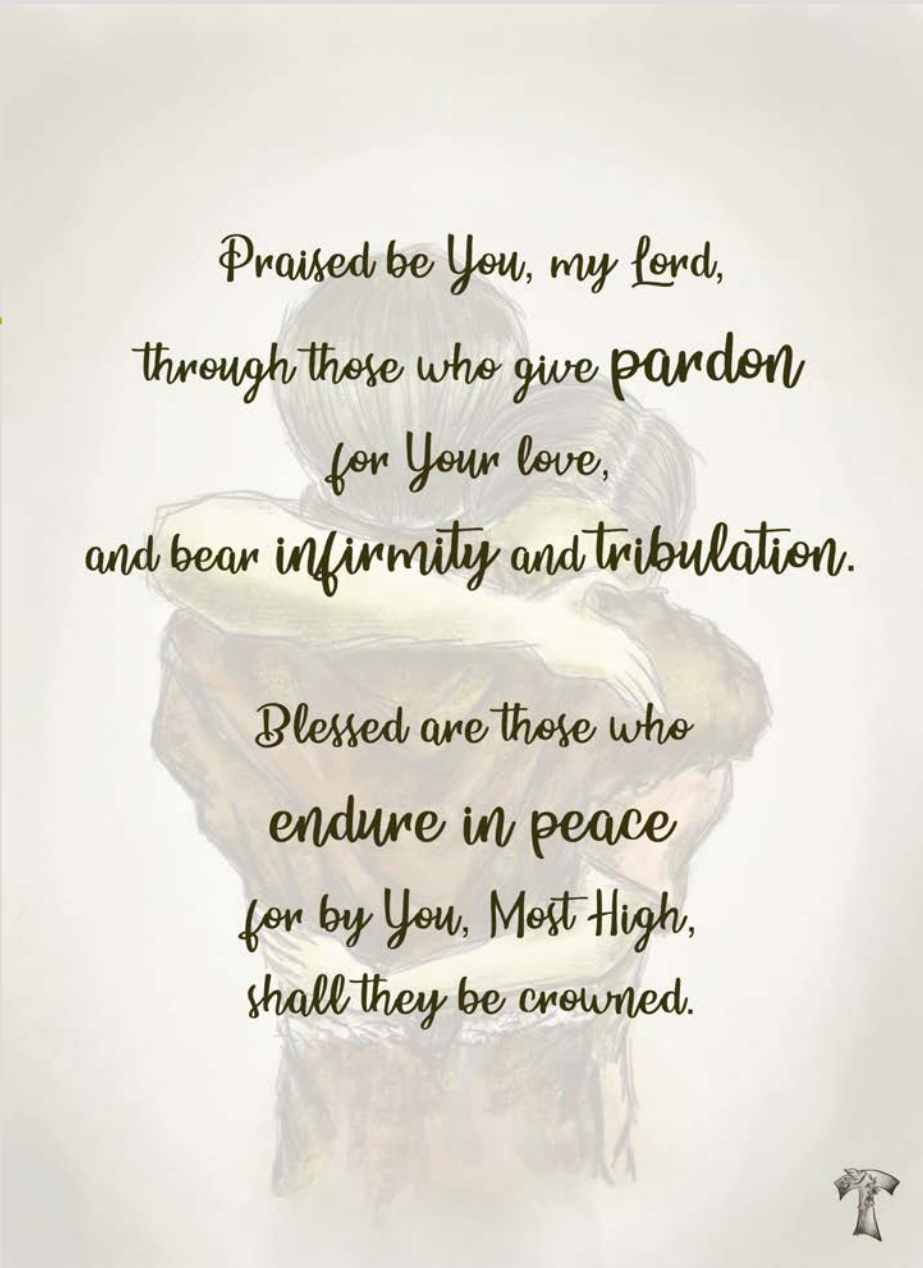
Praised be You, my Lord,
through **Sister Water**,
who is very useful and humble
and precious and chaste.





Praised be You, my Lord,
through Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night,
and he is beautiful and playful
and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces various fruit
with coloured flowers and herbs.



Praised be You, my Lord,
through those who give pardon
for Your love,
and bear infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are those who
endure in peace
for by You, Most High,
shall they be crowned.



*Praised be You, my Lord,
through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whom no one living can escape.*

Woe to those who die in mortal sin.

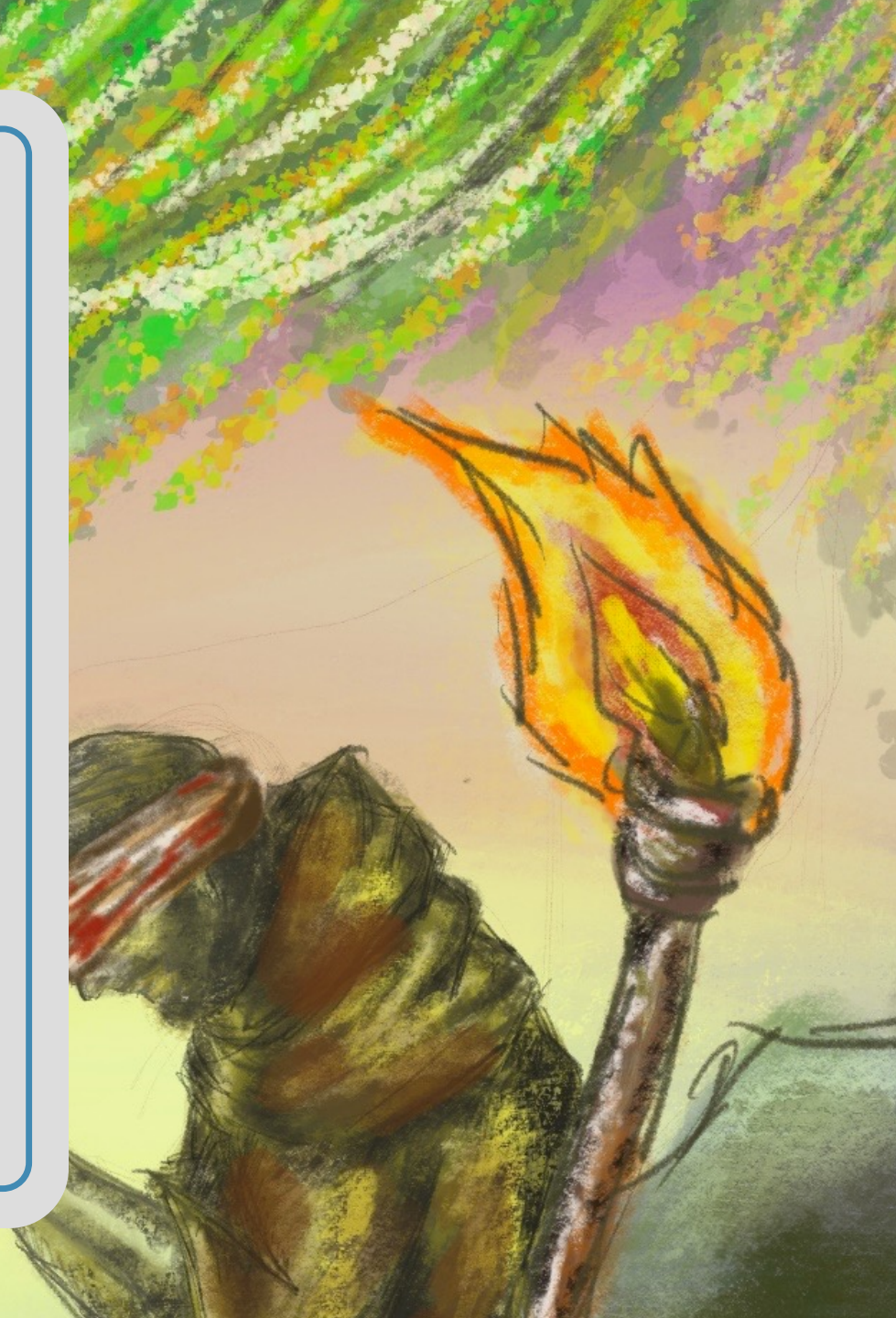
*Blessed are those
whom death will find in Your most holy will,
for the second death shall do them no harm.*

*Praise and bless my Lord
and give Him thanks
and serve Him with great humility.*



~ *Laudato Si'* ~ the canticle

- The Cantic of Brother Sun or *The Cantic of Creatures* (1224-1226 at San Damiano)
- *Laudato Si'* = Be Praised
- Who was Francis when he wrote the Cantic?
 - After receiving Stigmata on Mt Alvernia
 - Blind & very ill → external suffering
 - Rejection by brothers → internal suffering
 - “secure as if in my Kingdom” → divine consolation
 - At the first rays of dawn, he wrote...



2 Francisses

- First Pope to be named 'Francis'
- After St Francis of Assisi
- "Don't forget the Poor"
(the late Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes OFM)





Purpose of session

- Spiritual focus of *Laudato Si'*
- Contemplative eye on Creation
- Change of heart
→ Change of mind
(ecological conversion)
- Plans & Activities
(the work of our hands)
flow from this spirituality

Chapter headings

1. WHAT IS
HAPPENING TO
OUR COMMON
HOME

2. THE GOSPEL OF
CREATION

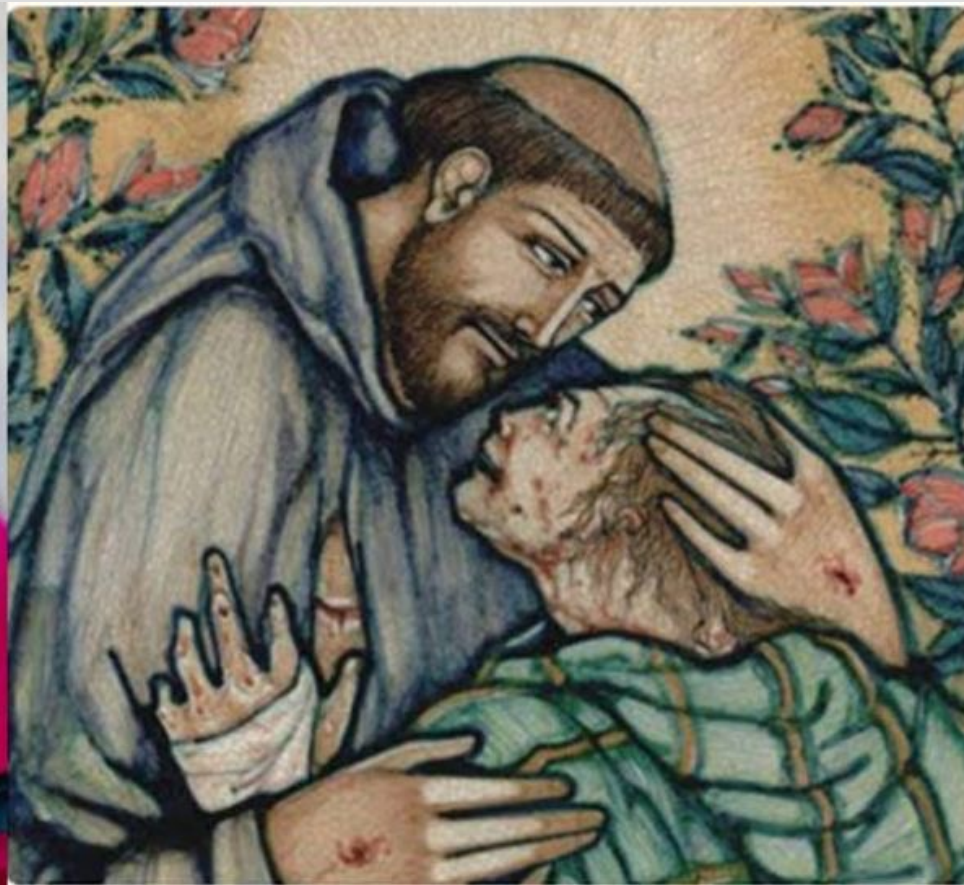
***3. THE HUMAN
ROOTS OF THE
ECOLOGICAL
CRISIS***

4. INTEGRAL
ECOLOGY

5. LINES OF
APPROACH AND
ACTION

6. ECOLOGICAL
EDUCATION AND
SPIRITUALITY

Bitterness to sweetness





3 models

1. Dominion
2. Stewardship
3. Kinship
 - St Francis of Assisi – encounter with lepers. Taught him **fraternity**.
 - Common Fatherhood of God → Universal Brotherhood of Creatures
 - Calling creatures “brothers and sisters”
 - “*Brother Francis*”

The Call (LS4-5)

- For a **radical** change in conduct of humanity
 - *radix* = root
- With **authentic** social and moral progress
- Global ecological conversion
- Authentic human ecology

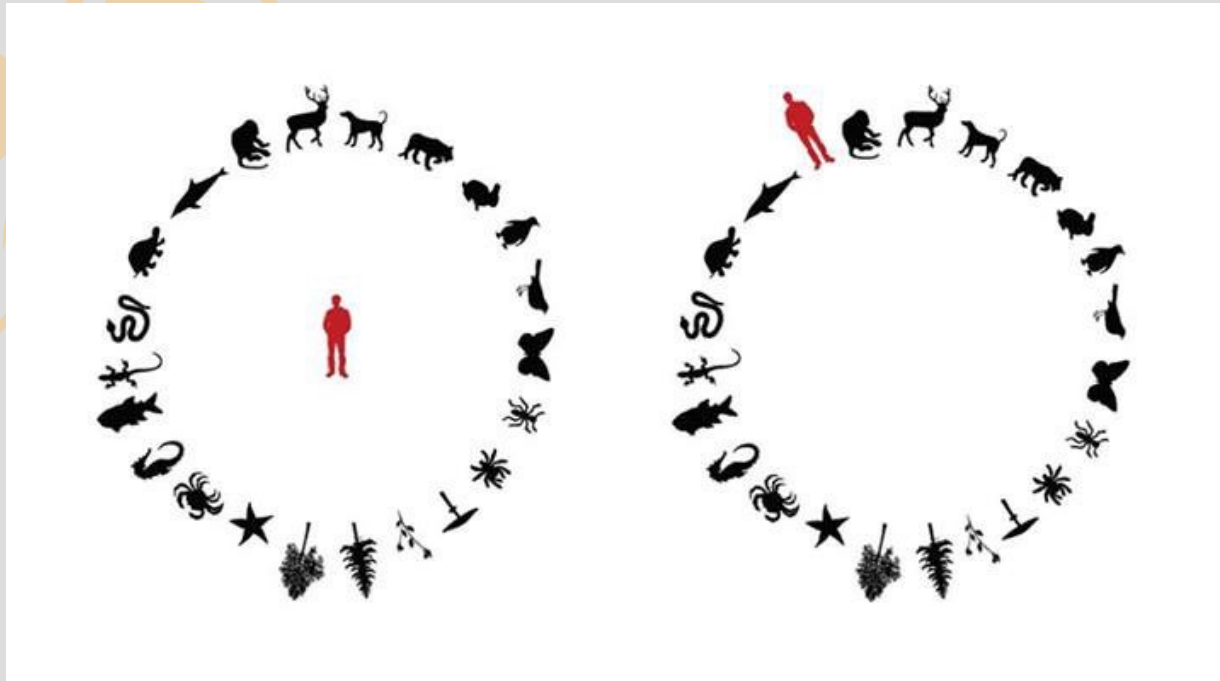


Core Problem

- **Natural** and **social** environments damaged due to same evil:
 - Notion that there are no indisputable truth to guide our lives = relativism
 - Human freedom is limitless = individualism
 - But man does not create himself... (LS6)
- Are we masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters with unlimited immediate needs? (LS11)



Core Problem



- **Throwaway** culture (LS22)
- **Alliance** between economy & technology (LS54)
- Tyrannical & distorted **anthropocentrism** (LS68, 69)
- Ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us (LS83)



Wisdom of scriptures

- Genesis = beginning (LS65)
- First Creation account
 - God's plan includes creating humanity
- "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was *very good*" (Gen 1:31)
- Humans
 - **image & likeness** of God
 - **immense & infinite dignity** of each person
- Not something but *someone*
- Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary (Ben16)

Wisdom of scriptures

Priority of **being** over
that of being useful
(LS69)

“each creature
possesses its own
**particular goodness
and perfection**”
(LS69, CCC339)

Human life →
**3 fundamental
& intertwined
relationships**: God,
neighbour, earth
(LS 66)

Interconnectedness
(LS70)





Martín Carbajo Núñez, OFM

SISTER

MOTHER

EARTH

Franciscan Roots of the *Laudato Si'*

Human issues

Anthropocentrism

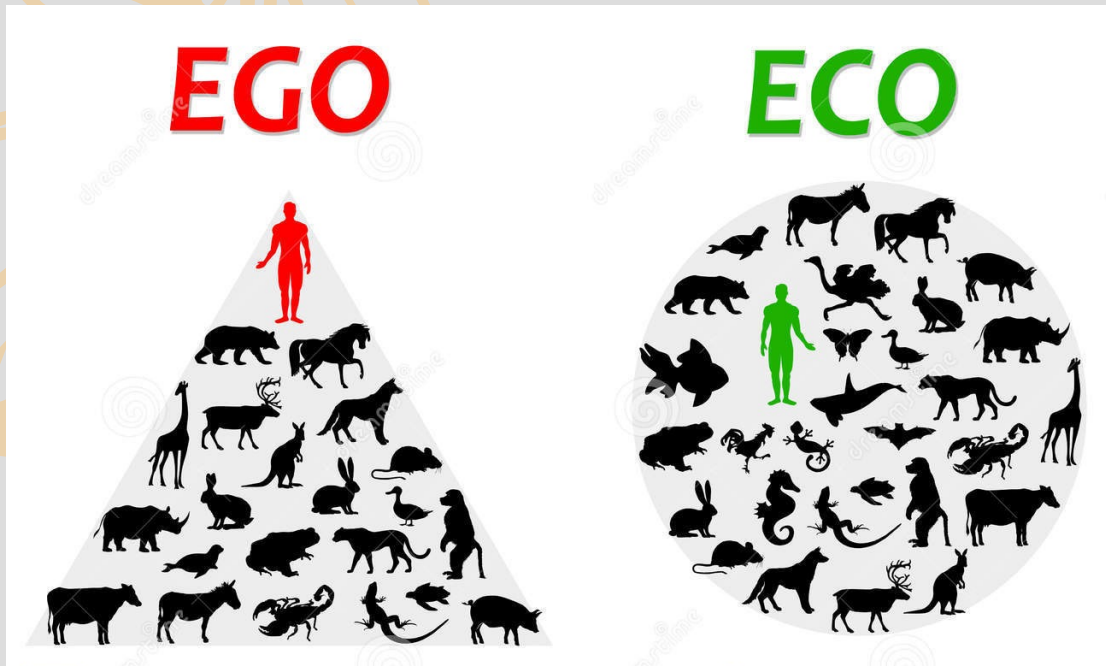
Self-sufficient freedom

Gratuitousness & contemplation ignored

Instrumental relationships

Self-made man
Total Good vs. Common Good

anthropocentrism



- Modernity imposes an **absolute and self-sufficient anthropocentrism**. It defends man's **complete and absolute dominion** over nature and over his own body. The biblical message on creation is **deformed and secularised**, in order to justify this excluding and exclusive anthropocentrism.
- The entire non-human world would have an **instrumental value**, depending completely on our needs. (p. 12)



St Francis model of integral ecology

- Patron Saint of “those who promote” Ecology, 1979, JP II
- Francis “shows us just how **inseparable the bond** is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (LS101)
- Since the Lord granted him “to begin to **do penance**” (Test 1), Francis sees **everything from God** and embraces all creatures as brothers and sisters.
- Francis assumes a **mystique, an ecological spirituality**, a holistic way of being in vital communion with all creatures. (p.59)
- Living a God-centred life, Francis discovers himself as **universal brother**. Having experienced God’s love and gratuitousness, he abandons any pretense of egotistic domination, feels joyfully in harmony with creation and together with it, praises the “all-powerful, good Lord.” (CtC 1, p. 60)



Self-sufficient freedom

- Today's world favours a **freedom without limit, direction or measure**, paving the way to **irresponsible use** of natural resources.
- “My freedom ends where yours begin”: everyone struggles to get the most possible space at the **expense of others** (p. 30)
- Leads to **utilitarian** and **possessive** anthropocentrism
- Development in terms of **consumerism**
- **Technocratic ideology** reduces progress only to technology and economics (p. 32)
- Rather than **contemplating**, recognising and valuing, prefers to analyse, objectify and dissect. (p. 33)

Self-sufficient freedom

This throwaway culture affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish. The same kind of thinking leads to the sexual exploitation of children and abandonment of the elderly. (p. 35)

Environmental problems... are symptoms of a deep ethical and anthropological crisis.

500 richest people in the world have more income than 4.16 billion of the poorest people.

St Ambrose: You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. The right to private property is not absolute and unconditional. (p. 37)



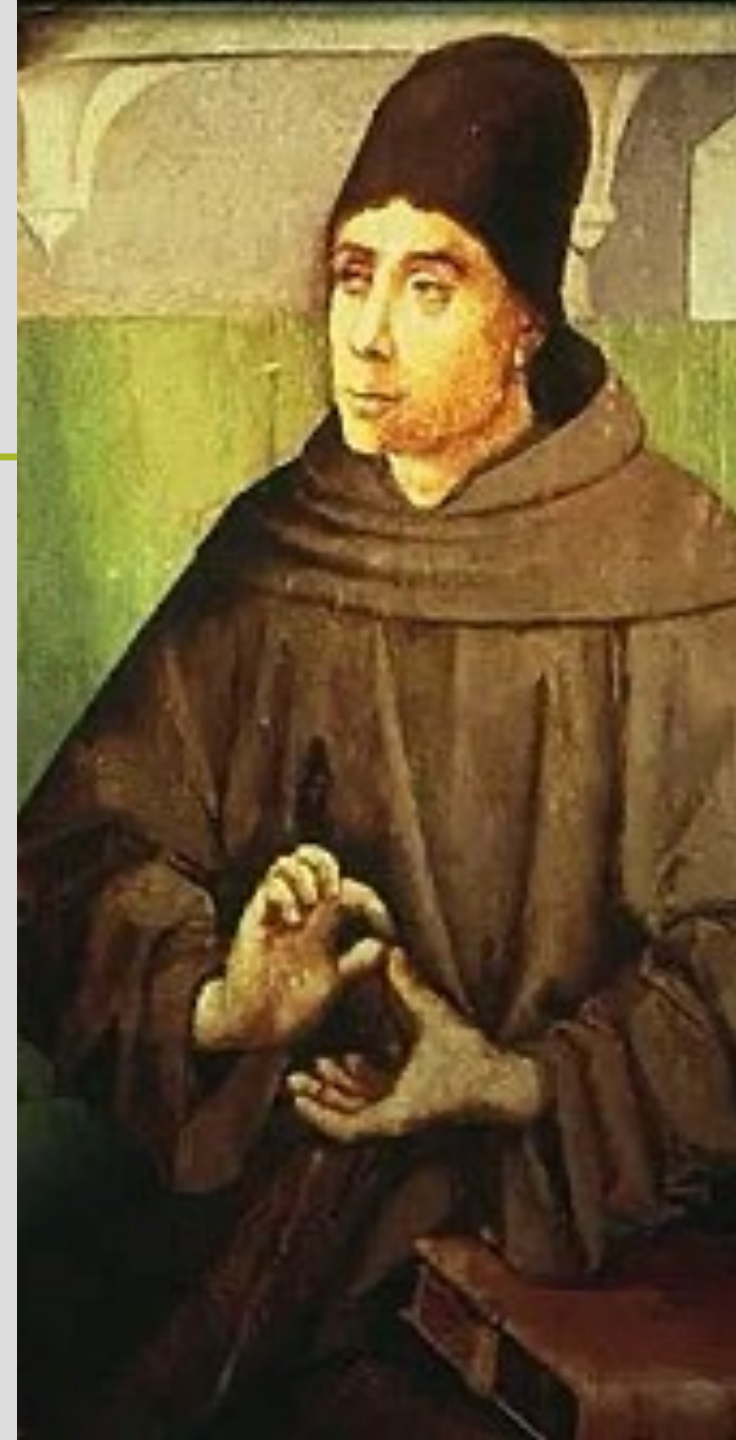
Francis' Freedom

- A **loving and responsible** freedom
- Francis' faith in the heavenly Father gives him the perfect joy, frees him from any fear and moves him to **embrace the most radical poverty**.
- He becomes the universal brother who freely and joyfully relates to all creatures and to all people. Does not try to prevail or dominate, but to **live fraternally** and to **build peace**.
- Recognising that all creatures are the fruit of a loving freedom. **Contemplates the Creator's presence** in all of them, with no exception. (p.69)
- All creation is a **sacrament** that reflects the presence, goodness and beauty of the divine Creator.



Franciscan freedom

- Freedom as **interpretative key** to everything that exists.
- **God is free**, without any kind of constriction. Nothing external to him can condition his decisions. His actions express his loving freedom and are oriented to it. God acts in orderly way, in conformity with his own goodness.
- **Scotus – Universal Primacy of Christ**
 - “from him and through him and for him are all things” (Rom 11:36)
 - Supreme Work of **Divine Freedom**
 - Human being made in **image of Christ** and shares his very being.
 - “Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fulness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator” [LS83]
- Whoever abuses creation denies his own nature, opposes mystery of Incarnation.
- Importance of **dialogical and relational freedom**





Spirituality that restores (LS75)

- Worship earthly powers & usurp God's place?
[We are not God (LS67)]
- Best way to **restore humans** to rightful place
 - An end to claims to absolute dominance over the earth
 - Believe in the **figure of a Father** who creates and who alone owns the world
(Nature vs. Creation)



Musing

1. What is my relationship with Creation?
Can I immerse myself in the kinship model?
2. Do I see all things as interconnected?
3. What is my vision of freedom?
4. Can I link freedom with love?
5. What are my own struggles in these areas of anthropocentrism and freedom?