Ecology Encyclical: Lead Messages – *With Paragraph Cites to Message (Not Exhaustive)*

Not for publication or redistribution

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

1. *These lead messages are suggestions to help talk about care for creation in the U.S. context. We’ve added cites to encyclical sections below that reference particular message points (not exhaustive). We also added new points that stood out in our first reading.*
2. *Pope Francis provides an invitation for global solidarity of the one human family as a central theme of the encyclical (§§14, 240).*
3. *Pope Francis gives a general outline of the encyclical (§15).*
4. *He discusses his general themes up front, noting that the document revisits them throughout (§16).*
5. *Pope Francis connects his teaching with the inspiration of Saint Francis (§10 ff).*
6. *A more extensive document with actual quotations from the encyclical will be forthcoming from USCCB staff.*

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* A MORAL ISSUE : Pope Francis is speaking as a **pastor** offering **moral** **guidance** rooted in **central** Catholic teachings about **care for others** and **care** **for God’s creation**. *(§§2,6,9,62-64)*  
  + CARE FOR OTHERS: T**he poor** suffer most when we don’t **responsibly care for God’s creation**. **It’s up to us to help them**. *(§§48-52, cite to USCCB document, Global Climate Change)*  
    - Pope Francis knows that **more fully caring for God’s creation** will help **real people right now**, especially the **poor and vulnerable.** *(§§17,48-52)*
    - This is about helping our **kids and grandkids**. Responsibly caring for the natural world **will help families just like yours and mine**. Every day, environmental impacts **affect the lives of countless people right here at home and around the world**. *(§17)*
  + CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION: **God gave us this world, and He asks us to take care of it.** The natural world is a **gift**. Let’s stop and think about what kind of world we want to **leave** **our** **kids and grandkids**. *(§§2,64,159)*
* CATHOLIC DISTINCTIVENESS**: Catholics bring a distinctive and important voice to this conversation.***(§§62-64, faith and reason)*
  + Catholics are called to **participate in public life** and **work for the common good**. *(§§14 - v. indifferentism, 64)*
  + We're a **global church** with **experience** with what's going on **in communities around the world**.
  + We’re committed to responding to the **concerns of those on the margins**: the **poor**, the **young**, and **others at the peripheries.** *(§25)*
  + *Realities of global inequality, need for solidarity (§48)*
  + INTEGRAL ECOLOGY: The Catholic understanding of integral ecology **links care for others and care for God’s creation.** *(§§5,6,10,137ff.; All of Chapt. 4 is entitled, “An Integral Ecology”).*
    - **Human ecology** begins with protecting human life from its beginning to its natural end. **Natural ecology** recognizes that our faith calls us to protect and care for God’s creation. We recognize the **strong link between respecting human dignity**and **care for the natural world**.*(§120 – abortion)*
    - **We’re called to cooperate with God’s design** in our relationships with the natural world and with one another. When we get these **intertwined** relationships right, **we grow closer to God.**
    - We understand that our **individual decisions have social consequences.**
    - Authentic development begins with recognizing the **dignity of the human person**. We know that **population isn’t the problem: it’s the throwaway culture that’s the problem.** *(§§ 50,120)*
  + These are **core Catholic moral teachings,** and we’re called **to respect them.** **Care for God’s creation** is **woven throughout the Bible**, and has been emphasized by **recent popes and the U.S. bishops.** *(Introduction,§§3-6 – St. John XXIII, St. JPII, Pope Benedict XVI; 8-9 Patriarch Bartholomew I; 10-12 St. Francis, §67 – dominion v. domination).*
  + *Creation as gift, revealing of God’s love §67.*
    - The encyclical is an exercise of Pope Francis’ teaching authority. It **affirms core Catholic moral teachings** on care for others and for God’s creation.
      * **It offers prudential judgments, “intelligence applied to our actions (US bishops, 2001),** on particular issues in light of those core moral teachings.
        + Catholics are called to **consider such prudential judgments prayerfully, humbly,** and with **open hearts and minds**.
        + **Invoking** the role of prudential judgment **doesn’t allow us to dismiss the encyclical out of hand.**
  + Our **unique perspective**means **we need to be a part** of this conversation.
* TIME TO ACT: Pope Francis is offering hope, **encouraging** us all to care for others and for the gift of God’s creation. It’s time to work together to **better protect the created world**. Let’s build a **culture of stewardship.** *(§13)*
  + Faith and reason go hand in hand. *(§§62-64).* **The Church respects the role of science**. Scientific knowledge should be used to promote human flourishing and to protect the poor.
    - **The** **scientific consensus** on the link between **human activity and recent climate change** is **strong** – as strong as the scientific consensus on the link between **cigarettes and cancer**. It would be imprudent not to act on this knowledge. *(§§23-24)*
    - **Even if you disagree, the moral case for acting to protect the created world remains.** Let’s not let disagreement over this distract from **the moral case** that Pope Francis is making regarding **care** **for God’s creation**.
  + **The US military and the business community agree that climate change is happening,** and they’re preparing for it.
  + What can we do? This **is a teaching document, not a set of policy proposals.** First, let’s prayerfully respond to Pope Francis’ call for a **change of hearts**. Let’s try our best to **live rightly within the world we’ve been given, and with each other.**
    - **Our “throwaway culture”** drives many of our environmental problems**.**  We can resist this by taking **small steps toward simpler, fuller lives.** This will help us **grow closer to God** and **each other**. *(§§10,22, 202-203)*
    - **Small everyday actions matter.** We can all take action **at home and in our communities**.
  + ***Economic Challenges and Consumerism*** *(§§56,93 – proper understanding of the right to private property; §189 – politics and economics at service of human life, not other way around, §190)*
  + **Our businesses and communities can work together** to find sustainable energy solutions.This will **foster innovation** and **create tens of thousands of jobs**.
  + **Sustainable development**means that **economic prosperity**, **protection of the created world**, and **inclusion of the poor and vulnerable**should be pursued together. “Protecting the environment **need not compromise legitimate economic progress.”** (Cardinal Wuerl)*(§§13,191-192)*
  + *Are significant risks to humanity from a “technological paradigm”* *(§§107-109)*
  + Responsibly caring for the natural world is a **global challenge and it needs a global response. The UN isn’t perfect, but it’s all we’ve got.** **These conversations are already happening**, and they’ll be improved if we’re part of them. *(§164)*
  + This is a chance to **witness to our faith.**
  + *The Church engages many dialogue partners in various disciplines and many faith communities to enrich our understanding and deepen solidarity* *(§7).*