

Laudato Si: Pope Francis' Encyclical on the Environment and Climate Change

St. Catherine of Siena
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The Vatican issued, through the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Ten Commandments for the environment.

The "commandments" are an attempt to explain in ten points the most important aspects of the chapter on the environment in the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2005).
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These commandments give a broad blueprint for those who want to integrate the teachings of the faith with current environmental and scientific concerns.

Here are the commandments—in many ways a summary of Laudato Si:

1. **USE, DON'T ABUSE:** The bible lays out the fundamental moral principles of how to confront the ecological question. The human being, created in God's image, is placed above all other early creatures, which must be used and cared for in a responsible way in cooperation with the divine plan for redemption. Christ's incarnation and his teachings testify to the value of nature: Nothing that exists in this world is outside the divine plan of Creation and Redemption.
2. **LITTLE LESS THAN A GOD:** The social teaching of the Church recalls two fundamental points. Nature must not be reduced to a utilitarian object of manipulation. Nor should we absolutize nature or place above human dignity.
3. **ONE FOR ALL, ALL FOR ONE:** Ecological responsibility involves the entire planet in a common duty to respect the environment as a collective good, for present and future generations.
4. **IT IS NOT A BRAVE NEW WORLD:** It is necessary to confirm both the primacy of ethics and the rights of the person over technology, thus preserving human dignity. The central point of reference for all scientific and technical applications must be respect for the human person, who in turn should treat the other created beings with respect.
5. **GAIA ISN'T GOD:** Nature is not a sacred or divine reality, removed from human intervention. It is, rather, a gift offered by our Creator to the human community, given to human intelligence and moral responsibility. Thus, human intervention that modifies some characteristics of living things is not wrong, so long as this is done within the context of a respect for its order and beauty, and taking into consideration the utility of every creature (respect for particular ecosystem).
6. **WHAT PRICE PROGRESS?:** Ecological questions highlight the need to achieve a greater harmony between measures designed to promote economic development and those directed to preserving the ecology, and between national and international policies. Economic development, moreover, needs to take into consideration the

integrity and rhythm of nature, because natural resources are limited. All economic activity that uses natural resources should also include the costs of safeguarding the environment into the calculations of the overall costs of its activity.

7. FLOWING LIKE A RIVER: Concern for the environment means that we should actively work for the integral development of the poorest regions. The goods of this world have been created by God to be wisely used by all. These goods should be shared, in a just and charitable manner.
8. WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT: Collaboration, by means of world-wide agreements, backed up by international law, is necessary to protect the environment. Responsibility toward the environment needs to be implemented in an adequate way at the juridical level. These laws and agreements should be guided by the demands of the common good.
9. DISCIPLINE IS NOT A FOUR-LETTER WORD: Lifestyles should be oriented according to the principles of sobriety, temperance, and self-discipline, both at the personal and social levels. People need to escape from the consumer mentality and promote methods of production that respect the created order, as well as satisfying the basic needs of all. This change of lifestyle would be helped by a greater awareness of the interdependence that ties together all the inhabitants of the Earth. That means moving away from the mindset of consumerism.
10. IT'S ALL GIFT: A spiritual response must be given to environmental questions, inspired by the conviction that creation is a gift that God has placed in the hands of humankind, to be used responsibly and with loving care. People's fundamental orientation toward the created world should be one of gratitude and thankfulness. The world, in fact, leads people back to the mystery of God who has created it and continues to sustain it. If God is forgotten, nature is emptied of its deepest meaning and left impoverished.