

Chapter 4 Integral Ecology

In this chapter the Pope points a way forward toward a new paradigm, that of an integral ecology. One where “nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live.”

The integral approach encompasses the relationships between environmental issues and social and human issues. The Pope states that “strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.”

He also discusses the principal of the common good, the sum of societal conditions which allow people, either as individuals or groups, to reach their fulfillment more fully and easily. Integral ecology is inseparable from the principal of common good. In order to leave a sustainable world for future generations, we must be committed to the common good by making choices based on “a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters”.