



„Laudato Si“ – On care for our common home

Pope Francis' Encyclical 'Laudato Si' powerfully reminds the Church and "all men and women of good will" of one of the main problems of our time: climate change and its foreseeable disastrous consequences. Six months before the UN-Climate Summit in Paris the Pope wants to challenge governments to finally reach an agreement about binding global targets to limit climate change. His concern is not only about climate; it is about justice: justice to the poor who are most vulnerable, justice to future generations, justice to for all God's creatures. The Pope criticises our present 'techno-economic paradigm' which treats nature as if it were an inexhaustible cheap source of raw material. In his radical way he says this promotes the extravagant and wasteful life style of the few while ignoring the basic necessities of the life of the poor. Following the example of St. Francis of Assisi, he proposes to us a different vision of creation and a spirituality of simplicity that finds joy in the small things of life. AEFJN and its German branch NAD would like to offer a series of reflections on a number of themes which reappear in the course of the Encyclical:

1. the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet
2. the conviction that everything in the world is connected
3. the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology,
4. the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress,
5. the value proper to each creature
6. the human meaning of ecology
7. the need for forthright and honest debate,
8. the serious responsibility of international and local policy
9. the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle.

(Laudato Si 16)

The Pope's insights are drawn from the researches and reflections of numerous scientists, philosophers, theologians and social movements. He goes back to the teachings of his predecessors Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II; to the vision of late Patriarch Bartholomew and especially to the example of the life of his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi.

(St. Francis) was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.“ (LS 10)



Finally, it is worth noting that many of the ideas of 'Laudato Si' are reflected in the wisdom of African cultures as is shown, among other references, by the quotations from the work of the well-known Zimbabwean poet Chenjerai Hove who died recently.

*Nature is protected by the community
of the living and the dead.
This community is the seal of this protection.*

Chenjerai Hove

