



## The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor

### - The intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet

*The primary focus of the Encyclical 'Laudato Si' is neither the climate nor the environment, but global justice. Pope Francis sees a close connection between the destructive brutality of humanity toward nature and the increasing violence between individuals and between nations. The ecological and the social crisis have a common origin and need to be tackled together*

✿ **The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together**; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet. (48) We have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as **to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor** (Laudato Si 49)

✿ These situations have caused **sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, to cry out**, pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness. The problem is that we still lack the culture needed to confront this crisis. (53)

✿ We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature. (139)

✿ The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the **earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor**; she "groans in travail". (Röm 8,22). (2)

✿ Our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people. **Every act of cruelty towards any creature is "contrary to human dignity**. (92)



*Our Ancestors knew you can only have your personal dignity when you have enough for a living, this brought people closer together, caring for each other, sympathetic towards each others' fortunes and misfortunes. It was useless to have a full belly, alone, in the village.*  
*Chenjerai Hove*