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A rescued lion is seen in Bethlehem, South Africa, Feb. 26. A Ghanaian bishop urged Catholic leaders from around Africa to use Pope Francis' environmental encyclical "Laudato Si'" as the basis of their work and to encourage others involve in ecological work to do the same. (CNS/handout via EPA)

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NAIROBI, Kenya — February 28, 2018
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A Ghanaian bishop urged Catholic leaders from Africa to use Pope Francis' environmental encyclical "Laudato Si'" as the basis of their work and to encourage others involved in ecological work to do the same.

"There is much such agents could learn from the papal document," said Bishop Emmanuel Kofi Fianu of Ho, Ghana, who opened the Feb. 21-23 conference, sponsored by the moral theology department of Tangaza University College and the Missionaries of Africa.

"If you like, you can qualify the encyclical as ecumenical, as it cuts across the existing religious beliefs," the bishop said.

The three-day conference was attended by 250 delegates, including priests, nuns and laypeople.

Fianu told Catholic News Service that episcopal conferences had been given leeway "as when and how best to implement the contents of the papal document."

"In our country, Ghana for example, our main focus is on pollution and deforestation," he told CNS.

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Sister Teresa Okure, a member of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and a professor of New Testament and gender hermeneutics at the Catholic Institute of West Africa in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, said human interference with God's creation had led some people in her country suffer from pollution.

"Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home," published in 2015, been translated into Kiswahili by the Tanzanian bishops' conference as part of the local church's commitment to implementing the document's contents.