

Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, Australia. (Wikimedia Commons/Donaldytong)

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Laudato Si', Introduction: "My appeal"

At the end of the introduction, Pope Francis offers his appeal when he describes the "urgent challenge" before us. He's optimistic that humanity will do the right thing when he says this challenge "includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." Furthermore, we are not alone: "The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home." Then, he expresses appreciation to all the people "who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest." Finally, Francis finishes this passage by offering the voice of the youth: "Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded." (13)

Reflect

The challenge of building a better future is no small task. Fundamentally, it's about creating a world where the basic needs of all people are met sustainably. Consider the image above, which is an illustration of humanity and nature in harmony. What do you make of Francis's appeal? What do you want your role to be?

Act

Because all people have different means, part of this urgent challenge is figuring out your part in it. No one person can save all endangered species, cure all diseases, or provide clean water, pollution-free energy and healthy foods to all people everywhere. Thankfully, "building a better future" is such a huge and varied task that there's a role for everyone.

If you're a student, consider using this time of being educated to think about your larger purpose, then take small steps in that direction. If you're older, perhaps raising a family or are more advanced in your career, consider the differences between personally taking action versus empowering others. Maybe you can make a

change right now that will make the world a bit better, or maybe you can invest in the ability of future generations to make a difference. Maybe you can do both. A key takeaway from *Laudato Si'* is that all acts of good, no matter how small, are worthwhile.

Digging Into Laudato Si'

Join EarthBeat on an exploration of Laudato Si' through a social, political and spiritual lens. Three times a week, we'll dive into a new section of the papal document, leading readers through an informal study of the call to care for our common home, five years on.

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LS. My Appeal.pdf

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