

Pope Francis reviews and initials each page of the manuscript of "Hope: The Autobiography" Aug. 9, 2024, in his Vatican residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae. The book was released in multiple languages Jan. 14, 2025. (CNS/courtesy of Mondadori)

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Climate change and poverty are "the sick fruit" of pride, selfishness and a "blind war" humanity has declared against itself and the planet, Pope Francis said.

"An economy that kills, that excludes, that starves, that concentrates enormous wealth in a few to the detriment of many, that multiplies poverty and grinds down salaries, that pollutes, that produces war, is not an economy," he said in an autobiography released Jan. 14. It is a perversion, "an emptiness, an absence, a sickness."

And as one Spanish proverb says, he wrote, "'If you breed ravens, they will rip out your eyes' (Cría cuervos y te sacarán los ojos). We have polluted and plundered, putting our own lives at risk."

"Hope: The Autobiography" was written with the Italian editor Carlo Musso beginning in 2019. The 300-page volume covers the pope's life, family, vocation and papal election as well as many of his thoughts and reflections regarding past events and current issues, particularly the exploitation and destruction of human life and creation.

"One of the great emergencies of our time is to honor the divine mandate to protect our common home, and at the same time to defend the sanctity and dignity of every human life," he wrote.

"Climate change and poverty are, essentially, the sick fruit of a blind war that man himself has declared — against a fairer distribution of resources, against nature,

against his own planet," he told his readers.

"Each day the world seems more elitist, and each day crueler, toward those who have been cast out and abandoned. Developing countries continue to be drained of their finest natural and human resources for the benefit of a few privileged markets," he wrote.

A "hostile architecture" has even been created to keep the poor out of sight and even off the streets, he added. "The condition of marginalization in which millions of people are oppressed cannot last much longer."

The horror in the world — the abuse, misery, decay and darkness — is almost always fed by indifference, he wrote, an attitude that problems and injustices have "nothing to do with me" and that it is imperative to "just save yourself."

It is a sign of "a society that is profoundly sick. Because selfishness is not just anti-Christian. Selfishness is also a form of self-harm," he wrote, and "selfishness is stupid."

"There aren't two separate crises — one environmental and the other social — but one single and complex socio-environmental crisis," whose negative consequences are rooted in hubris and arrogance, which make people unaware of their own limitations, he wrote.

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Restoring dignity to those excluded from society, fighting poverty and exploitation, caring for the environment and protecting "our own lives" are related and interconnected needs, he wrote. "They must guide us toward one single integrated approach, which must now be considered unavoidable."

"Genuine development is inclusive, fruitful, directed toward the future and future generations," he wrote.

Immediate and decisive action is needed as well as "some serious policy decisions," which, he wrote, have so far been "too timid, incoherent, contradictory, insufficient."

"It is time to leave behind the divisions between factions, between catastrophists and those who are indifferent, between radicals and climate deniers, and to join

forces in order to emerge gradually and resolutely from the dark night of environmental devastation," the 88-year-old pope wrote.

"It is time at last to subordinate the interests of a few people for the rights of everyone, for the benefit of present and future generations," he wrote, praising the young people who protest and echo the cries of the earth, the poor and the outcast.

"They are teaching us what is obvious, and what only a suicidal and nihilistic outlook can now fail to see: There is no tomorrow if we destroy the environment that sustains us," he wrote.