

Editorial

CARE FOR CREATION TOWARDS AN INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

“If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation” Pope Benedict XVI spoke on the World Day of Peace Message on January 1, 2010. Pope Benedict XVI, known as the “Green Pope,” propelled the Church’s practical thought on climate change and care for creation. This had an impact on Pope Francis and his world-changing encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. His teachings on creation wisely point to the integration of the environment with all aspects of modern, globalised life: political peace, social and economic well-being, human dignity, and justice.

Renewal through *Laudato Si’*

Pope Francis is emphasising an integral ecology that integrates the well-being of humans and the Earth. He makes it clear that the environment is no longer a matter solely for scientific experts, environmental groups, or government agencies. He instead encourages all individuals, programmes, and institutions to recognise that these are intricate environmental and social issues that necessitate comprehensive solutions that transcend the “technocratic paradigm” that prioritises an effortless resolution. He advocates for innovative solutions within this comprehensive framework. He is calling for ecological conversion from within all religions. In addition to the academic fields of religion and ecology, he is highlighting the emerging global phenomenon of religious environmentalism, which is actively developing new ecotheologies and ecojustice ethics. “A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, it must integrate questions of justice” (LS 49).

It is impossible for religions to disregard the contemporary appeal for ecological renewal. This question cannot be resolved solely through

doctrine, dogma, scripture, devotion, ritual, belief, or prayer. It is impossible to resolve it through any of these narrow paths of religious expression in isolation. However, religions, like so many of our human cultures and institutions, are essential for our progress; however, they are insufficient to effect the necessary transformation. The functions of religions cannot be exported beyond their horizons. Therefore, if the individual religions are to participate in the current era of environmental engagement, they must both clarify and transform themselves. If religions are able to engage in this creativity, they may once again inspire individuals to adopt values that promote life and contribute to a thriving Earth Community. "Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect" (LS 42).

The Contributors' Insights

P J Alphonsa's paper, *Biblical Mandate for Ecological Stewardship*, examines the Biblical Canon that urges environmental protection. The Bible, God's inspired Word, focuses on God-man relationships, salvation and eternal life. Many Bible references, despite their publication centuries ago, continue to address numerous environmental issues. As trustworthy stewards of God's creation, Christians should care for the environment.

Augustin Somé and Uchechukwu Oguike in their combined work on *Qoheleth's Ecocentrism and Hebel in Ecclesiastes 3: 16 - 22: Restoring Order to the Created World* argues that humans have long considered themselves the core of creation. Genesis 1:27-31 shows that God created humanity in his image and likeness and gave them dominion over the planet. Humans have distorted this idea of lordship over the world, resulting in the destruction of all other creations. Over time, humans have sought homo-dominus over all creation. A critical, exegetical, ecological reading of Ecclesiastes 3: 16-22 shows a wise man's concern over humans' destructive inclinations over other creations.

Joy Philip Kakkanattu's paper *A Path to a Synodal Integral Ecology: Biblical Perspectives* addresses Pope Francis' synodal approach to holistic ecology, starting with ecological stewardship. The main goal is to study biblical texts that help construct an eco-theology of mission and participation. The Bible encourages harmony between God, people, and creation, with humans serving as earth stewards. This stewardship emphasizes the interconnectedness of all creation, both integral and synodal.

Francis Xavier Joseph's paper, *An Adequate Response to the Ecological Crisis*, examines the current ecological crisis. First, it defines crises in

connection to ecological, then it describes how this crisis has affected humanity. The paper analyses two levels or aspects of response. 1. Society or State 2. Religion or Church. The state created rules and regulations to tackle the problem, but the Church released papers to conscientize its faithful and respond quickly to the tremendous peril to humanity.

In Celebration of Life's Relationality: A Wake-up Call for Integral Ecology, Paulachan Kochappilly invites us to celebrate life's relationships at all levels and stages to start integral ecology, taking into account all forms of life, including humans, and fulfilling the priestly ministry of praise and thanks for the excellent creation. Celebrating life's relationality from an integral ecological perspective emphasises three interrelated insights: integral ecology, triadic relations, and life. The article examines how God-creation-humans celebrate life relationships: rootedness to creation, relatedness to people, and oneness in God.

Sebastian Alackapally's article *Ecological and Social Vision in the Encyclicals of Pope Francis* highlights Pope Francis' ecological and social vision in *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti*, and *Laudate Deum*. Popes' encyclicals usually address Catholics and focus on faith and morals. *Laudato Si'* on the other hand, addresses everyone on Earth. Pope Francis emphasises in the Encyclical that he wants to discuss our common home with everyone (LS' 3). LS' addresses important concerns that impact all religions and societies, transcending dogmas, rituals, and rules. The need for dialogue to find sustainable alternatives, and a new lifestyle is also discussed in this article.

The climate crisis and ecological issues we face today are reshaping our world, according to Joby Kunnath's article *Climate Refugees: The Unseen Victims of Ecological Crisis*. Climate change can harm food, water, and economic security, along with social, economic, and environmental issues. Climate change also affects forced and voluntary displacement. Climate migrants/refugees face issues that the international community typically ignores. Pope Francis' writings, speeches, and activities brought this subject to the forefront, and world leaders began to help climate refugees.

Indigenous people subsist on nature's resources. Paul Lelen Haokip's study, *Environmental Insights from Indigenous People: Northeast India Perspective* focuses on it. Colonialism has erased and suppressed numerous indigenous customs in Northeast India. Modern science has accelerated natural manipulation through unfettered commercial

growth due to globalisation. Poor people are uprooted from their homes and forests for development, becoming ecological refugees on their land. Indigenous Northeast Indian environmental ideas can help sustainable development, conservation, and climate resilience. Local tribal ecological prudence could help humans and the environment.

Rajeev Palakkacherry writes about the Kerala Kani tribe in the Western Ghats, which provides excellent ecological harmony knowledge. Studying their practices and traditions can encourage sustainable living. Their lifestyle follows Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which promotes environmental care. The Catholic Church can play a significant role here. *Laudato Si'* can help Kani people preserve their uniqueness and ecological wisdom, benefiting both them and the world. Kani is a precious blossom in human civilization's garden. Based on scientific surveys and observations, this research examines the Kani tribe's current difficulties and their lessons for a sustainable future. It tries to capture their distinct lifestyle.

Carlos Luis' article *Laudate Deum: Moral Insight and Imperative for the Harmony of Life* examines environmental challenges, morality, and world harmony through Pope Francis's Apostolic Exhortation. It supports the Pope's appeal to recognise climate change as a structural crime with grave moral consequences. The article addresses IPCC findings, emphasising the need to minimise global warming and its greater impact on disadvantaged communities. It also discusses *Laudate Deum's* call to abandon fossil fuels and the Pope's criticism of an unethical technological paradigm. Pope Francis's appeal for thankfulness, constructive action, and God's exaltation is essential to solving climate change and moral responsibility.

The article, titled *Peter Lombard's Theology of Marriage: Insights from the Sentences* of Yuan Jin examines his theological framework, views on matrimonial consent, and the sacredness of marriage. This article examines Lombard's complex views on marriage's sacramentality, marital obligations, and indissoluble bond. The analysis illuminates the history of Lombard's unique theology and Catholic marital teachings. This essay also examines Lombard's social, legal, and religious interactions in the marriage setting of his time. This work enhances our understanding of mediaeval Church teachings and marital customs by blending historical theology with social and legal analysis.

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