



# “HOW GREEN DO WE HAVE TO BE?” READING LAUDATE DEUM IN THE LENSES OF INCLUSIVITY

JAMES LORETO PISCOS

SAN BEDA UNIVERSITY

jpiscos@sanbeda.edu.ph

*Reading **Laudate Deum** in the Lenses of Inclusivity is not just an academic exercise. It is a commitment to walk with Pope Francis' call to act immediately to address the issues of climate change and global environmental crisis. The paper aims to present the key concepts of his apostolic exhortation that advance the theme of inclusivity. It shall include a trace in the development of his concepts of inclusivity in his writings and programs, identify them in the text itself of Laudate Deum, and examine them within the framework of intersectionality. Pope Francis has been highly vocal about the technocratic paradigm that dominates and causes havoc to the harmony that the people of this world can enjoy. He urges world leaders to do something since his encyclical is at the best time to influence the United Nations Climate Summit (COP28). But beyond the rhetoric are issues that need to be responded to. The call is for everyone regardless of background and we are all united to work together to take care of our earth, our home.*

Keywords: Climate Change, Pope's Encyclical, Technocratic Paradigms, Intersectionality

#### Copyright:

Online: EBSCO, DOAJ. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License © 2024.  
Print: Philippine Copyright © September 2024 San Beda University

#### How to cite this article:

Piscos, James Loreto . “How Green Do We Have to Be?’ Reading Laudate Deum in the Lenses of Inclusivity.” *Scientia - the International Journal on the Liberal Arts* 13, no. 2 (September 30, 2024): 29–43. <https://doi.org/10.57106/scientia.v13i2.187>.

#### Dates:

Received: February 17, 2024  
Revised: July 15, 2024  
Accepted: August 28, 2024  
Published(Online): Sept 30, 2024

#### Read online



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online





## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Pope Francis embarked on eco-ethical and theological discourses that addressed the pressing environmental crisis shown in his early encyclical entitled, *Laudati Si* or *On Care for our Common Home* (2015). This work tackled how human development is hampered by the many forms of abuses that impact our quality of life. The issue of how people harm the earth is not just something physical where we see pollution all over the place. It is also a question of socio-political, cultural, and spiritual quest. Hence, the pope's approach is integrated and involved concerns that promote holistic growth in how to be a disciple of Christ in today's world.

A closer look at his encyclical letters, the theme of inclusivity pervades in his narratives. This is well pronounced in his *Fratelli Tutti* (2020) or *On the Fraternity and Social Friendship*, where it punctuated the importance of conversation and respect for people with different religious and cultural traditions. On March 13, 2013, the Argentinian Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected the 266<sup>th</sup> pope of the Roman Catholic Church. He was the man of many firsts including first from Latin America and the first to use the name Francis (Reuters, 2023). St. Francis (c. 1181-October 3, 1226) was the major influence in the development of his thoughts on simplicity, joy, and fraternal love. St. Francis took the bold move of visiting Sultan Malik-el-Kamil in Egypt at the height of the ongoing crusade or holy war between Christians and Muslims. Inspired by such an act, Pope Francis sketched his framework on inclusivity and integrated it into his encyclical attitude of openness and fraternal subjection (*Fratelli Tutti* No.3). Literally means “*all brothers and sisters*” (*Fratelli Tutti* No. 1), *Fratelli Tutti* became a testament of the pontificate's agenda of inclusivity in his papal leadership (Vatican 2020). It highlights

the “*need for a culture of encounter and dialogue*” in responding to global problems (n 215-221).

To pursue a concrete program of inclusivity, the Pope launched the Synodality in the Church with the guiding theme of “*communion, participation, mission*” (Synod of Bishops, 2021). This is a three-year program from 2021-2024 of listening and conversation on how to be a Church in today's times. In his homily on the opening of Synod on Synodality, Pope Francis reiterated that we need to take the “*Jesus' gaze that blesses and invites us to be a church that does not face today's challenges and problems with a divisive and contentious spirit but, on the contrary, turns its eyes to God who is communion and, with awe and humility*” (Pope Francis, 2023).

Pope Francis emphasizes that the Synod is a process where the Church reflects its attitude and character in responding to the plight of its people. It is a journey where nobody is left behind. It can be surmised that during the Synod, the pope released the *Laudate Deum*, a forceful and in-depth follow-up to the *Laudati Si* that addresses environmental destruction. The encyclical is not only concerned with the physical issues of climate change, but it also advocates inclusivity since any ecological problems also touch the poorest of the poor who in most cases are excluded from any societal progress.

It is in this context that the research shall explore the reading of *Laudate Deum* through the lenses of inclusivity since the greening of the earth means integration in all aspects of being human. *Laudate Deum* explicitly articulates the impact of our attitude to climate change and environmental degradation on the marginalized sectors of our world. We are called to be agents of change to include the lost, the last, the little, and the least of society.





In just a matter of months when *Laudate Deum* was launched on the feast day of St. Francis (October 4, 2023), the encyclical found several reviews among theologians and scholars from various fields. The University of Notre Dame experts published their comments in a title, *ND experts respond to 'Laudate Deum': Tackling climate change is 'a fundamentally human and social problem'* (University of Notre Dame, 2023). These experts are John Cavadini, Daniel Miller, and Emmanuel Katongole from the discipline of Theology and School of Global Affairs. Cavadini called *Laudate Deum* to have an Augustinian twist citing arrogance or as St. Augustine called it pride that wrecks environmental destruction for one's vested interests. Cavadini claimed that the encyclical pointed out the reality of how the financial or cultural elite with their technocratic framework represented that lust for wealth, power, and domination. The advancement of technology came with the poor excluded, and worst blamed them where in fact they are the real victims of progress. The technological approach was never inclusive, hence the growing disparity between the rich and the poor and the marginalization of people persist. He also dismissed the critique in the encyclical that it assumed to be scientific within this field where the Church has no authority. Cavadini affirmed that the Pope's exhortation is a forceful continuity of *Laudati Si* which was deeply theological. He argued that the title of the encyclical means "Praise God", and only in acknowledging the Creator and not taking God's place where we become truly in unity with the divine and to one another (University of Notre Dame, 2023).

Daniel Miller from the School of Global Affairs and Environmental Policy maintains the position that *Laudate Deum* is a statement of universal goodwill, and not just exclusive for Catholics. He asserted that the Pope's writing promotes inclusivity to all people of the earth

since we need to act together to respond to the environmental crisis and climate change. The pope boldly names the roots of the problem. For him, the encyclical pointed to the fossil fuels, coal, gas, and oil that are considered the greatest contributor to environmental problems and climate change. Miller noted that the encyclical is a forceful voice that can provide impact to the upcoming United Nations Climate Summit (COP28) to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from November 30, 2023, to December 12, 2023 (United Nations, 2023). Miller showed how the encyclical challenged world leaders to take responsibility or maintain their power and callous indifference to the effect of global warming that may destroy the common good and the future of our children. Miller concluded that *Laudate Deum* is not just about environmental issues but a "fundamentally human and social problem." (University of Notre Dame, 2023)

Emmanuel Katongole, a professor in peace studies and theology, cited that the *Laudate Deum* provides the space to encourage people to undergo adjustments be it cultural or political. The claim of the encyclical is the urgency to address environmental issues and climate change. This was given to those who are mostly responsible by conscientizing these world leaders to act immediately. Pope Francis underscored the terrifying power of technology, and how it was produced by the drivers of technocratic paradigms. It calls on powerful nations ahead of COP28 to reconfigure their priorities to save our mother home, our earth. (University of Notre Dame, 2023).

Sunny Jacob SJ, the Assistant Secretary of the Jesuit Global Network of Schools, Rome commented on the various parts of *Laudate Deum* in his review entitled, *Laudate Deum: A document on Integral Ecology for the Humanity* (2023). This





paper made a preliminary assessment but not an in-depth analysis of the contents of the encyclical particularly presenting the highlights for its parts. Jacob shows how the encyclical gives importance to making a stand and committing to deeper conversion that can fuel change in attitude for the benefit of our Mother Nature. An integral ecology considers various dimensions of life, and that is what *Laudate Deum* stands for.

Daniel Horan, OFM, a national Catholic reporter claimed in his article, in *'Laudate Deum,' Pope Francis presents a compelling climate crisis apologia* (2023) that it builds from the insights of *Laudati Si* but is more specific in its approach to concretely address the environmental problems. It is an apologetic style to urgently ask people to do something while deepening of its theological and rhetorical defense of truth and faith. The pope's apostolic exhortation utilizes scientific data and dialogues them with the various sources of the Catholic Church, previous encyclicals, spiritual reflections and treatises, and biblical quotations. For Horan, *Laudate Deum* provided the powerful tone to articulate the prophetic message and decry the worsening situation of Mother Earth.

Thomas J. Farrel, professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota Duluth, wrote a review entitled *Pope Francis' 2023 Eco-Exhortation Laudate Deum ("Praise God") and Walter J. Ong's Thought*, where he juxtaposes the theme of the encyclical on technocratic domination to the thoughts of the American Jesuit cultural historian Walter J. Ong (1912-2003). He argued that Vatican researchers are unfamiliar with this media ecology theorist who designed the visuality in cognitive processing. Ong highlights in this theory the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing in interpreting Western cultural history. The Pope's critique of the dominant technocratic paradigm is aligned with Ong's concepts in which Farrel argues to not being acknowledged by the Vatican.

In his analysis of the encyclical, Farrel punctuates how globalization in the economic and cultural sphere has widened the gap between the Global South and the Global North. Farrel argued that being from Argentina, which represented the Global South, the Pope criticizes the WEIRD Global North or simply the Western culture. WEIRD is an acronym that stands for Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic. Their affluent lifestyle and their apathy to the environmental crisis which in most cases they are the ones causing them, is the reason why in the *Laudate Deum*, they are given special mention by the Pope for change.

Andra Costache's *"Intersectionality and Climate Change: A Review of the Literature between 2014 and 2023"* (2023) provides a good review and list of articles that can help in surveying the extent of studies in the field. It showcases various models of analysis that can enlighten the nexus of intersectionality theory and the global environmental crisis. It also supplies practitioners of ecology best practices and methodological features. Costache's work is valuable given that this research paper anchored its theoretical framework using intersectionality theory.

The Review of Related Literature (RRL) showcases diverse views on the newly released apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum*. Several experts affirm how the document offers an integral human growth and total development of society. It is not just about physical environmental problems and climate change but also the quality of life that affects all its dimensions. The concept of inclusivity in *Laudate Deum* is not yet well explored by scholars on how it can be a bridge that can connect and engage all people of the earth to work together and call our common space home. It is important to note, too, that its link to UNSDG is not yet well explored.







## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research utilized the Theory of Intersectionality, which tackles various forms of exclusion by examining the depths of the inequalities caused by society's hierarchies of power and privileges. (Carastathis, 2014). This was first cited by Kimberlie Crenshaw in 1989 to refer to a model of analysis that highlights how “*power operates and creates variability in privileges and oppression within interactive processes*” that happen within a particular social and cultural milieu (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectional theory identifies intersecting systems of domination and oppression. For instance, a gay person is also a black race with physical disability and is economically marginalized. In this case, there is overlapping discrimination in gender, race, physical, and economic status. For Ferree (2010), intersectionality pushes an inclusive perspective of social identity, communities, and families.

During the 2017, Women's March Crenshaw's Intersectionality Theory became widespread when its organizers stressed how “*women's intersecting identities*” impacted a plethora of human rights and social justice concerns. (Coaston, 2019). Intersectionality theory is based on critical theory and carried by the black feminist movement, but later it became a journey and a process to critically examine social relations, unfold its system of domination, and “*speaking truth to power*”. Later, it tackled beyond gender, race, and class overlapping in an oppressed individual or society to the realities of how these dominions of power shaped political and social life (Weldon, 2008, p. 208).

There are several scholarly engagements and pursuits about intersectionality. This is the reason that for this paper the focus and limitation is on the related concepts that align and connect to Pope Francis' inclusivity theme. Since the

apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum* unravels systems of dominion by technocratic paradigms, the research highlights the three forms also called senses of intersectionality that raised awareness on the situations of marginalized entities brought about by technocratic oppressive systems. These are representational, political, and structural intersectionality. Representational refers to showing how the dominant entities and the marginalized sectors in a society or culture are portrayed through images, texts, language, and media. Political intersectionality describes the opposing mechanisms in the political sphere that distinguish women and women of color, for instance, into two inferior classes. Hence, women may not be equally the same in terms of opportunities in leadership and politics. While political intersectionality talks about spaces to lead where chances for women of color are lesser, structural intersectionality speaks about individual experiences in their multiple overlapping discrimination. (Crenshaw, 1991). A white woman might be lower than her male counterpart in various contexts, but a black woman may carry a heavier burden of oppression than the white female since there are overlapping discriminations not just in gender but also in race. The overlapping entities may go on adding physical abilities, status, and social class. The figure below illustrates the dynamics of Intersectionality Theory as an Analytical Framework:



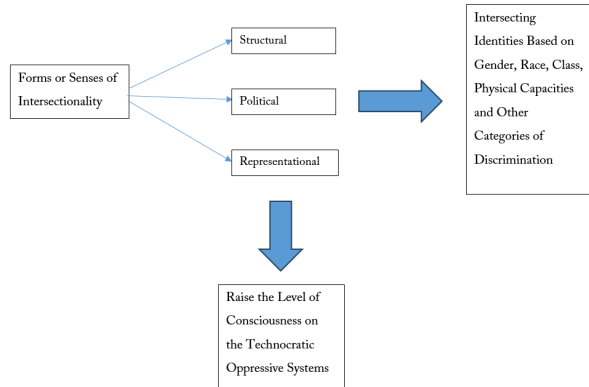


Figure 1: *Unraveling Intentionality Theory on How Power Operates in Social Categories and Relations*

The advocacy of intersectionality theory is to raise the consciousness about how systematic discrimination is, and how structural power operates in categories and social relations that can exclude and oppress people.

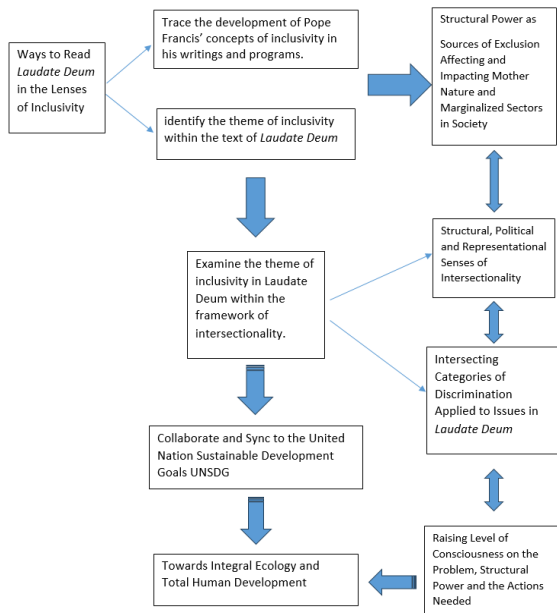


Figure 2: *Reading Laudate Deum in the Lenses of Inclusivity*

To walk the talk, Figure 2 shows the ultimate agenda of achieving integral ecology and total human development in the analysis of *Laudate Deum*, which offers the theme of inclusivity, where no one, including all elements of the earth, will be left behind. Everyone will have space for growth, sustainability, and total development.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Development of Pope Francis's Concepts of Inclusivity*

On 18 June 2015, Pope Francis published the *Laudati Si* (Praise be to you) that showcased the nexus of scientific findings and theological principles and drew lines of approach and action that integrate natural and social interactions. He outlined a holistic approach to the way we consider caring for the earth by stating how various factors from politics, economics, socio-cultural, and faith dimensions play together in realizing sustainable stewardship. Earth is our home, and abuse of it impacts the poor and the marginalized since they are the most vulnerable groups that suffer the catastrophic effects of global warming (Pope Francis, 2015).

On November 29, 2017, Pope Francis witnessed his program of inclusivity by visiting Yangon, Myanmar, to be in solidarity with the Rohingya refugees who became displaced stateless persons (Berlinger, J. and Gallagher D, 2017). On February 3-5, 2019, he had a meeting with Abu Dhabi Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, showing his papacy's program to be beyond gender, race, social status, and religion. They sealed their collaboration with the document "*Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*," which, for Pope Francis, is "more than a mere diplomatic gesture but a reflection born of dialogue and common commitment" (Pope Francis, 2020)



On October 3, 2020, Pope Francis issued the *Fratelli Tutti* (all brothers and sisters), an encyclical that explicitly articulated inclusivity anchored on human dignity, common good, and solidarity. He shared his reflections on social friendship in this document, where he listened, collaborated, and dialogued with neighbors beyond borders. It embodied his passion and desire to connect everybody and everything in our common home toward unity among all creations. (Pope Francis, 2020).

On October 9, 2021, Pope Francis launched the Synod of Synodality, where he invited the entire Catholic Church to reflect on its theme of communion, participation, and mission. Inclusivity in the Synod on Synodality is shown in the various stages where there are spaces for encounter and dialogue namely: the diocesan phase, the episcopal conference or synods of oriental churches phase, the continental phase, and the universal phase (Synod Process, 2021). The diocesan phase is like a roadmap that allows priests and laypeople in their local diocese to advise the bishop. This does not follow a majority vote shown in the procedural parliamentary meeting, but a process of listening and discernment based on the provided *vademecum* or literally “go with me”. *Vademecum* is a manual or guidebook that accompanies the local churches in their reflections, listening, and discernment (USCCB, 2021). Their many voices are heard by the diocesan team leaders and the bishop. A diocesan synthesis is expected with emphasis on the key points and validation process that considers the local culture and context. The episcopal conference or synods of oriental churches followed the collected feedback from the participants at the local level. This has the function of crafting a wider synthesis and is the basis of *Instrumentum Laboris* or the working instrument to be used at the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. The continental phase

processes the results from previous phases at a bigger and broader level. It is an experience of the “seeds of synodality” uniquely encountered where bishops are grouped by continent. The last stage is the universal phase that started in October 2023 and concluded by October 2024, where all bishops from all around the world convene to walk together using *instrumentum laboris* as a guide in their listening sessions to meet the demands and pressing issues of the world that affects our being a Church (Synod, 2021).

On October 4, 2023, *Laudate Deum* (Praise God) came to continue the *Laudati Si* encyclical, which emphasized a more practical agenda in implementing programs that shall address the ecological crisis. After eight years of publishing the *Laudati Si*, where the concern for the common home was the battle cry, the Pope felt there was little progress in terms of finding urgent solutions, and response to the pressing issues of climate change was a bit slow. *Laudate Deum* shows a comprehensive and more compelling move on how to engage in integral ecology where no one is left behind. (Pope Francis, 2023).

The diagram below shows the timeline and summary of the major events and documents under the tutelage of Pope Francis. This sketches the development of his concepts of inclusivity to be holistic and comprehensive:



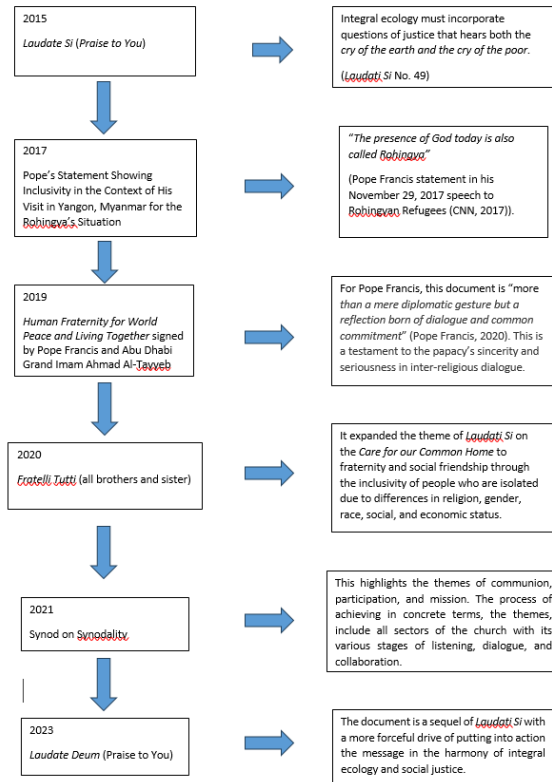


Figure 3: Timeline and Summary of the Major Events and Documents under the Tutelage of Pope Francis

### ***The Theme of Inclusivity Within the Text of Laudate Deum***

The papal encyclical is composed of 73 paragraphs divided into six chapters. The outline for the document follows:

Chapter 1: The Global Climate Crisis (paragraphs 1-19)

Chapter 2: A Growing Technocratic Paradigm (20-33)

Chapter 3: The Weakness of International Politics (34-43)

Chapter 4: Climate Conferences:

Progress and Failures (44-52)

Chapter 5: What to Expect from COP28 in Dubai (53-60)

Chapter 6: Spiritual Motivations (61-73)

Chapter 1 (1-19) reinforces the key theme of *Laudati Si*, which is living together in our common home where everything is interconnected (19). When Pope Francis wrote about the *Global Climate Crisis*, he recalled the plethora of environmental problems that are intertwined with a dichotomist and fragmented life in a throw-away culture. In *Laudate Deum*, he pinches the reality after eight years of writing *Laudati Si* that the conditions are getting worse. There is little progress when global temperature dramatically increases, and it shows an immediate effect on the melting of Greenland and a large part of Antarctica. The extraordinary warming experienced now may cause greater havoc if there are no bold steps to be taken. Sooner or later, people will be dislocated in their homes (5-6). In this chapter, Pope Francis corrected the notion that the poor are major contributors to this problem (9). In contrast, they are the ones most affected. Pope Francis deconstructed the fact that the poor, due to their numbers and lifestyle, cause the acceleration of global warming. Conversely, it is the rich countries, in their great use of fossil fuels, attributed to the rise of global temperature to 1.1° C since 1850. In his estimation, the maximum global ceiling of 1.5° C shall be achieved within ten years. Pope Francis displayed his inclusivity approach by asking for expert opinions on the matter. Mauna Loa Observatory reported that carbon dioxide has hit the daily measurements of historic 423 parts per million in June 2023 (11). The human causes of global warming, which Pope Francis calls "*anthropic*," go side by side with human





progress and development. Hence, there is a close correlation between the throw-away culture in a complex advanced society to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions (13).

Pope Francis calls for ecological conversion at the very beginning of *Laudate Deum*. It has an outright rejection of the condescending attitude and exclusivist concepts of the rich blaming the poor as their simplistic answer to the problem. Pope Francis lays down the reality check that the per capita emission of richer countries is more than 50% of the world's poorest population (9).

*Chapter 2: Growing Technocratic Problem* (20-33) reveals the unsuccessful relationship of technological development to holistic growth. We have turned into gods of our own, utilizing the latest technology and manipulation of news and realities to one's advantage. Pope Francis described how technological advancement and economic power "*monstrously feeds upon itself*" (21) but missed the link between human responsibility, conscience, and values (24). Latest technological innovations and artificial intelligence turned humans to greatness, thinking to live their lives without limits (21). It has expanded their capacities to use such power to dominate the entire world. This led to his exclusion from the harmony of the universe and exploitation of the earth's resources to its own advantage (25-26). In this chapter, the Pope challenged the WEIRD or the Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic with their technocratic paradigm of how their lust for domination, wealth, and influence excluded the poor whom they pointed to be the culprit of the problem.

*Chapter 3: The Weakness of International Politics* (34-43) underscores the shortcomings of diplomatic relations and collaboration of the international community. It criticized the lack

of coordination and attention to basic human dignity and rights. The Pope cited the financial crisis and Covid 19 as examples. This is recalling his previous comments in *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), where the complex situation showed the inability of various nations to share a common roadmap (7). Amidst the hyper-connectivity using the latest internet applications, there was fragmentation to do things on their own at the expense of poorer nations. The greater individualism per nation brings weaker cooperation manifested in how the United Nations works for the common good. Pope Francis cited how many groups in civil society managed to fill out this gap.

*Chapter 4: Climate Conferences: Progress and Failures* (44-52)

Although Pope Francis mentioned the weakness of international politics in the preceding chapter, he acknowledges the progress of climate conferences along with its failures. This section of *Laudate Deum* traces the history of how the international community developed a framework from the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference that established the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to the Conference of Parties 27 (COP27) in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt in 2022 where "*combustible fuels still provide 80% of the world's energy*" (50). Countries meet annually in COP, being the highest decision-making body for climate change issues. However, Pope Francis boldly declared that some of its conferences were failures, like the 2009 Copenhagen, which did not achieve the goal of reducing greenhouse emissions by 5%. The conference continued to fail in 2012 when it did not meet the same expectations (44).

It was the recurring issue tackled by the COPs on how richer countries compensate for their high contributions to fossil fuel and greenhouse gas emissions. However, there was an apparent





lack of political will to explain how they would be sanctioned if they did not abide. This is the continuous collapse of succeeding conferences (46).

COP21 (2015) in Paris showed a glimmer of hope. Pope Francis cited how it generated new rounds of agreements and showed so much inclusivity by involving everyone. It aimed to achieve lower global temperatures to under 2° C in reference to preindustrial degrees and decrease them in the current period to 1.5° C (48). The next conferences showed little progression to solve the climate crisis. Pope Francis expressed his disappointment with the results. There was scarcity to none in the attempt to make the transition to less polluting forms of energy (49). The succeeding years saw the revitalization of the 2015 Paris Agreement, but the Covid-19 pandemic held the program in abeyance.

The latest COP27 in Egypt witnessed a tug-of-war in negotiations. They were designed to finance “loss and damage” in nations adversely affected by global warming (51). Currently, to his dismay, Pope Francis quoted how the poor implementation of these agreements maintains its lackluster performance, pointing to the issue of how non-compliant countries should be penalized for their lack of commitment. This is compounded by the fact that most of them prioritized their “national interests above the global common good” (52). The Pope asserted its appeal to act based on conscience and human responsibility.

*Chapter 5: What to Expect from COP28 in Dubai (53-60)* follows the narrative in the previous chapter where amidst the succeeding failures, hope springs in the upcoming COP28 in Dubai where the international community will find the courage to come up with substantial results from a more inclusive approach in dealing with the

problems. Inclusivity in such a context is to go beyond national interests and individualism and look at the bigger picture of the interconnected world. Pope Francis expressed his positive aspiration that clean energy sources like solar and wind and the dropping of fossil fuels be more advanced and seriously applied in communities (55). He is asking leaders and all people of the world to stop “*appearing concerned*” but not having the passion to work for what should be done (56). He reiterated that climate change is not purely ecologically romantic “*green*,” but it has underlying issues on economic interests and power dynamics. Since it is threatening human existence on various levels, it is, first and foremost, a human and social problem that calls for the engagement of everyone (58).

Pope Francis called COP28 historic and prayed that it honors the dignity of human beings by addressing issues of climate change that caused disasters to billions of people in the world. It asks to develop programs that set the conditions of efficiency, obligation, and availability for monitoring. To regain its credibility, international politics should act on concrete measures that reduce CO2 levels. However, he warned of the irony of oil and gas companies’ new ventures and projects that continue to increase fossil fuel emissions (53). Hence, the challenge is posed for countries who are under the category of WEIRD, that is to what extent they can walk the talk, fulfill agreements, and work for the global scale welfare for all?

*Laudate Deum* concludes with *Chapter 6: Spiritual Motivations (61-73)* that speaks about the motivations for all these initiatives. Pope Francis mentioned how his encyclicals were borne out of faith traditions rooted in the Scriptures and Jesus’ teachings on *metanoia* and harmony to bring everything under the Risen One that directed them to the fullness of life





(65). In our reconciliation with Christ, we call our world *home* and make it beautiful because we also commit to honor our human dignity and highest values. (69) Social justice comes in when the very integrity of our being human is put at risk by the threats of global warming. Finally, in his last paragraph (73), Pope Francis brings back to prayer his intentions to Praise God (*Laudate Deum*) to implore everyone that our greening of the earth is essential for our survival and life's meaning. This is not just an individual endeavor or a lone country project but an international community willing to commit to the global common good. In his last sentence, he hits with these words, "*For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies*". (73)

### ***The Theme of Inclusivity in Laudate Deum Within the Framework of Intersectionality***

When Crenshaw introduced the Intersectionality Paradigm (1989), what she had in mind was to demonstrate the operation of power that creates variability in opportunities and domination within various interactive processes (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality resonates with the critical theory model, which examines social relations and how it unravels in the system of control in the way people think.

When we deal with connection and re-appropriation on the theme of inclusivity in *Laudate Deum*, which comes close to the intersectionality paradigm are the three forms or senses of intersectionality, namely the representational, political, and structural. Representational intersectionality reveals how those in power and the dominated class are represented through images, texts, language, and media. Rich countries and powerful institutions project their initiatives to show their concern for Mother Earth. Companies may call it corporate

social responsibility. They employ constant bombardment through advertisement and branding that conditions people to accept them and cover their actions that cause degradation and havoc to the environment. People can be desensitized and apathetic to the issue. For instance, aggressive ads about brand new cars and how they offer an easy life hide the effect of the use of fossil fuel that overlaps with the use of the vehicle. How many new cars are released that use fossil fuels in the world every year?

When millions of people use single-use plastic, the hazard it brings is massive since it is not easy to decompose. The damage is in the consciousness of people because the product offers instant, easy, and affordable. This is how the power maximized ideological tools that deceived the way people look at themselves. Thus, raising awareness about ecological concerns is needed to counter-attack the malformation.

The technocratic model offers the consumerist world a better life using various media materials to achieve mind conditioning. This is both on the local and international scales. In the global scene, multinational corporations package their companies within the ambit of sustainability, like in the case of mining. These groups offer developments and opportunities but will dramatically damage the environment. The local communities are concrete battlegrounds in the fight against deceptive propaganda and fake promises. In the Homonhon Mining in Eastern Samar, Philippines, featured by a Philippine local TV investigative program (KMJS, 2024), the operation of four mining companies that endanger the livelihood, flora, and fauna of the place was uncovered. The destruction is massive since these miners were there for years. Some issues overlap in mining, which are not purely economic and environmental concerns but also cultural and social relations among inhabitants in





the community. In the Homonhon Mining Story, there is the devaluing of historical sites since this is the location where the seed of Christianity in the Philippines took place in the landing of Magellan on March 16, 1521 (Pigafetta, 1522). In mining, it will lose its historical significance. If this had not been featured on national TV, people would not be aware of the extent of its destruction.

Political intersectionality speaks about spaces to lead and venues to influence for the common good. Pope Francis explicitly mentioned this reality in *Laudate Deum's* Chapters 4 and 5. He challenged political leaders to have the will to realize the goals, agreements, and frameworks to solve climate change since at the time of writing the encyclical, the results were scarce to nothing. Pope Francis brought up the problem of how participants in the COP and the collaboration of the international community in the United Nations put a premium on safeguarding national interests rather than the universal global common good. Thus, what to expect in COP conferences if the attitude and mindset are the same? Hence, Pope Francis serves as a voice like a prophet on conscientizing world leaders that we need concrete bold measures to reduce the global temperature, or else the world our home is doomed for annihilation. The underlying overlapping issue in the lack of political will among leaders is the continuing global divide between the WEIRD Global North and the Global South, where poverty and population are escalating actualities. The Global North, though less populated, consumed much fossil fuels and had a higher use of greenhouse emissions than the poor Global South. And yet, the Global North, in its affluent lifestyle, points its finger at the Global South as the cause of global warming. In most cases, the poor countries in the South suffered the most, be it in catastrophic typhoons, extreme heat, flooding, and melting of ice. Pope Francis

displays them all in *Laudati Si* and *Laudati Deum*. In his shared reflection, humanity's disaster started when humans acted like gods and used available resources as if they had no limits.

Structural intersectionality talks about multiple overlapping discrimination. On a global scale, the problem of climate change is not just purely "green" ecological concern but it speaks of social justice since it affects social relations, where poor countries and people are the main targets of its havoc and disaster. It is also having a touch of diplomatic relations since leaders of each nation strive to defend their national interests. Middle Eastern countries continue to produce fossil fuels through opening new projects in extracting oil rather than renewable energy of wind and solar since it is their major source of income. How will they balance national interest with the global common good? Is there a way to compensate for their initiatives that may harm the environment to those poor countries who are directly and indirectly affected? This is the assertion of Pope Francis in *Laudate Deum*. The United States has more people using fossil fuel-based engines in their vehicles. Can they afford to change their lifestyle and switch to environment-friendly cars?

In the local communities, the destruction of their environment means a loss of their identity and pride. We take Sibuyan Island in Romblon as a test case. In their desire to protect their culture and way of life, gradually destroyed by the mining, they barricaded and rallied against the perpetrators. There were several human rights violations reported by the Commission on Human Rights (UNTV News, 2023). The overlapping issues are the fight for dignity embodied in the environmental concerns, the battle for survival, and the manipulation of those in power, including local politicians who allowed the projects to proceed.







### *Laudate Deum and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)*

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are testaments of the international community's collaboration and engagement to address issues of climate change within the parameters of holistic growth. However, a careful reading of *Laudate Deum* reveals the subtle and implicit critique of how world leaders lack the political will to realize the goals they have written. Pope Francis boldly declared that only a few steps were taken since the priority for every delegate is their national interest rather than the global common good. This further intensified the global divide between the North and the South.

The approach to solve the global warming problem should be integrated and operate from the global system to local communities. Everything is interconnected, or else, the initiatives will simply be reduced to a mere façade for good branding and image.

### CONCLUSION

*"How Green Do We Have to Be?" Laudate Deum* in the Lenses of Inclusivity implies two things: reading on the global scale on the representational, political, and structural systems and the dynamics of local communities in implementing initiatives that advance the greening of the earth.

In inclusivity, we live the values of integral ecology and achieve the real green. Here, we weave various disciplinary layers that overlap with each other, from environment, economic, cultural, social relations, and social justice. The challenge is always how to transcend vested interests for the achievement of the common good. Integral ecology is deepened by the spirituality of listening and reflection on the

opportunities and challenges that climate change has offered to our existence.

Thus, authentic "green" is not just about the romantic image of appearing concern for the environment but looks at the intersectionality of issues and overlapping realities that speak about our journey of being human. Real green means we must look at the bigger picture of how ecological concerns are also issues of social justice and power dynamics. At the global level, leaders should transcend national interests and work for the global common good. Local communities should be empowered too, by raising their level of awareness in order that engagement to cooperate for a greener home is born out of commitment and understanding that we share a common home and we are stewards of God's creation. Life's meaning, rooted in our human dignity, is the anchor of why we must be green. When ecological conversion starts to operate in our system, hope springs, and together, we acclaim Praise God (*Laudate Deum*).







## REFERENCES

- BBC. "Pope Francis on Iraq Visit Calls for End to Violence and Extremism." BBC News, March 5, 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-56282598>.
- Benkirane, Sarah, and Marina M. Doucerain. "Considering Intersectionality in Acculturation: Bringing Theory to Practice." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 91 (November 2022): 150–57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2022.10.002>.
- Berlinger, Joshua, and Delia Gallagher. "Pope Francis: 'the Presence of God Today Is Also Called Rohingya.'" CNN, December 1, 2017. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/01/asia/pope-bangladesh-myanmar-intl/index.html>.
- Biography.com Editors. "Pope Francis." Biography, April 12, 2018. <https://www.biography.com/religious-figure/pope-francis>.
- Coaston, Jane. "The Intersectionality Wars." Vox, May 20, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-%20law-race-gender-discrimination>.
- Cornish, Sandie. "Journeying Together: Synodality in the Church - Vatican News." *www.vaticannews.va*, March 13, 2023. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-03/pope-francis-tenth-anniversary-sandie-cornish-synod-oceania.html>.
- Costache, Andra. "Intersectionality and Climate Change: A Review of the Literature between 2014 and 2023." *International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 11, no. 9 (December 12, 2023). <https://doi.org/10.24940/theijhss/2023/v11/i9/hs2309-017>.
- Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989): 139–67. <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8/>.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*. New York: New Press, 2017.
- Devitt, Catherine, and Jaime Tatay. "Sustainability and Interreligious Dialogue." *Pontificio Istituto Di Studi Arabi E D'Islamistica* 43 (May 21, 2018).
- Farrell, Thomas. "Pope Francis' 2023 Eco-Exhortation Laudate Deum ('Praise God'), and Walter J. Ong's Thought." *conservancy.umn.edu*. University of Minnesota Duluth, October 2023. <https://conservancy.umn.edu/items/546a382c-9516-4629-bdf0-c7842da71818>.
- Fredman, Sandra. "Intersectionality Transforms Our Perceptions, Our Perceptions Shape Our Realities." *www.coe.int*. Council of Europe, May 2016. [https://www.coe.int/en/web/north-south-centre/intersectionality/-/asset\\_publisher/wMPHJcZn0JE6/content/structural-imbalance](https://www.coe.int/en/web/north-south-centre/intersectionality/-/asset_publisher/wMPHJcZn0JE6/content/structural-imbalance).
- Friel, Chris S. "Fratelli Tutti and the Crisis of Liberalism." *Academia.edu*, October 21, 2020. [https://www.academia.edu/44346648/Fratelli\\_Tutti\\_and\\_the\\_Crisis\\_of\\_Liberalism](https://www.academia.edu/44346648/Fratelli_Tutti_and_the_Crisis_of_Liberalism).
- Gates, Carrie. "ND Experts Respond to 'Laudate Deum': Tackling Climate Change Is 'a Fundamentally Human and Social Problem.'" *Notre Dame News*, October 5, 2023. <https://news.nd.edu/news/nd-experts-respond-to-laudate-deum-tackling-climate-change-is-a-fundamentally-human-and-social-problem/>.
- Goertz, Gary, Amy G Mazur, and Weldon S Laurel. "Intersectionality." In *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology*, 193218. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755910.009>.
- Horan, Daniel. "Relationship Leads Us to Peace: Three Key Franciscan Themes in 'Fratelli Tutti.'" *National Catholic Reporter*, October 4, 2020. <https://www.ncronline.org/opinion/faith-seeking-understanding/relationship-leads-us-peace-three-key-franciscan-themes>.
- Jacob, Sunny. "Laudate Deum: A Document on Integral Ecology for the Humanity." *Academia.edu*, October 9, 2023. [https://www.academia.edu/107856859/Laudate\\_Deum\\_A\\_Document\\_on\\_Integral\\_Ecology\\_for\\_the\\_Humanity](https://www.academia.edu/107856859/Laudate_Deum_A_Document_on_Integral_Ecology_for_the_Humanity).
- Moss, Walter. "Reading Pope Francis's 'Fratelli Tutti' through Carl Sandburg." *Academia.edu*, November 2, 2020. [https://www.academia.edu/44418894/Reading\\_Pope\\_Francis\\_Fratelli\\_tutti\\_through\\_Carl\\_Sandburg](https://www.academia.edu/44418894/Reading_Pope_Francis_Fratelli_tutti_through_Carl_Sandburg).
- O'Reilly, Peter. "Academia.edu - Find Research Papers, Topics, Researchers." *Academia.edu*, 2020. <https://www.academia.edu/search?utf8=%E2%>.
- Pigafetta, Antonio. *The First Voyage around the World*. Madrid. Vol. 33. Cleveland, 1522.
- Piscos, James Lotero. "Analyzing Inclusivity in Pope Francis' Fratelli Tutti (on Fraternity and Social Friendship) and Its Implications to Catholic Education." *Bedan Research Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 30, 2021): 240–62. <https://doi.org/10.58870/berj.v6i1.29>.
- Pope Francis. "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship." *www.vatican.va*, October 3, 2020. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html).





- . “Laudate Deum, Praise God for All Creatures.” [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html), October 4, 2023. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html).
- . “Laudati Si, Praise Be to You-on Care for Our Common Home.” [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html), June 18, 2015. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_encyclica-laudato-si.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html).
- . “Lumen Fidei, the Light of Faith.” [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_encyclica-lumen-fidei.html), 2013. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130629\\_encyclica-lumen-fidei.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_encyclica-lumen-fidei.html).
- . “Opening of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops a the Opening of the Synod of Bishops, on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.” [www.vatican.va](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco_20181003_apertura-sinodo.html), 2018. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20181003\\_apertura-sinodo.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco_20181003_apertura-sinodo.html).
- . “Pope Francis’ Homily Opening the Synod on Synodality.” *America Magazine*, October 4, 2023. <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/10/04/pope-francis-homily-opening-mass-synod-246198>.
- Rasmussen, Larry L. *Earthhonoring Faith: Religious Ethics in a New Key*. Oxford University Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199917006.001.0001>.
- Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops. “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality.” [press.vatican.va](https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2021/09/07/0541/01166.html), 2021. <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2021/09/07/0541/01166.html>.
- Soho, Jessica. “Jessica Soho, Inimbestigahan Ang Isyu Sa Pagmimina Sa Homonhon Island.” [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVAcjegkiaY). KMJS, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVAcjegkiaY>.
- Synod 2021-2024. “Synodal Process.” [www.synod.va](http://www.synod.va), 2021. <https://www.synod.va/en/synodal-process.html>.
- United Nation Development Programme. “UNSDGs in Action.” UNDP, 2015. [https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals?gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAjMKqBhCgARIsAPDgWlyM3vjZHE-mqagyX7PMcT9T3sdbwj3FOssQQPnc1RJEydxfg\\_KUCMaAtPTEALw\\_wcB](https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiAjMKqBhCgARIsAPDgWlyM3vjZHE-mqagyX7PMcT9T3sdbwj3FOssQQPnc1RJEydxfg_KUCMaAtPTEALw_wcB).
- United Nations. “UN Climate Change Conferences.” United Nations, 2023. <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/un-climate-conferences>.
- Unites States Conference Catholic Bishops. “Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality,” 2021. <https://www.usccb.org/resources/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf>.
- UNTV News and Rescue. “CHR Investigates Alleged Violations of Mining Company in Sibuyan Island.” YouTube, February 15, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82m6NvnFzOI>.
- Villafana, A. “Environmental Mobilization: Pope Francis’ Encyclical.” [www.academia.edu](http://www.academia.edu/31950900/Environmental_Mobilization_Pope_Francis_Encyclical), 2018. [https://www.academia.edu/31950900/Environmental\\_Mobilization\\_Pope\\_Francis\\_Encyclical](https://www.academia.edu/31950900/Environmental_Mobilization_Pope_Francis_Encyclical).

