



In the previous chapters of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has helped us to understand how environmental degradation is destroying our common home and harming our brothers and sisters. In Chapter 5, noting a “need for a change of direction and other courses of action” (163), Pope Francis outlines the major paths of dialogue which are so desperately needed.

DIALOGUE

I. DIALOGUE ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

As we saw in the last chapter, everything is connected. Our one world needs a common plan; it necessitates a global solution that benefits all. There have been World Summits (e.g., COP30 Brazil which was held in November 2025), that “have not lived up to the expectations because, due to lack of political will, they were unable to reach meaningful and effective agreements on the environment” (166). In some cases, agreements that were proclaimed “still await an efficient and flexible means of practical implementation” (167). Unfortunately, too many countries, especially the richer and more powerful countries, come to the table to protect and promote self-interest.

What is needed:

1. An understanding and commitment to the spirit of solidarity with, and for the care of, those who are poor.
2. A political authority who, among other things, would “guarantee the protection of the environment” (cf. 175).

II. DIALOGUE FOR NEW NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICIES

Since *one size does not fit all*, and since there are no uniform recipes (cf. 180), dialogue is needed at the national and local level. In the spirit of the principle of subsidiarity, national and local implementation of international agreements and principles should be done according to the gifts and needs of the people. We need political leaders who can commit to long-term plans for the care of the earth and the care of those who are poor (cf. 178).

What is needed:

1. Promote best practice and to “stimulate creativity in seeking new solutions and to encourage individual and group initiatives” (177).
2. Public pressure has to be exerted to bring about decisive political action (179; cf. 181).
3. National and local long-term plans to care for those who are poor and for care of the earth.

III. DIALOGUE AND TRANSPARENCY IN DECISION-MAKING

There is a need for “transparent political processes involving a free exchange of views” as we assess the environmental impact of business ventures and projects. Too often, it would appear that environmental concerns are sacrificed for profit. “In any discussion about a proposed venture, a number of questions need to be asked in order to discern whether or not it will contribute to genuine integral development. What will it accomplish? Why? Where? When? How? For whom? What are the risks? What are the costs? Who will pay those costs and how? (185)

What is needed:

1. As individuals and groups, we need to get involved, to be part of the discussion. We must be aware of what is happening and ensure our voices are heard.

IV. POLITICS AND ECONOMY IN DIALOGUE FOR HUMAN FULFILMENT

Often efficiency is narrowly defined by how quickly something can be done and how much money we can make. Too often we believe that “problems can be solved simply by an increase of profits of companies or individuals” (190). The impact on the environment and on those most in need must be considered. If we are going to promote the common good, “there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life” (189). Finally, “Environmental impact assessment should not come after the drawing up of a business proposition or the proposal of a particular policy, plan or programme. It should be part of the process from the beginning, and be carried out in a way which is interdisciplinary, transparent and free of all economic or political pressure” (183).

What is needed:

1. We need to redefine our notion of progress that includes caring for others, caring for the earth, and caring for the well-being of all.
2. A willingness to make sacrifices and simplify our lifestyles, so that others can simply live (cf. 193).

V. RELIGIONS IN DIALOGUE WITH SCIENCE

Science can tell us *how something* is created; religions tell us *why* (the reason and purpose for which) something is created. Empirical science is not meant to provide us with a complete explanation of life (why are we here), nor is it meant to be a source of moral authority. At the same time, Sacred Scripture is not meant to offer us a scientific reason for the existence of creation. We need both the *how* and the *why*, *science* and *religion*.

What is needed:

1. A healthy understanding of the relationship between science and religion.
2. A healthy approach to reading, praying with, studying and understanding Sacred Scripture.
3. Dialogue between religions “for the sake of protecting nature, defending the poor, and building networks of respect and fraternity” (201).

