

LAUDATO SI': CHAPTER THREE

THE HUMAN ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS



SEPTEMBER 2025

PART 1: THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE TECHNOCRATIC PARADIGM

In Chapter 3, continuing to use the 'see, discern, act model', Pope Francis explores the *human roots of the ecological crises*. He starts this chapter by rejoicing in the advances that technology has brought to us and notes how we are "excited by the immense possibilities which they continue to open up before us, for science and technology are wonderful products of a God-given human creativity" (102). Technological advancements have led to improving the quality of human life (103). At the same time, he is aware that with all these advantages, there have been some drawbacks:

1. Not all people have benefited from the advances. This has led to some people getting richer while forcing others into greater poverty and harm to the earth.
2. Never has humanity had so much power over itself and this power is not always used for good but instead for destruction. We must ask ourselves in whose hands this power is and how it is being used (104)
3. We have become fixated on power, equating power with progress and falsely believing that goodness is connected to power, especially financial power (105).
4. Technological advancements have not been accompanied by "sound ethics, a culture and spirituality genuinely capable of setting limits and teaching clear-minded self-restraint" (105).

It has become countercultural to choose a lifestyle whose goals are even partly independent of technology, of its costs and its power to globalize and make us all the same. Technology tends to absorb everything into its ironclad logic, and those who are surrounded with technology "know full well that it moves forward in the final analysis neither for profit nor for the well-being of the human race", that "in the most radical sense of the term power is its motive – a lordship over all (108).

IN OUR HEARTS WE KNOW SOMETHING IS WRONG: "IN THE CONCRETE SITUATION CONFRONTING US, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS WHICH POINT TO WHAT IS WRONG, SUCH AS ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, ANXIETY, A LOSS OF THE PURPOSE OF LIFE AND OF COMMUNITY LIVING" (110).



JOIN US AS WE TAKE ACTION FOR OUR PLANET & THE POOR.

DOL.CA/LAUDATO-SI

At the roots of the Ecological Crisis is the **Globalization of the Technocratic Paradigm**

We are becoming increasingly fascinated by technological advancement, believing that things and ways of doing and being that are faster and more efficient must mean they are better. Pope Francis points out that this technocratic paradigm elevates the methods and goals of science and technology to the primary way of understanding reality. It treats the world as an object to be mastered, measured, and exploited through logical/rational procedures, reducing human life, nature, and society to mere technical problems (106-108). And thus, instead of caring for integral human development, balanced lifestyles, balanced levels of production, a better distribution of wealth, the environment, future generations and social inclusion, we get caught up with what more we can do, what more can we own, power and profit.

In the end the technocratic paradigm has us all thinking:

- Economically we must always be profit driven without concern for how our decisions might negatively impact people and/or the environment.
- Politically our thinking and decision making becomes driven by a desire for power, by so-called efficiency (even if is ineffective) and by data. The human component, the respect for human dignity, for future generations, and for the common good is easily ignored.

NOBODY IS SUGGESTING A RETURN TO THE STONE AGE, BUT WE DO NEED TO SLOW DOWN AND LOOK AT REALITY IN A DIFFERENT WAY, TO APPROPRIATE THE POSITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE, BUT ALSO TO RECOVER THE VALUES AND THE GREAT GOALS SWEEPED AWAY BY OUR UNRESTRAINED DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR (114).

Reflection:

- How might we promote “a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm” while respecting the dignity of each person, the common good and care for our common home? (cf. 111)
- How might we put technology “at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral?” (cf. 112)
- How has the accumulation of constant novelties affected me? Has it led to a superficiality which pulls us in one direction? Has it become difficult to pause and recover depth in life? (113)

Today we find ourselves in a new culture, deeply characterized and formed by technology. It is up to us – it is up to each one of you – to ensure that this culture remains human. Science and technology influence the way we live in the world, even affecting how we understand ourselves and how we relate to God, how we relate to one another. But nothing that comes from man and his creativity should be used to undermine the dignity of others. Our mission – your mission – is to nurture a culture of Christian humanism, and to do so together. This is the beauty of the “network” for all of us.

Address of his Holiness Pope Leo XIV to Catholic Digital Missionaries and Influencers (July 29, 2025)