
Integral ecology. The Holy See: need for “ecological citizenship”

“Reaffirming the centrality of integral ecology in the life of us all, contributing to identifying concrete ways to live it and to implement it according to individual sensitivity, but above all starting from the specific needs of caring for our common home and those who inhabit it, particularly those in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable situations.” This is the purpose of the document prepared by the Holy See's Interdicastery Table, entitled "Journeying for the care of the common home", featuring a set of "recommendations for action" on integral ecology - at the heart of *Laudato si* - inviting the particular Churches "to set an example of coherence" with the encyclical's indications, five years after its publication: "Education and training on integral ecology, differentiated waste collection and disposal, use of more environmentally friendly means of transport, critical and circular consumption, improved insulation systems for buildings, energy efficiency, ethical investment, abolition of disposable plastic, care of green areas." "At this challenging time, destined to bring about significant changes in the societies in which we live - the reference to ongoing pandemic - we are called to care for one another, not to close ourselves off in selfishness, to promote and protect human life from its beginning to its natural end, to offer appropriate medical care to all, to foster international solidarity, to combat the throwaway culture, to study, to build together new, more equitable economic and financial systems, to work for dialogue, peace, and the rejection of violence and war." *“Giving concrete form to the new paradigm of integral ecology” proposed by Laudato si means having “a far-sighted vision, which must materialize in the places and spaces where education and culture are cultivated and transmitted, awareness is created, political, scientific and economic responsibility is formed, and, in general, in places where responsible action is carried out.”*

“The elimination of human lives is an unacceptable policy for protecting the planet and promoting integral human development.”

The first part of the text exhorts us to "protect the family, the fundamental cell of society, human life from conception to natural death and the fragility of creation as a question of justice", and to "implement practical initiatives to defend and promote human life on a social, educational and pastoral level" in schools and parishes. The document also calls to

“place emphasis on the notion of sin against human life

among the young generation in the educational, cultural and pastoral spheres, especially in connection with the new challenges in the area of bioethics", such as abortion, euthanasia, suicide. **“Promoting sound policies for family growth in order to counter the so-called demographic winter, especially in Western countries”**, is the most urgent measure to be taken regarding the family. "The school, which has lost the primacy of transmission of knowledge, should restore renewed centrality", reads the text, with precise indications for schools of all levels and for universities. The task of the media, is "to oppose the dissemination of misinformation designed to deny the existence of an environmental crisis" and "to give voice to those who do not have it, encouraging and facilitating the acquisition of first-hand accounts of those who are suffering or are willing to report abuses, pollution, episodes of violated human rights." **“Facilitating the widest possible access to water and avoiding the waste of energy by changing lifestyles, “especially in the richest regions of the planet”**, is the new direction. For the Holy See, a new notion of "ecological citizenship" is also needed to prevent deforestation and exploitation of vast areas of the world, as in the Pan-Amazon region, including the risk of environmental disasters. "Reducing the quantity of polluted water and plastic in the oceans, avoiding the use of the seas and oceans as dumping grounds", is the proposal to protect the marine ecosystem, together with the commitment to "eradicate piracy, trafficking in human beings, drugs and other forms of illegal trade at sea and in ports." *“Promoting dignified work*

and respecting workers, rejecting all forms of discrimination, recognising to all intents and purposes the equal dignity of women, as well as the inherent value of all types of work, provided it is worthy of the human person." This is the document's first recommendation in relation to labour, along with requests for fair wages, flexible working hours reconcilable with family life, employment in the most underdeveloped countries, stable job opportunities especially for young people. A firm "no" to unemployment, "inhuman exploitation" and "new forms of slavery", such as human trafficking, valuing "the primacy of the human person over machines and new technologies." "Fostering and protecting access to justice, even by the poor or unschooled", while "carefully rethinking the prison system", are the proposals at political level. Extending access to treatment and medicines to the whole population, with special regard for the poorest and most vulnerable, is among the health recommendations. "To examine the dangers posed by the rapid spread of viral and bacterial epidemics in a world characterised by increasing urbanisation and human mobility", the suggestion at the time of the coronavirus.

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