

EFFORTS TO OVERCOME THE CLIMATE
CRISIS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF
HUMAN LIFE ACCORDING TO THE
LAUDATE DEUM DOCUMENT

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to show the role of the *Laudate Deum* document issued by Pope Francis in efforts to address the climate crisis about the survival of humans on earth. Humans were created by God to be His partners in protecting and managing the earth. However, over time, humans began to neglect their duties. Humans tend to prioritize their interests above all things. In the document *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis seeks to reconcile mankind with nature which has begun to be damaged. Humans are invited to look back at all their negligence. Pope Francis outlines the right way for everyone to address the climate crisis for the sustainability of human life.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the world's attention is increasingly drawn to nature, which is increasingly leading to the point of collapse. The impact of the destruction of nature is felt everywhere. Climate change that occurs as one of the natural damage that occurs will increasingly harm many people and families [1]. It makes all parties in the world required to try to direct their attention to nature that began to experience damage. The ecological crisis is an inevitable concern today. From the late 1960s to the early 1970s two trends emerged in response to the ecological crisis. First, refers to political, economic and technological issues. Second, refers to philosophy and religion [2]. Therefore, to overcome the ecological crisis, it must involve all people from all walks of life. People must start taking concrete actions by changing paradigms and shifting lifestyles [3].

Pope Francis believes this is an important matter for the Church to consider. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis had expressed his concern for all people on earth who are already suffering. He also expressed his concern for the preservation of the earth as the common home of all human beings[4]. Pope Francis feels that *Laudato Si'* has not been enough to awaken everyone to begin a life that is more respectful of nature and human survival. He believes that it is the human responsibility to protect and preserve the world and that this can be achieved by making people aware of how dangerous the current climate crisis is.

The climate crisis is a matter of great concern to Pope Francis. In 2023, he published a document entitled *Laudate Deum: Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation to "All People of Good Will" on the Climate Crisis*, which represented a continuation of his efforts to protect the world from destruction. Pope Francis continues to encourage all the world's forces to work together to repair the damage already done to the climate. It is up to humans to repair what has been destroyed. Humans are an integral part of the world. We are

¹ Fransiskus, *LAUDATE DEUM*, Dokumen Gerejawi, 137 (Dokpen KWI, 2023), art. 2.

² Barnabas Ohoiwutun, 'Agama dan Alam dari Perspektif Arne Naess', *Media (Jurnal Filsafat dan Teologi)*, 3.1 (2022), pp. 1–12 (p. 1), doi:10.53396/media.v3i1.72.

³ Arne Naess, 'Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy', *New York: Cambridge University Press*, 1989.

⁴ *Laudate Deum*, art. 2.

interdependent with nature. It is our duty to protect and nurture nature and other creatures in it [5].

The aim of this paper is to highlight the issues Pope Francis raises in relation to climate change. It provides a thorough discussion of the *Laudate Deum* document, which can be considered to be Pope Francis' response to this issue. In particular, it considers ways in which the *Laudate Deum* document addresses the climate crisis and, in doing so, contributes to the sustainability of human life on Earth.

LAUDATE DEUM DOCUMENT

Laudate Deum or “Praise the Lord” has a meaning that shows how humanity should appreciate and praise God who is the creator of all creation. The almighty God has made the heavens and the earth and their contents well and God himself expects that humans as reasonable creatures seek and manage nature's creation properly and responsibly.

Background of the Laudate Deum Document

The main reason for the issuance of the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* is Pope Francis' concern about the destruction of creation, which is increasingly heading towards collapse and may have already begun to reach the peak of its destruction [6]. It is this phenomenon that ultimately makes erratic climate change so that the impact is detrimental to many people on this earth. In addition, there are several reasons behind the writing of this Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* such as climate change and environmental degradation that affect the rise of the earth's average temperature and the shifting of rainfall that can cause floods and droughts in some areas. Even the most pressing issue of climate change is the melting of ice, which causes sea water levels to rise and threatens coastal areas and small islands to flooding. In addition, deforestation is also a cause of natural destruction. It can result in a reduction in wildlife and biodiversity or even causes the loss of wildlife habitat.

⁵ *Agama dan Alam dari Perspektif Arne Naess*, p. 2.

⁶ *Laudate Deum*, art. 12.

Furthermore, the brutal felling of trees reduces the capacity of forests to absorb carbon dioxide, which in turn exacerbates climate change.

The writing of the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* is also based on the awareness of Pope Francis as the leader of the Church who has the moral and spiritual responsibility to call for a change in attitude and action towards the environment. Pope Francis himself reminds us that the earth is God's creation that must be respected and safeguarded^[7]. On an ongoing basis, Pope Francis himself recognises that humanity's response has not been as effective as it could be, while the earth is increasingly heading towards a challenging future. With the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum*, the church leader hopes that we will consider ways to increase our concern for our fellow human beings and our concern for the environment in which we grow and develop.

Purpose of the Document

The intention of this *Laudate Deum* document is to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the importance of maintaining and preserving the natural environment in which we live and thrive. It is our sincere hope that through the writing of this *Laudate Deum* document, many people with awareness and wisdom will strive as much as possible to achieve environmental stability by doing good things for this earth, for the benefit of us all as human beings

Outline Document

The *Laudate Deum* document consists of several parts. It was previously titled *Laudate Deum* Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation to All People of Good Will on the Climate Crisis. The first part of the document talks about the global climate crisis, the second part talks about the increasingly dominant technocratic paradigm, the third part talks about the weakness of international politics, the fourth part talks about climate conferences: progress and failure, the fifth part talks about what to expect from COP28 in Dubai, and the sixth part talks about spiritual motivations. Overall, the document talks about the

⁷ *Laudate Deum*, art. 1.

problems with our beloved earth and contains teachings on how to do good things for the common good.

The Laudate Deum document offers an explanation and a call from Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, regarding his concern for creation. It expresses his hope that humanity will work together to protect the planet and ensure its future. It is therefore the hope of Pope Francis that all people will strive for good things by focusing on social justice and environmental sustainability. Indeed, this document also serves to remind us that humans bear a responsibility for the sustainability of life on earth. We are created in His image, and it is only through our capacity for reason that we can engage with the world around us in a way that ensures the continuity of creation.

CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate crisis is a condition in which significant climate change occurs when the earth's average temperature increases over a period of time. This is thought to be due to the effects of greenhouse gases and other human activities that exploit the environment in ways that may not be entirely sustainable, resulting in or causing the global warming that we are experiencing today. It is becoming increasingly clear that climate change is having a significant impact on human life, as well as the clean water crisis and also affecting human economic life.

Causes of the Climate Crisis

The current climate change is a very challenging and potentially dangerous situation. It is becoming increasingly clear that human activities and the resulting environmental damage are the main drivers of this climate change. Climate change is a phenomenon that occurs with some regularity, with the temperatures rising and causing various difficulties for humans. Despite the increase in temperature, some people still question whether these changes are a scientific fact. Some argue that this is because the planet has always experienced, and will continue to experience, periods of cooling and warming^[8]. It would seem that they are unaware of the fact that the reality they

⁸ *Laudate Deum*, art. 6.

are now experiencing is one that is extremely dangerous to human survival. It is becoming increasingly clear that the effects of climate change are having a significant impact on our planet. The melting of glaciers and rising sea levels could potentially lead to people being displaced from their homes.

It is often the case that those who are better off in society tend to blame those who are less well off for having too many children, which in turn leads to the climate crisis. It is possible that they are unaware that the climate crisis is occurring as a result of their exploitation of nature through the unfair use of natural resources. It is worth noting that the richest people on earth contribute more to global pollution than the poorest 50% of the world's population. Furthermore, per capita emissions in rich countries are higher than in the poorest. [9].

It could be said that humans are the subject of climate change and global warming. It could be said that humans are perhaps more concerned with their personal lives than with the common good. This is perhaps because we have created various technologies to satisfy our personal needs, which has resulted in us squeezing nature [10]. It could be said that humans have a tendency to be somewhat arrogant, and this can sometimes result in the misuse of nature. One such misuse is the creation of greenhouse gases, which have been identified as a significant contributor to global warming. The Mauna Loa observatory has been measuring carbon dioxide levels on a daily basis since 1958. The results show that global warming has increased very rapidly in recent years, which may be linked to an increase in industrial development and emissions [11].

It would be prudent for humanity to consider the possibility that, in the next ten years, there may be an increase in global warming on the earth's surface. This could also have an impact on the high level of the atmosphere at sea level. With the occurrence of this event, there is a possibility that oxygen levels may decrease, which could potentially lead to human poisoning and even death. It is also worth noting that a decrease in snow cover could have an impact

⁹ *Laudate Deum*, art. 9.

¹⁰ Lailiy Muthmainnah, Rizal Mustansyir, and Sindung Tjahyadi, 'Kapitalisme, Krisis Ekologi, Dan Keadilan Intergenerasi: Analisis Kritis Atas Problem Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup Di Indonesia', *Mozaik Humaniora* 20, 1, 2020.

¹¹ *Laudate Deum*, art. 11.

on ecosystems. It is possible that many animals may be affected as a result of the melting of ice caps and the rise in sea levels [12].

How the Climate Crisis Affects Human Life

It seems that there is growing evidence that the climate crisis is having an impact on the sustainability of human life. One of the most visible examples today is the impact of floods, landslides and droughts, as well as the lack of clean water. It is becoming increasingly evident that the relationship between humans, the environment and animals is being affected by human behaviour that could perhaps be more responsible [13]. Climate change can threaten the survival of humans and other living things, and cause various negative impacts such as lack of clean water and food availability.

The immense phenomenon of climate change presents the earth with a number of challenges that could potentially impact human life. These include the intensity of natural disasters and the transmission of diseases. Furthermore, climate change has the potential to result in an increase in global temperature, which could have an impact on the loss of carrying capacity of the environment and may even narrow the space for life. It is therefore important to take climate change seriously in order to reduce its impact on the sustainability of human life. [14].

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

In light of the changes that are occurring on our planet today, the Catholic Church is taking a stance. In his document *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis kindly advised all Catholics and non-Catholics to consider making

¹² *Laudate Deum*, art. 12.

¹³ Amatus Woi, “Manusia Dan Lingkungan Dalam Persekutuan Ciptaan”, ed. by A. Sunarko and Eddy Kristiyanto, *Yogyakarta: Kanisius*, Menyapa Bumi Menyembah Hyang Ilahi: Tinjauan Teologis Atas Lingkungan Hidup, 2008, pp. 22–23.

¹⁴ Fransiskus, ‘*Laudato Si’: Terpujilah Engkau*’ (Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi dan Penerangan KWI, 2018).

changes to their lifestyles, in order to become more responsible. Pope Francis also suggests that our world is not as it should be, and that we must take action to address any unwanted consequences. Pope Francis is aware that a form of global warming is occurring as a result of human actions that have led to a significant increase in volcanic eruptions in recent decades. In light of these concerns, Pope Francis encourages us all to consider the importance of protecting the natural world around us.

The Role of the Laudate Deum Document

It is becoming increasingly clear that the destruction of nature is a growing concern in the present time. Forests that were once green have now become barren places, and it is clear that the damage is being done by humans. Such damage has had an impact on climate change and environmental degradation, which has led to an increase in the earth's average temperature and a shift in rainfall patterns that can cause floods and droughts in certain areas. This *Laudate Deum* document was created with the intention of raising awareness of climate change and encouraging all of us to play our part in protecting our planet. It is therefore our collective responsibility to do everything we can to protect our natural environment if we are to ensure that climate change is sustainable. The *Laudate Deum* document presents a number of potential solutions to the challenges posed by the destruction of nature. In this context, we can identify a number of ways to overcome the climate crisis and ensure the sustainability of human life.

The challenge of addressing the climate crisis

The *Laudate Deum* document offers a number of suggestions for addressing the destruction of nature and the climate crisis, which could contribute to the sustainability of human life.

Personal

We can and must take action to address the climate crisis. We must all pay attention to cleanliness and not litter. If we are active smokers, we must dispose of cigarette residue properly. We must also reduce smoking to protect our

health and the air. We are all connected to the world around us, and deforestation is a disease that affects us all. Extinction is a painful mutilation that we must mourn.

In the Family

Families can and should take part in overcoming the climate crisis. It is crucial to remember to turn off any appliances that are not in use. This will help to avoid wastage and ensure that the family is making the most of their resources. Additionally, they can engage in joint activities such as planting trees and vegetables around the house. These actions are an important step in overcoming the climate crisis [15]. However, even the smallest thing can help. Avoiding a tenth of a degree rise in global temperature is enough to prevent many people from suffering. What is important is something less quantitative: we must remember that there is no lasting change without cultural change. This means that we must also remember that there is no cultural change without a change in the human person, and that this change in the human person must come about through the maturation of lifestyles and social beliefs.[16]

Within the Community

To overcome the climate crisis, a community or group must create a useful activity. One such activity is cleaning up areas prone to flooding. This can be done by cleaning culverts that are filled with garbage because of the actions of irresponsible humans. This will ensure that during the rainy season the area is not flooded. Cleaning the culverts will reduce the occurrence of floods and landslides [17].

¹⁵ *Laudate Deum*, art. 70.

¹⁶ Robin Ryan, 'The Theme of Communion in *Laudato Si'* and Its Implications for Ecclesiology', *New Theology Review*, 29 (2016), pp. 19–30.

¹⁷ Louis M. Savary and Teilhard de Chardin, 'The Divine Milieu', *New York: Paulist Press*, 2007, no. 25.

In the Church

It might be suggested that churches could play a part in addressing the sustainable climate crisis. One way in which they could do this would be by conducting education and awareness programmes. It is also worth noting that churches are active in spreading awareness about climate change and the importance of environmental conservation. They hold seminars and educational programmes to increase people's understanding of the impacts of climate change and actions that can be taken to mitigate it [18]. A number of churches have initiated environmental conservation programmes, including tree planting, river cleaning and forest preservation. These programmes have the dual objective of improving environmental quality and combating climate change. In this case, the church can assist the government in overcoming the climate crisis, thereby contributing to the greater good of humanity.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that all of us want our homes to be safe and comfortable, and we must therefore consider how important it is for us to protect our natural environment so that it remains beautiful and pleasant to live in. If we are to overcome the ongoing climate crisis, we need to pay attention to the ways above. It is also important to remember that we are all connected to each other and to the natural world, and that we will all feel the effects of climate change if we are ignorant of this. In the Laudate Deum document written by Pope Francis, we can see that the importance of protecting our nature is clear. The document was made because Pope Francis saw that this earth was increasingly heading towards destruction. To overcome this, we must quickly realise and keep this earth maintained. God has united us with all His creatures. However, the technocratic paradigm can isolate us from the environment around us and deceive us by making us forget that the whole world is a contact zone.

¹⁸ Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (Orbis Books, 1997), p. 110.

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