

Thomas Massaro, S.J. Kennedy Lecture at Saint Peter Church (Charlotte, NC) Jan. 25, 2020

Title: “Caring for our Common Home: Pope Francis’s Call for an Integral Ecology”

I. The Many Accomplishments of *Laudato Si’* (Papal encyclical letter of June 19, 2015)

A. Advancing Catholic Social Teaching on the Environment

B. Addressing the Specific Threat of Climate Change

-- diagnosis, comparisons, the role of science, distinctive role of religious voices

C. Sharing a Broader Vision of Humanity’s Place within Creation

-- overcoming “tyrannical anthropocentrism” and “technocratic rationality” with a shift of models:
Dominion → Stewardship → Creation-centered spirituality (see Genesis 1:28 on “subduing the earth”)

II. A Progress Report on the Adoption of an “Integral Ecology” in our Time: 3 Changes

A. Global Changes (including political implications surrounding the U.N. COP process)

-- economic changes, including the project of reassessing the logic of markets, mass consumption

B. Personal Changes (on the level of attitudes, spirituality, eliciting a sense of urgency)

-- a call for “ecological conversion” to new relationships with God and with other creatures, supported by emotions and spurring outward actions and lifestyle changes, with a sense of urgency

C. Ecclesial Changes (placing the church on a new trajectory, in line with vision of Francis)

—a new kind of church, featuring dialogue, dedicated to genuine listening, a “synodal church”

-- the encouraging October 2019 “Synod on the Pan-Amazonian Region” as a “child of *Laudato Si’*”

-- broad Synodal participation in some dioceses, and nationally in “Encuentro V” of Latino community

-- the Society of Jesus has recently adopted “care for environment” as one of its 4 Universal Apostolic Preferences (alongside supporting discernment, youth, the marginalized)

III. What will it take to “get our relationships right” on the way to environmental sustainability?

--focus on how “everything is connected,” overcoming alienations, responding to requirements of faith and of social justice by moving “from ideas to action” and beyond “weak responses thus far” (Madrid 2019)

-- affinities with Greta Thunberg, but with a deliberately less confrontative style and brimming with hope despite “climate grief,” cognizant of difference from previous experiences of environmental degradation

-- conducting an inventory of encouraging responses, charting future trajectories for change and action