

# Justice, Peace and Life

December 2023

## “The world sings of an infinite Love: How can we fail to care for it?”

-Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*

In the lead-up to the United Nations COP 28, Pope Francis issued an apostolic exhortation entitled *Laudate Deum*. COP 28 is the 28th Conference of Parties to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. It's an enormous international gathering of delegates from countries around the world, along with climate scientists and others. At these meetings, national governments make mutual agreements on combatting climate change, with greater and lesser amounts of enthusiasm and commitment.



Image: Rappler.com

In *Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis calls out governments as well as the rest of us for failing to live up to our commitments and responsibility to the Earth. He writes, “If we consider that emissions per individual in the United States are about two times greater than those of individuals living in China, and about seven times greater than the average of the poorest countries, we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact. As a result, along with indispensable political decisions, we would be making progress along the way to genuine care for one another.”

He calls us to recognize that individual actions aren't sufficient, that “it is necessary to be honest and recognize that the most effective solutions will not come from individual efforts alone, but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level.” At the same time, our individual choices to live sustainably still matter because they contribute to the cultural transformation— a new way of looking at the world and our place in it— that is needed to save humanity from the ravages of climate change. Pope Francis writes, “...[T]here are no lasting changes without cultural changes, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and there are no cultural changes without personal changes.”

Learn more about *Laudate Deum* at [this video link](#) from the Vatican and [this one](#) from Ignation Solidarity Network. Read the entire document [here](#). Then resolve to take climate change as the serious moral issue that the Church teaches us it is.



Nativity in Cream from  
Positive Image Gifts, Blackartdepot.com

Vulnerable God,  
As we contemplate the wonder of your birth,  
Stir in us the desire to cradle those who have  
no where to lay their head,  
That together we may rock the boat of injustice.  
Give us grace to offer our hands to those who reach out  
That with faltering steps we may find a way home  
And kindle our hearts to embrace  
the rejected and dispossessed  
And so meet you face to face.  
We ask this in your name. Amen.

-Annabel Shilson-Thomas/  
Catholic Agency For Overseas Development

## PRAY for COP28

Decisions made at the COP will affect all of us, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. **Pray hard** for wisdom and conviction for the leaders there.

God,  
All-merciful Love,  
Creator of all that is,  
you created and keep creating  
the world as a beautiful  
process of relatedness.  
Give us and all participants of COP 28  
genuine love for the world  
and the consciousness of its profound goodness.



God,  
All-merciful Love,  
Firstborn of the New Creation,  
you redeemed and keep redeeming  
this Creation from within,  
and so make possible our conversion to life.  
Give us and all participants of COP 28  
the understanding of the world's brokenness  
and of your constant healing effort.

God,  
All-merciful Love,  
Breath of life,  
you promised and keep promising  
the Transfiguration of all wounds  
and the Resurrection of your crucified Creation.  
Give us and all participants of COP 28  
your creative Spirit, hope-giving renewer of the world,  
to contribute courageously to your New Creation.

Amen.



This Advent, let's re-commit ourselves to living more sustainably. Let's recognize that addressing climate change is a moral issue, one that all of us are called to act on. As we welcome the Christ Child, let's build a world in which all God's children can flourish.

♥Take the **Laudate Deum Action Pledge**

Act on the personal, parish  
and global level



♥Participate in the **Advent Simplicity Challenge**  
(for instance, commit to car-free, spending-free Sundays)

♥Click **here** for tips on making your home more energy efficient but still cozy.

♥Find and reflect on other Advent resources from Catholic Climate Covenant **here**



**“[T]he destruction of the environment is an offense against God, a sin that is not only personal but also structural, one that greatly endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable in our midst and threatens to unleash a conflict between generations. Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death? To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future!**

-taken from **Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to COP28**

Although Pope Francis was unable to attend COP 28 due to ill health, his representative read his address to the gathering on December 2.

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