

ECOLOGY ON SUNDAYS

Pastoral Insights from *Laudato Si*, *Querida Amazonia*, *Fratelli Tutti*,
And Resources from the United Nations

November 29, 2020 to November 21, 2021 –
Year B – Sunday Lectionary

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In fulfillment of project requirement for the *Laudato Si Animators Program*
Sponsored by the Global Catholic Climate Movement

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Introduction

The year 2020 is a year most of us would like to forget. The global spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2) is the worse disease outbreak since the Spanish Flu a hundred years ago. Our lives have been turned upside down and we wonder if things will go back to the so-called “normal” times. The dreary statistics are well known: 1.4 million deaths with 260,000 deaths in the United States alone. As Advent 2020 begins, nearly 60 million global cases have been recorded, and the United States leads with 12.5 million, the highest of all the nations.

We live with new medical strategies that carry new anxieties and unknowns. Families are anxious about their children receiving an adequate education with the unfamiliar online learning environment. Those who are unemployed now find themselves in cars waiting in the new “bread lines.” Our economic system and its baked-in inequalities are exposed for what they are. The political environment is more divided now than ever with populist and authoritarian movements spawning in many countries. Places of worship have not escaped the fallout of a runaway virus and the necessary shutdowns to protect public health. The face mask is now an addition to our safety wardrobe, yet its proven efficacy is ignored by many.

Through the human exploitation of the planet’s resources a microscopic virus was unleashed into the natural environment and brought many-layered devastation. The pandemic is a stark reminder that everything is interconnected. What is our future? How will climate change affect the lives of our children and grandchildren and the Earth’s biome?

The answer to these questions depends on the choices we make today. One way to navigate these troubling waters is to turn to our tradition, especially to the scriptures and documents that are meant to be lights for our darkened path. A worthwhile approach to become acquainted with these teachings from tradition is to read them in the context of the lectionary, the yearlong cycle of scriptural readings through which we enter into the mystery of God, through the teachings and life of Christ.

This collection is a practical way to open the treasures of the Church’s pastoral thinking about questions that concern us: the natural environment and climate change, the extinction of species, the poor and the vulnerable, radical capitalism and consumerist lifestyles, technocratic societies, the fragility of democratic institutions, terrorism and nuclear war. In particular, we focus on Pope Francis’s writings on the environment: *Laudato Si* , *Querida Amazonia* , and *Fratelli Tutti* because they address the issues confronting humanity and offer suggestions for building a better world beyond the time of the pandemic.

Accompanying the ecclesial writings are the diplomatic and academic resources at multilateral institutions like the United Nations. In section 257 of *Fratelli Tutti* : On Fraternity and Social Friendship, Pope Francis draws the reader’s attention to the role of the United Nations and its Charter. He states that the United Nations is an “obligatory reference point of justice and a channel of peace.” For that reason, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, “[Transforming our world](#)”) and its anniversaries are highlighted at appropriate sections of this collection. We gratefully remember that in 2015 Pope Francis, through the publication of *Laudato Si* , influenced and promoted the UN’s SDGs as well as the Paris Climate Agreement. The Global Catholic Climate (GCCM) also contributed its influence at these critical junctures and continues to do so.



Homilists, educators and all parishioners can study these words, individually or in small groups (Zoom during the pandemic?), and derive inspiration and guidance from them. Then, in the context of the Sunday scriptures, the homily, the seasons and feasts, our prayer, current events, and global challenges come together in the liturgy. An average of three passages from Pope Francis’s writings are given for each Sunday. An SDG goal, with a hyperlink to its targets, is identified for each month. UN anniversaries are chosen to highlight global concerns and serve as points for reflection. These passages from Pope Francis’s writings and the resources from the UN can be used within homilies, as catalysts for the general intercessions, topics for religious education, and as reading for private reflection or for public discussion in post-Covid-19 faith-sharing groups. Immediately after this English introduction is a summary of the citations provided for Spanish readers. The English citation follows.

This collection is the result of fulfilling a requirement for the *Laudato Si Animators* program of the Global Catholic Climate Movement. A second part of the collection, from June to November, is forthcoming. I would like to express my gratitude to those who have helped me put together

this project, in particular, my friends in El Paso, Texas, Dr. Jean Ponder Soto, Marco Raposo, Odile Coirier, and from Seoul, South Korea, Young Mi Cho. Without them I would not have been able to have this collection completed in time for the First Sunday of Advent.

This year has had its challenges, but it also offers new possibilities. We have many reference points. We can take, read, pray and be guided by these documents and collections. Our choices make a difference. In fact, our future depends on them.

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**Reflexiones ecológicas con las escrituras dominicales:
Escritos desde *Laudato Si*, *Querida Amazonia*, y *Fratelli Tutti*
Con los de las Naciones Unidas**

Año B (2020-2021)

LS – *Laudato Si*
QA – *Querida Amazonia*
FT – *Fratelli Tutti*
ONU – Organización de las Naciones Unidas
ODS – Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible



1r Adviento
QA 15, 16
FT 15-17

ODS #1 Fin de la Pobreza (diciembre)
75 aniversario de la ONU (2020)

2º Adviento
FT 281-282
LS 24, 32-33
10 diciembre – [Día de los Derechos Humanos](#)
11 diciembre – [Día de las Montañas](#)

3r Adviento
FT 284-285
QA 45

4º Adviento
FT 277

Sagrada Familia
FT 114-115
QA 38-40
LS 21-22, 81, 164

Epifanía
LS 71-73
QA 20-22
FT 87
ODS #2 Hambre Cero (enero)
[Año Internacional de la Paz y la Confianza, 2021](#)

Bautismo del Señor
LS 83
QA 55-57
FT 92-93

2 Tiempo Ordinario (Ord)
LS 208
QA 61-63
FT 94-95

3º Ord
LS 216-217
QA 64-65
FT 112-113
24 enero [Día Internacional de la Educación](#)
27 enero [Día de Conmemoración del Holocausto](#)

4º Ord

LS 88

QA 75-76

FT 180

1 al 7 de febrero – [Semana Mundial de la Armonía Interconfesional](#)

5° Ord

LS 13, 18

QA 6-7

FT 247

[ODS #3 Salud y Bienestar \(febrero\)](#)

6° Ord

LS 220

QA 89-90

FT 54-55

[20 febrero Día Mundial de la Justicia Social](#)

1° Cuaresma

LS 68, 69, 126

QA 66, nota 84

FT 277

2° Cuaresma

LS 237

QA 74

FT 187, 190-191

[3 Marzo Día Mundial de la Vida Silvestre](#)

3° Cuaresma

LS 84, 85, 237

FT 117, 281, 287

[ODS #4 Educación de Calidad \(marzo\)](#)

[8 marzo Día Internacional de la Mujer](#)

4° Cuaresma

LS 19

QA 9-10, 16-17, 19

5° Cuaresma

LS 73, 75, 205

QA 73

21-27 marzo [Semana de la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial \(documento ONU\)](#)

Domingo de Ramos

QA 111

FT 287

Domingo de Pascua

LS 202-206

QA 109, 110

FT 278

[ODS #5 Igualdad de Género \(abril\)](#)

[5 abril Día Internacional de la Conciencia](#)

2° Pascua

QA 5-7, 19

LS 91, 92

FT 238, 241, 242, 244, 245

3° Pascua

LS 83, 100, 221

FT 59, 60

[22 abril Día Internacional de la Madre Tierra](#)

4° Pascua

QA 14, 15, 19

LS 9, 219, 220

FT 17, 257

[Preámbulo de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas](#)

[UN75 Más allá de 2020: Forjando nuestro futuro juntos](#)

[El papel de Los Agustinos en la ONU – Augustinians International](#)

5° Pascua

LS 47, 62, 67, 71, 93

QA 7, 33, 68

FT 11, 41, 53

[ODS #6 Agua limpia y Saneamiento \(mayo\)](#)

[8 mayo Día Mundial de las Aves Migratorias](#)

6° Pascua

LS 84, 142, 230

QA 63, 91

FT 154, 180, 198

7° Pascua o Ascensión

LS 14, 15, 155, 235

QA 56, 65

FT 74, 273, 280

[22 mayo Día Internacional de la Diversidad Biológica](#)

Pentecostés
LS 58, 73, 106, 118, 164
QA 60, 70
FT 30, 55, 77

Santísima Trinidad
LS 128, 151, 156, 172, 246
QA 41, 94
FT 3, 6, 8

November 29, 2020

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:33-37



[Link to SDG 1: No Poverty](#)

[Link to materials](#) on the SDGs

UN75 Anniversary -- <https://www.un.org/en/un75>

15. We need to feel outrage,[\[10\]](#) as Moses did (cf. Ex 11:8), as Jesus did (cf. Mk 3:5), as God does in the face of injustice (cf. Am 2:4-8; 5:7-12; Ps 106:40). It is not good for us to become inured to evil; it is not good when our social consciousness is dulled before “an exploitation that is leaving destruction and even death throughout our region... jeopardizing the lives of millions of people and especially the habitat of peasants and indigenous peoples”.[\[11\]](#) The incidents of injustice and cruelty that took place in the Amazon region even in the last century ought to provoke profound abhorrence, but they should also make us more sensitive to the need to acknowledge current forms of human exploitation, abuse and killing. With regard to the shameful past, let us listen, for example, to an account of the sufferings of the indigenous people during the “rubber age” in the Venezuelan Amazon region: “They gave no money to the indigenous people, but only merchandise, for which they charged dearly and the people never finished paying for it... They would pay for it but they were told, “You are racking up a debt” and the indigenous person would have to go back to work... More than twenty ye’kuana towns

were entirely razed to the ground. The ye'kuana women were raped and their breasts amputated, pregnant women had their children torn from the womb, men had their fingers or hands cut off so they could not sail... along with other scenes of the most absurd sadism".[\[12\]](#)

16. Such a history of suffering and contempt does not heal easily. Nor has colonization ended; in many places, it has been changed, disguised and concealed,[\[13\]](#) while losing none of its contempt for the life of the poor and the fragility of the environment. As the bishops of the Brazilian Amazon have noted, "the history of the Amazon region shows that it was always a minority that profited from the poverty of the majority and from the unscrupulous plundering of the region's natural riches, God's gift to the peoples who have lived there for millennia and to the immigrants who arrived in centuries past".[\[14\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 15-16

15. The best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values. Today, in many countries, hyperbole, extremism and polarization have become political tools. Employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism, in a variety of ways one denies the right of others to exist or to have an opinion. Their share of the truth and their values are rejected and, as a result, the life of society is impoverished and subjected to the hubris of the powerful. Political life no longer has to do with healthy debates about long-term plans to improve people's lives and to advance the common good, but only with slick marketing techniques primarily aimed at discrediting others. In this craven exchange of charges and counter-charges, debate degenerates into a permanent state of disagreement and confrontation.

16. Amid the fray of conflicting interests, where victory consists in eliminating one's opponents, how is it possible to raise our sights to recognize our neighbours or to help those who have fallen along the way? A plan that would set great goals for the development of our entire human family nowadays sounds like madness. We are growing ever more distant from one another, while the slow and demanding march towards an increasingly united and just world is suffering a new and dramatic setback.

17. To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home. Such care does not interest those economic powers that demand quick profits. Often the voices raised in defence of the environment are silenced or ridiculed, using apparently reasonable arguments that are merely a screen for special interests. In this shallow, short-sighted culture that we have created, bereft of a shared vision, "it is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims".[\[12\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 15-17 (Chapter One: Dark Clouds over a Closed World)

December 6, 2020

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Is 40:1-5, 9-11/

2 Pt 3:8-14/

Mk 1:1-8 (5)

10 December: [Human Rights Day](#) ([A/RES/423 \(V\)](#))

11 December: [International Mountain Day](#) ([A/RES/57/245](#))

281. A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. "God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised".[\[278\]](#)

282. It follows that "we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... For the deeper, stronger and richer our own identity is, the more we will be capable of enriching others with our own proper contribution".[\[279\]](#) We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbour, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 281-282 (Religion and Violence)

24. Warming has effects on the carbon cycle. It creates a vicious circle which aggravates the situation even more, affecting the availability of essential resources like drinking water, energy and agricultural production in warmer regions, and leading to the extinction of part of the planet's biodiversity. The melting in the polar ice caps and in high altitude plains can lead to the dangerous release of methane gas, while the decomposition of frozen organic material can further increase the emission of carbon dioxide. Things are made worse by the loss of tropical forests which would otherwise help to mitigate climate change. Carbon dioxide pollution increases the acidification of the oceans and compromises the marine food chain. If present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for all of us. A rise in the sea level, for example, can create extremely serious situations, if we consider that a quarter of the world's population lives on the coast or nearby, and that the majority of our megacities are situated in coastal areas.

*** *Laudato Si* 24

32. The earth's resources are also being plundered because of short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production. The loss of forests and woodlands entails the loss of species which may constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses. Different species contain genes which could be key resources in years ahead for meeting human needs and regulating environmental problems.

33. It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential "resources" to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.

*** *Laudato Si* 32-33 (Loss of Biodiversity)

December 13, 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Is 61:1-2a, 10-11/

1 Thes 5:16-24/

Jn 1:6-8, 19-28 (8)

284. At times fundamentalist violence is unleashed in some groups, of whatever religion, by the rashness of their leaders. Yet, "the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions that we represent... As religious leaders, we are called to be true 'people of dialogue', to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Intermediaries seek to give everyone a discount, ultimately in order to gain something for themselves. The mediator, on the other hand, is one who retains nothing for himself, but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed, knowing that the only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue and not by constructing new walls".[\[283\]](#)

An appeal

285. In my fraternal meeting, which I gladly recall, with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "we resolutely [declared] that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women... God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people".[\[284\]](#) For this reason I would like to reiterate here the appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together:

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 284-285

45. The Amazon is also the spinal column that creates harmony and unity: “the river does not divide us. It unites us and helps us live together amid different cultures and languages”.[\[55\]](#) While it is true that in these lands there are many “Amazon regions”, the principal axis is the great river, the offspring of many rivers:

“From the high mountain range where the snows are eternal, the water descends and traces a shimmering line along the ancient skin of the rock: the Amazon is born. It is born every second. It descends slowly, a sinuous ray of light, and then swells in the lowland. Rushing upon green spaces, it invents its own path and expands. Underground waters well up to embrace the water that falls from the Andes. From the belly of the pure white clouds, swept by the wind, water falls from heaven. It collects and advances, multiplied in infinite pathways, bathing the immense plain... This is the Great Amazonia, covering the humid tropic with its astonishingly thick forest, vast reaches untouched by man, pulsing with life threading through its deep waters... From the time that men have lived there, there has arisen from the depths of its waters, and running through the heart of its forest, a terrible fear: that its life is slowly but surely coming to an end”.[\[56\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 45

December 20, 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16/

Rom 16:25-27/

Lk 1:26-38 (11)

277. The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women”.[\[271\]](#) Yet we Christians are very much aware that “if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman”.[\[272\]](#) Others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, “for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all”.[\[273\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 277

December 27, 2020

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/

Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/

Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

or, in Year B,

Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3/

Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19/

Lk 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40 (17)

114. I would like especially to mention solidarity, which, “as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation. I think first of families, called to a primary and vital mission of education. Families are the first place where the values of love and fraternity, togetherness and sharing, concern and care for others are lived out and handed on. They are also the privileged milieu for transmitting the faith, beginning with those first simple gestures of devotion which mothers teach their children. Teachers, who have the challenging task of training children and youth in schools or other settings, should be conscious that their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of life. The values of freedom, mutual respect and solidarity can be handed on from a tender age... Communicators also have a responsibility for education and formation, especially nowadays, when the means of information and communication are so widespread”.[\[87\]](#)

115. At a time when everything seems to disintegrate and lose consistency, it is good for us to appeal to the “solidity”[\[88\]](#) born of the consciousness that we are responsible for the fragility of others as we strive to build a common future. Solidarity finds concrete expression in service, which can take a variety of forms in an effort to care for others. And service in great part means “caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people”. In offering such service, individuals learn to “set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, ‘suffers’ that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people”.[\[89\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 114-115

38. In the Amazon region, even between the different original peoples, it is possible to develop “intercultural relations where diversity does not mean threat, and does not justify hierarchies of power of some over others, but dialogue between different cultural visions, of celebration, of interrelationship and of revival of hope”.[\[42\]](#)

Endangered cultures, peoples at risk

39. The globalized economy shamelessly damages human, social and cultural richness. The disintegration of families that comes about as a result of forced migrations affects the transmission of values, for “the family is and has always been the social institution that has most contributed to keeping our cultures alive”.[\[43\]](#) Furthermore, “faced with a colonizing invasion of means of mass communication”, there is a need to promote for the original peoples “alternative forms of communication based on their own languages and cultures” and for “the indigenous subjects themselves [to] become present in already existing means of communication”.[\[44\]](#)

40. In any project for the Amazon region, “there is a need to respect the rights of peoples and cultures and to appreciate that the development of a social group presupposes an historical process which takes place within a cultural context and demands the constant and active involvement of local people from within their own culture. Nor can the notion of the quality of life be imposed from without, for quality of life must be understood within the world of symbols and customs proper to each human group”.[\[45\]](#) If the ancestral cultures of the original peoples arose and developed in intimate contact with the natural environment, then it will be hard for them to remain unaffected once that environment is damaged.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 38-40

21. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. In many parts of the planet, the elderly lament that once beautiful landscapes are now covered with rubbish. Industrial waste and chemical products utilized in cities and agricultural areas can lead to bioaccumulation in the organisms of the local population, even when levels of toxins in those places are low. Frequently no measures are taken until after people’s health has been irreversibly affected.

22. These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish.

*** *Laudato Si* 21-22 (Pollution, waste and the throwaway culture)

164. Beginning in the middle of the last century and overcoming many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. An interdependent world not only makes us more conscious of the negative effects of certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption which affect us all; more importantly, it motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan. Yet the same ingenuity which has brought about enormous technological progress has so far proved incapable of finding effective ways of dealing with grave environmental and social problems worldwide. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries. Such a consensus could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water.

*** *Laudato Si* 164 (Lines of Approach and Action)

81. The sheer novelty involved in the emergence of a personal being within a material universe presupposes a direct action of God and a particular call to life and to relationship on the part of a “Thou” who addresses himself to another “thou”. The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object.

*** *Laudato Si* 81

January 3, 2021

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Is 60:1-6/Ps 72

Eph 3:2-3, 5-6

Mt 2:1-12



[Link to SDG 2: Zero Hunger](#)

2021 -- International Year of Peace and Trust <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/338>

71. At the same time, it was an acknowledgment that the gift of the earth with its fruits belongs to everyone. Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans and foreigners in their midst: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after the harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner” (Lev 19:9-10).

72. The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, “who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures for ever” (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:3-5). We do not only exist by God’s mighty power; we also live with him and beside him. This is why we adore him.

73. The writings of the prophets invite us to find renewed strength in times of trial by contemplating the all-powerful God who created the universe. Yet God’s infinite power does not

lead us to flee his fatherly tenderness, because in him affection and strength are joined. Indeed, all sound spirituality entails both welcoming divine love and adoration, confident in the Lord because of his infinite power. In the Bible, the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected: “Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you... You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders” (Jer 32:17, 21). “The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless” (Is 40:28b-29).

*** *Laudato Si* 71-73

A sense of community

20. Efforts to build a just society require a capacity for fraternity, a spirit of human fellowship. Hence, without diminishing the importance of personal freedom, it is clear that the original peoples of the Amazon region have a strong sense of community. It permeates “their work, their rest, their relationships, their rites and celebrations. Everything is shared; private areas – typical of modernity – are minimal. Life is a communal journey where tasks and responsibilities are apportioned and shared on the basis of the common good. There is no room for the notion of an individual detached from the community or from the land”.^[22] Their relationships are steeped in the surrounding nature, which they feel and think of as a reality that integrates society and culture, and a prolongation of their bodies, personal, familial and communal:

“The morning star draws near,
the wings of the hummingbirds flutter;
my heart pounds louder than the cascade:
with your lips I will water the land
as the breeze softly blows among us”.^[23]

21. All this makes even more unsettling the sense of bewilderment and uprootedness felt by those indigenous people who feel forced to migrate to the cities, as they attempt to preserve their dignity amid more individualistic urban habitats and a hostile environment. How do we heal all these hurts, how do we bring serenity and meaning to these uprooted lives? Given situations like these, we ought to appreciate and accompany the efforts made by many of those groups to preserve their values and way of life, and to integrate in new situations without losing them, but instead offering them as their own contribution to the common good.

22. Christ redeemed the whole person, and he wishes to restore in each of us the capacity to enter into relationship with others. The Gospel proposes the divine charity welling up in the heart of Christ and generating a pursuit of justice that is at once a hymn of fraternity and of solidarity, an impetus to the culture of encounter. The wisdom of the way of life of the original peoples – for all its limitations – encourages us to deepen this desire. In view of this, the bishops of Ecuador have appealed for “a new social and cultural system which privileges fraternal relations within a framework of acknowledgment and esteem for the different cultures and ecosystems, one capable of opposing every form of discrimination and oppression between human beings”.^[24]

*** *Querida Amazonia* 20-22

ENVISAGING AND ENGENDERING AN OPEN WORLD

87. Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except “in the sincere gift of self to others”.[\[62\]](#) Nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons: “I communicate effectively with myself only insofar as I communicate with others”.[\[63\]](#) No one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. “Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails”.[\[64\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 87

January 10, 2021

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Is 42:1-4, 6-7/

Ps 12/

Acts 10:34-38/

Mk 1:7-11

83. The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things.[\[53\]](#) Here we can add yet another argument for rejecting every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures. The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.

*** *Laudato Si* 83

55. From the original peoples, we can learn to contemplate the Amazon region and not simply analyze it, and thus appreciate this precious mystery that transcends us. We can love it, not simply use it, with the result that love can awaken a deep and sincere interest. Even more, we can feel intimately a part of it and not only defend it; then the Amazon region will once more become like a mother to us. For “we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings”.[\[74\]](#)

56. Let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense that so often we let languish. Let us remember that “if someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we

should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple”.^[75] On the other hand, if we enter into communion with the forest, our voices will easily blend with its own and become a prayer: “as we rest in the shade of an ancient eucalyptus, our prayer for light joins in the song of the eternal foliage”.^[76] This interior conversion will enable us to weep for the Amazon region and to join in its cry to the Lord.

57. Jesus said: “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight” (Lk 12:6). God our Father, who created each being in the universe with infinite love, calls us to be his means for hearing the cry of the Amazon region. If we respond to this heartrending plea, it will become clear that the creatures of the Amazon region are not forgotten by our heavenly Father. For Christians, Jesus himself cries out to us from their midst, “because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence”.^[77] For all these reasons, we believers encounter in the Amazon region a theological locus, a space where God himself reveals himself and summons his sons and daughters.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 55-57

The unique value of love

92. The spiritual stature of a person’s life is measured by love, which in the end remains “the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life’s worth or lack thereof”.^[71] Yet some believers think that it consists in the imposition of their own ideologies upon everyone else, or in a violent defence of the truth, or in impressive demonstrations of strength. All of us, as believers, need to recognize that love takes first place: love must never be put at risk, and the greatest danger lies in failing to love (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-13).

93. Saint Thomas Aquinas sought to describe the love made possible by God’s grace as a movement outwards towards another, whereby we consider “the beloved as somehow united to ourselves”.^[72] Our affection for others makes us freely desire to seek their good. All this originates in a sense of esteem, an appreciation of the value of the other. This is ultimately the idea behind the word “charity”: those who are loved are “dear” to me; “they are considered of great value”.^[73] And “the love whereby someone becomes pleasing (grata) to another is the reason why the latter bestows something on him freely (gratis)”.^[74]

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 92-93

January 17, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

1Sm 3:3-10,19

Ps 40

1Cor 6:13-15,17-20

208. We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society.

*** *Laudato Si* 208

An Ecclesial Dream

61. The Church is called to journey alongside the people of the Amazon region. In Latin America, this journey found privileged expression at the Bishops' Conference in Medellin (1968) and its application to the Amazon region at Santarem (1972),^[79] followed by Puebla (1979), Santo Domingo (1992) and Aparecida (2007). The journey continues, and missionary efforts, if they are to develop a Church with an Amazonian face, need to grow in a culture of encounter towards "a multifaceted harmony".^[80] But for this incarnation of the Church and the Gospel to be possible, the great missionary proclamation must continue to resound.

The message that needs to be heard in the Amazon region

62. Recognizing the many problems and needs that cry out from the heart of the Amazon region, we can respond beginning with organizations, technical resources, opportunities for discussion and political programmes: all these can be part of the solution. Yet as Christians, we cannot set aside the call to faith that we have received from the Gospel. In our desire to struggle side by side with everyone, we are not ashamed of Jesus Christ. Those who have encountered him, those who live as his friends and identify with his message, must inevitably speak of him and bring to others his offer of new life: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16).

63. An authentic option for the poor and the abandoned, while motivating us to liberate them from material poverty and to defend their rights, also involves inviting them to a friendship with the Lord that can elevate and dignify them. How sad it would be if they were to receive from us a body of teachings or a moral code, but not the great message of salvation, the missionary appeal that speaks to the heart and gives meaning to everything else in life. Nor can we be content with a social message. If we devote our lives to their service, to working for the justice and dignity that they deserve, we cannot conceal the fact that we do so because we see Christ in them and because we acknowledge the immense dignity that they have received from God, the Father who loves them with boundless love.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 61-63

94. Love, then, is more than just a series of benevolent actions. Those actions have their source in a union increasingly directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful apart from their physical or moral appearances. Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives. Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another will we make possible a social friendship that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all.

A love ever more open

95. Love also impels us towards universal communion. No one can mature or find fulfilment by withdrawing from others. By its very nature, love calls for growth in openness and the ability to accept others as part of a continuing adventure that makes every periphery converge in a greater sense of mutual belonging. As Jesus told us: “You are all brothers” (Mt 23:8).

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 94-95

January 24, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Jon 3:1-5,10

Ps 25

1Cor 7:29-31

Mk 1:14-20

January 24: [International Day of Education \(A/RES/73/25\)](#)

January 27: [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust \(A/RES/60/7\)](#)

Ecological conversion

216. The rich heritage of Christian spirituality, the fruit of twenty centuries of personal and communal experience, has a precious contribution to make to the renewal of humanity. Here, I would like to offer Christians a few suggestions for an ecological spirituality grounded in the convictions of our faith, since the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living. More than in ideas or concepts as such, I am interested in how such a spirituality can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world. A commitment this lofty cannot be sustained by doctrine alone, without a spirituality capable of inspiring us, without an “interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity”.^[151] Admittedly, Christians have not always appropriated and developed the spiritual treasures bestowed by God upon the Church, where the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us.

217. “The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast”.^[152] For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of

realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

*** *Laudato Si* 216-217

64. They have a right to hear the Gospel, and above all that first proclamation, the kerygma, which is “the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another”.^[81] It proclaims a God who infinitely loves every man and woman and has revealed this love fully in Jesus Christ, crucified for us and risen in our lives. I would ask that you re-read the brief summary of this “great message” found in [Chapter Four of the Exhortation Christus Vivit](#). That message, expressed in a variety of ways, must constantly resound in the Amazon region. Without that impassioned proclamation, every ecclesial structure would become just another NGO and we would not follow the command given us by Christ: “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

65. Any project for growth in the Christian life needs to be centred continually on this message, for “all Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma”.^[82] The fundamental response to this message, when it leads to a personal encounter with the Lord, is fraternal charity, “the new commandment, the first and the greatest of the commandments, and the one that best identifies us as Christ’s disciples”.^[83] Indeed, the kerygma and fraternal charity constitute the great synthesis of the whole content of the Gospel, to be proclaimed unceasingly in the Amazon region. That is what shaped the lives of the great evangelizers of Latin America, like Saint Turibius of Mogrovejo or Saint Joseph of Anchieta.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 64-65

Promoting the moral good

112. Nor can we fail to mention that seeking and pursuing the good of others and of the entire human family also implies helping individuals and societies to mature in the moral values that foster integral human development. The New Testament describes one fruit of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22) as agathosyne; the Greek word expresses attachment to the good, pursuit of the good. Even more, it suggests a striving for excellence and what is best for others, their growth in maturity and health, the cultivation of values and not simply material wellbeing. A similar expression exists in Latin: benevolentia. This is an attitude that “wills the good” of others; it bespeaks a yearning for goodness, an inclination towards all that is fine and excellent, a desire to fill the lives of others with what is beautiful, sublime and edifying.

113. Here, regrettably, I feel bound to reiterate that “we have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. Once the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests”.^[86] Let us return to promoting the good, for ourselves and

for the whole human family, and thus advance together towards an authentic and integral growth. Every society needs to ensure that values are passed on; otherwise, what is handed down are selfishness, violence, corruption in its various forms, indifference and, ultimately, a life closed to transcendence and entrenched in individual interests.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 112-113

January 31, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 95

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-28

(First week of February: [World Interfaith Harmony Week](#) ([A/RES/65/5](#)))

88. The bishops of Brazil have pointed out that nature as a whole not only manifests God but is also a locus of his presence. The Spirit of life dwells in every living creature and calls us to enter into relationship with him.^[65] Discovering this presence leads us to cultivate the “ecological virtues”.^[66] This is not to forget that there is an infinite distance between God and the things of this world, which do not possess his fullness. Otherwise, we would not be doing the creatures themselves any good either, for we would be failing to acknowledge their right and proper place. We would end up unduly demanding of them something which they, in their smallness, cannot give us.

*** *Laudato Si* 88

Social and spiritual inculturation

75. Given the situation of poverty and neglect experienced by so many inhabitants of the Amazon region, inculturation will necessarily have a markedly social cast, accompanied by a resolute defence of human rights; in this way it will reveal the face of Christ, who “wished with special tenderness to be identified with the weak and the poor”.^[107] Indeed, “from the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement”.^[108] For Christian communities, this entails a clear commitment to the justice of God’s kingdom through work for the advancement of those who have been “discarded”. It follows that a suitable training of pastoral workers in the Church’s social doctrine is most important.

76. At the same time, the inculturation of the Gospel in the Amazon region must better integrate the social and the spiritual, so that the poor do not have to look outside the Church for a spirituality that responds to their deepest yearnings. This does not mean an alienating and individualistic religiosity that would silence social demands for a more dignified life, but neither

does it mean ignoring the transcendent and spiritual dimension, as if material development alone were sufficient for human beings. We are thus called not merely to join those two things, but to connect them at a deeper level. In this way, we will reveal the true beauty of the Gospel, which fully humanizes, integrally dignifies persons and peoples, and brings fulfilment to every heart and the whole of life.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 75-76

Political love

180. Recognizing that all people are our brothers and sisters, and seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, is not merely utopian. It demands a decisive commitment to devising effective means to this end. Any effort along these lines becomes a noble exercise of charity. For whereas individuals can help others in need, when they join together in initiating social processes of fraternity and justice for all, they enter the “field of charity at its most vast, namely political charity”.[\[165\]](#) This entails working for a social and political order whose soul is social charity.[\[166\]](#) Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as “a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good”.[\[167\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 180

February 7, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Psalm 147

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39



[Link to SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being](#)

13. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Here I want to recognize, encourage and thank all those striving in countless ways to guarantee the protection of the home which we share. Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world's poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.

*** *Laudato Si* 13

18. The continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet is coupled today with a more intensified pace of life and work which might be called "rapidification". Although change is part of the working of complex systems, the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution. Moreover, the goals of this rapid and constant change are not necessarily geared to the common good or to integral and sustainable human development. Change is something desirable, yet it becomes a source of anxiety when it causes harm to the world and to the quality of life of much of humanity.

*** *Laudato Si* 18

6. Preaching must become incarnate, spirituality must become incarnate, ecclesial structures must become incarnate. For this reason, I humbly propose in this brief Exhortation to speak of four great dreams that the Amazon region inspires in me.

7. I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.

I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 6-7

247. The Shoah must not be forgotten. It is "the enduring symbol of the depths to which human evil can sink when, spurred by false ideologies, it fails to recognize the fundamental dignity of each person, which merits unconditional respect regardless of ethnic origin or religious belief".^[231] As I think of it, I cannot help but repeat this prayer: "Lord, remember us in your mercy. Grant us the grace to be ashamed of what we men have done, to be ashamed of this massive idolatry, of having despised and destroyed our own flesh which you formed from the earth, to which you gave life with your own breath of life. Never again, Lord, never again!".

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 247

February 14, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Psalm 32

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Mark 1:40-45

February 20: [World Day of Social Justice](#) ([A/RES/62/10](#))

220. This conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness. First, it entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God's loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works: "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing... and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Mt 6:3-4). It also entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion. As believers, we do not look at the world from without but from within, conscious of the bonds with which the Father has linked us to all beings. By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God "as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable" (Rom 12:1). We do not understand our superiority as a reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith.

*** *Laudato Si* 220

89. In the specific circumstances of the Amazon region, particularly in its forests and more remote places, a way must be found to ensure this priestly ministry. The laity can proclaim God's word, teach, organize communities, celebrate certain sacraments, seek different ways to express popular devotion and develop the multitude of gifts that the Spirit pours out in their midst. But they need the celebration of the Eucharist because it "makes the Church".^[130] We can even say that "no Christian community is built up which does not grow from and hinge on the celebration of the most holy Eucharist".^[131] If we are truly convinced that this is the case, then every effort should be made to ensure that the Amazonian peoples do not lack this food of new life and the sacrament of forgiveness.

90. . . At the same time, it is appropriate that the structure and content of both initial and ongoing priestly formation be thoroughly revised, so that priests can acquire the attitudes and abilities demanded by dialogue with Amazonian cultures. This formation must be preeminently pastoral and favour the development of priestly mercy.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 89-90

Hope

54. Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like in the following pages to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family. The recent pandemic enabled us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious... They understood that no one is saved alone.[\[51\]](#)

55. I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”.[\[52\]](#) Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 54-55

February 21, 2021

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 9:8-15

Psalm 25

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:12-15

68. The laws found in the Bible dwell on relationships, not only among individuals but also with other living beings. “You shall not see your brother’s donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and withhold your help... If you chance to come upon a bird’s nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs; you shall not take the mother with the young” (Dt 22:4, 6). Along these same lines, rest on the seventh day is meant not only for human beings, but also so “that your ox and your donkey may have rest” (Ex 23:12). Clearly, the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures.

*** *Laudato Si* 68

69. The Catechism clearly and forcefully criticizes a distorted anthropocentrism: “Each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things”.

*** *Laudato Si* 69

126. The monks sought the desert, convinced that it was the best place for encountering the presence of God. Later, Saint Benedict of Norcia proposed that his monks live in community, combining prayer and spiritual reading with manual labour (*ora et labora*). Seeing manual labour as spiritually meaningful proved revolutionary. Personal growth and sanctification came to be sought in the interplay of recollection and work. This way of experiencing work makes us more protective and respectful of the environment; it imbues our relationship to the world with a healthy sobriety.

*** *Laudato Si* 126

66. As the Second Vatican Council states in No. 44 of the Constitution [Gaudium et Spes](#): “The Church learned early in her history to express the Christian message in the concepts and languages of different peoples and tried to clarify it in the light of the wisdom of their philosophers: it was an attempt to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all and the requirements of the learned, insofar as this could be done. Indeed, this kind of adaptation and preaching of the revealed word must ever be the law of all evangelization. In this way it is possible to create in every country the possibility of expressing the message of Christ in suitable terms and to foster vital contact and exchange between the Church and different cultures”.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 66, footnote 84

Christian identity

277. The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women”.^[271] Yet we Christians are very much aware that “if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman”.^[272] Others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 277

February 28, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Genesis 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Psalm 116

Romans 8:31b-34

Mark 9:2-10

March 3: World Wildlife Day ([A/RES/68/205](#))

237. On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the “first day” of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord’s risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality.

*** *Laudato Si* 237

74. Similarly, a relationship with Jesus Christ, true God and true man, liberator and redeemer, is not inimical to the markedly cosmic worldview that characterizes the indigenous peoples, since he is also the Risen Lord who permeates all things.[105] In Christian experience, “all the creatures of the material universe find their true meaning in the incarnate Word, for the Son of God has incorporated in his person part of the material world, planting in it a seed of definitive transformation”. [106] He is present in a glorious and mysterious way in the river, the trees, the fish and the wind, as the Lord who reigns in creation without ever losing his transfigured wounds, while in the Eucharist he takes up the elements of this world and confers on all things the meaning of the paschal gift.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 74

(The exercise of political love): Sacrifices born of love

187. This charity, which is the spiritual heart of politics, is always a preferential love shown to those in greatest need; it undergirds everything we do on their behalf.[183] Only a gaze transformed by charity can enable the dignity of others to be recognized and, as a consequence, the poor to be acknowledged and valued in their dignity, respected in their identity and culture, and thus truly integrated into society. That gaze is at the heart of the authentic spirit of politics. It sees paths open up that are different from those of a soulless pragmatism. . . Education serves these by making it possible for each human being to shape his or her own future. Here too we see the importance of the principle of subsidiarity, which is inseparable from the principle of solidarity.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 187

190. Political charity is also expressed in a spirit of openness to everyone. Government leaders should be the first to make the sacrifices that foster encounter and to seek convergence on at least some issues. They should be ready to listen to other points of view and to make room for everyone. Through sacrifice and patience, they can help to create a beautiful polyhedral reality in which everyone has a place. Here, economic negotiations do not work. Something else is required: an exchange of gifts for the common good. It may seem naïve and utopian, yet we cannot renounce this lofty aim.

191. At a time when various forms of fundamentalist intolerance are damaging relationships between individuals, groups and peoples, let us be committed to living and teaching the value of respect for others, a love capable of welcoming differences, and the priority of the dignity of every human being over his or her ideas, opinions, practices and even sins. Even as forms of fanaticism, closedmindedness and social and cultural fragmentation proliferate in present-day society, a good politician will take the first step and insist that different voices be heard. Disagreements may well give rise to conflicts, but uniformity proves stifling and leads to cultural decay. May we not be content with being enclosed in one fragment of reality.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 190-191

March 7, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Exodus 17:3-7

Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

John 4:5-42



[Link to SDG 4: Quality Education](#)

March 8: [International Women's Day](#)

IV. THE MESSAGE OF EACH CREATURE IN THE HARMONY OF CREATION

84. Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighbourhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves.

*** *Laudato Si* 84

85. God has written a precious book, "whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe".^[54] The Canadian bishops rightly pointed out that no creature is excluded from this manifestation of God: "From panoramic vistas to the tiniest living form, nature is a constant source of wonder and awe. It is also a continuing revelation of the divine".^[55] The bishops of Japan, for their part, made a thought-provoking observation: "To sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope".^[56] This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us, since "for the believer, to contemplate creation is to hear a message, to listen to a paradoxical and silent voice".^[57] We can say that "alongside revelation properly so-called, contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night".^[58] Paying attention to this manifestation, we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures: "I express myself in expressing the world; in my effort to decipher the sacredness of the world, I explore my own".^[59]

*** *Laudato Si* 85

237. Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centred on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor.

*** *Laudato Si* 237

117. When we speak of the need to care for our common home, our planet, we appeal to that spark of universal consciousness and mutual concern that may still be present in people's hearts. Those who enjoy a surplus of water yet choose to conserve it for the sake of the greater human family have attained a moral stature that allows them to look beyond themselves and the group to which they belong. How marvellously human! The same attitude is demanded if we are to recognize the rights of all people, even those born beyond our own borders.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 117

281. A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. "God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When

the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised”.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 281

A Prayer to the Creator

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams. Amen.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 287

March 14, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23

Psalm 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Ephesians 2:4-10

John 3:14-21

19. Following a period of irrational confidence in progress and human abilities, some sectors of society are now adopting a more critical approach. We see increasing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet. Let us review, however cursorily, those questions which are troubling us today and which we can no longer sweep under the carpet. Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.

*** *Laudato Si* 19

Injustice and crime

9. The colonizing interests that have continued to expand – legally and illegally – the timber and mining industries, and have expelled or marginalized the indigenous peoples, the river people and those of African descent, are provoking a cry that rises up to heaven:

“Many are the trees
where torture dwelt,
and vast are the forests
purchased with a thousand deaths”.[\[3\]](#)

“The timber merchants have members of parliament,
while our Amazonia has no one to defend her...
They exiled the parrots and the monkeys...
the chestnut harvests will never be the same”.[\[4\]](#)

10. This encouraged the more recent migrations of the indigenous peoples to the outskirts of the cities. There they find no real freedom from their troubles, but rather the worst forms of enslavement, subjection and poverty.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 9-10

16. Such a history of suffering and contempt does not heal easily. Nor has colonization ended; in many places, it has been changed, disguised and concealed,[\[13\]](#) while losing none of its contempt for the life of the poor and the fragility of the environment. As the bishops of the Brazilian Amazon have noted, “the history of the Amazon region shows that it was always a minority that profited from the poverty of the majority and from the unscrupulous plundering of the region’s natural riches, God’s gift to the peoples who have lived there for millennia and to the immigrants who arrived in centuries past”.[\[14\]](#)

17. Yet even as we feel this healthy sense of indignation, we are reminded that it is possible to overcome the various colonizing mentalities and to build networks of solidarity and development.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 16-17

19. Today the Church can be no less committed. She is called to hear the plea of the Amazonian peoples and “to exercise with transparency her prophetic mission”.[\[19\]](#) At the same time, since we cannot deny that the wheat was mixed with the tares, and that the missionaries did not always take the side of the oppressed, I express my shame and once more “I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but for the crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America”[\[20\]](#) as well as for the terrible crimes that followed throughout the history of the Amazon region. I thank the members of the original peoples and I repeat: “Your lives cry out... You are living memory of the mission that God has entrusted to us all: the protection of our common home”.[\[21\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 19

March 21, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15
Hebrews 5:7-9
John 12:20-33

March 21-27: [Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination \(A/RES/34/24\)](#)

73. The writings of the prophets invite us to find renewed strength in times of trial by contemplating the all-powerful God who created the universe. Yet God's infinite power does not lead us to flee his fatherly tenderness, because in him affection and strength are joined. Indeed, all sound spirituality entails both welcoming divine love and adoration, confident in the Lord because of his infinite power. In the Bible, the God who liberates and saves is the same God who created the universe, and these two divine ways of acting are intimately and inseparably connected: "Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you... You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders" (Jer 32:17, 21). "The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless" (Is 40:28b-29).

*** *Laudato Si* 73

75. A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshipping earthly powers, or ourselves usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample his creation underfoot. The best way to restore men and women to their rightful place, putting an end to their claim to absolute dominion over the earth, is to speak once more of the figure of a Father who creates and who alone owns the world. Otherwise, human beings will always try to impose their own laws and interests on reality.

*** *Laudato Si* 75

205. Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us.

*** *Laudato Si* 205

73. Inculturation elevates and fulfills. Certainly, we should esteem the indigenous mysticism that sees the interconnection and interdependence of the whole of creation, the mysticism of gratuitousness that loves life as a gift, the mysticism of a sacred wonder before nature and all its forms of life.

At the same time, though, we are called to turn this relationship with God present in the cosmos into an increasingly personal relationship with a “Thou” who sustains our lives and wants to give them a meaning, a “Thou” who knows us and loves us:

“Shadows float from me, dead wood.
But the star is born without reproach
over the expert hands of this child,
that conquer the waters and the night.
It has to be enough for me to know
that you know me
completely, from before my days.”

*** *Querida Amazonia* 73

March 28, 2021

PALM SUNDAY

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 22

Philippians 2:6-11

Mark 14: - 15:47

MOTHER OF THE AMAZON REGION

111. After sharing a few of my dreams, I encourage everyone to advance along concrete paths that can allow the reality of the Amazon region to be transformed and set free from the evils that beset it. Let us now lift our gaze to Mary. The Mother whom Christ gave us is also the one Mother of all, who reveals herself in the Amazon region in distinct ways. We know that “the indigenous peoples have a vital encounter with Jesus Christ in many ways; but the path of Mary has contributed greatly to this encounter” [\[145\]](#) Faced with the marvel of the Amazon region, which we discovered ever more fully during the preparation and celebration of the Synod, I consider it best to conclude this Exhortation by turning to her:

Mother of life,
in your maternal womb Jesus took flesh,
the Lord of all that exists.

Risen, he transfigured you by his light
and made you the Queen of all creation.
For that reason, we ask you, Mary, to reign
in the beating heart of Amazonia.

Show yourself the Mother of all creatures,
in the beauty of the flowers, the rivers,
the great river that courses through it
and all the life pulsing in its forests.
Tenderly care for this explosion of beauty.

Ask Jesus to pour out all his love
on the men and women who dwell there,
that they may know how to appreciate and care for it.

Bring your Son to birth in their hearts,
so that he can shine forth in the Amazon region,
in its peoples and in its cultures,
by the light of his word,
by his consoling love,
by his message of fraternity and justice.

And at every Eucharist,
may all this awe and wonder be lifted up
to the glory of the Father.

Mother, look upon the poor of the Amazon region,
for their home is being destroyed by petty interests.
How much pain and misery,
how much neglect and abuse there is
in this blessed land
overflowing with life!

Touch the hearts of the powerful,
for, even though we sense that the hour is late,
you call us to save
what is still alive.

Mother whose heart is pierced,
who yourself suffer in your mistreated sons and daughters,
and in the wounds inflicted on nature,
reign in the Amazon,
together with your Son.
Reign so that no one else can claim lordship
over the handiwork of God.

We trust in you, Mother of life.
Do not abandon us
in this dark hour.

Amen.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 111

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer

O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,
in his family of Nazareth,
and in the early Christian community.

Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 287

April 4, 2021

EASTER SUNDAY — THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

We are witnesses—Commissioned to testify

Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23.

I shall not die, but live,

Col 3:1-4

your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Jn 20:1-9
He saw and believed.



[Link to SDG 5: Gender Equality](#)

April 5: [International Day of Conscience \(A/RES/73/329\)](#)

202. Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.

203. Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. Compulsive consumerism is one example of how the techno-economic paradigm affects individuals... This paradigm leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power. Amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction, and this lack of identity is a source of anxiety. We have too many means and only a few insubstantial ends.

204. The current global situation engenders a feeling of instability and uncertainty, which in turn becomes “a seedbed for collective selfishness”.^[145] When people become self-centred and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person’s heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. As these attitudes become more widespread, social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs. So our concern cannot be limited merely to the threat of extreme weather events, but must also extend to the catastrophic consequences of social unrest. Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction.

205. Yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to

his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us.

206. A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. “Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act”.^[146] Today, in a word, “the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle”.^[147]

*** *Laudato Si* 202, 203, 204, 205, 206

109. All of us, as Christians, are united by faith in God, the Father who gives us life and loves us so greatly. We are united by faith in Jesus Christ, the one Saviour, who set us free by his precious blood and his glorious resurrection. We are united by our desire for his word that guides our steps. We are united by the fire of the Spirit, who sends us forth on mission. We are united by the new commandment that Jesus left us, by the pursuit of the civilization of love and by passion for the kingdom that the Lord calls us to build with him. We are united by the struggle for peace and justice. We are united by the conviction that not everything ends with this life, but that we are called to the heavenly banquet, where God will wipe away every tear and take up all that we did for those who suffer.

110 All this unites us. How can we not struggle together? How can we not pray and work together, side by side, to defend the poor of the Amazon region, to show the sacred countenance of the Lord, and to care for his work of creation

*** *Querida Amazonia* 109, 110

278...this journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary. Having received this universal motherhood at the foot of the cross (cf. Jn 19:26), she cares not only for Jesus but also for “the rest of her children” (cf. Rev 12:17). In the power of the risen Lord, she wants to give birth to a new world, where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, where justice and peace are resplendent.

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer
Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 278

April 11, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 4:32-35

The community of believers was of one heart and mind

Ps 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

The stone has become the cornerstone.

1 Jn 5:1-6

When we love God and obey his commandments

Gospel Jn 20:19-31

"Peace be with you."

5. The Amazon region is a multinational and interconnected whole, a great biome shared by nine countries . . .

6. Everything that the Church has to offer must become incarnate in a distinctive way in each part of the world, . . .

7. I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced. I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways. I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 5-7

19. Today the Church can be no less committed. She is called to hear the plea of the Amazonian peoples and “to exercise with transparency her prophetic mission”.[19] At the same time, since we cannot deny that the wheat was mixed with the tares, and that the missionaries did not always take the side of the oppressed, . . . “I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but for the crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America”[20] as well as for the terrible crimes that followed throughout the history of the Amazon region. I thank the members of the original peoples and I repeat: “Your lives cry out

*** *Querida Amazonia* 19

91. A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings. It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. This compromises the very meaning of our struggle for the sake of the environment . .

. Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.

92. Moreover, when our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one. . . Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

****Laudato Si* 91, 92

238. Jesus never promoted violence or intolerance. He openly condemned the use of force to gain power over others: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you” (Mt 20:25-26).

241. We are called to love everyone, without exception; at the same time, loving an oppressor does not mean allowing him to keep oppressing us, or letting him think that what he does is acceptable. On the contrary, true love for an oppressor means seeking ways to make him cease his oppression; it means stripping him of a power that he does not know how to use, and that diminishes his own humanity and that of others. Forgiveness does not entail allowing oppressors to keep trampling on their own dignity and that of others, or letting criminals continue their wrongdoing. Those who suffer injustice have to defend strenuously their own rights and those of their family, precisely because they must preserve the dignity they have received as a loving gift from God.

242. The important thing is not to fuel anger, which is unhealthy for our own soul and the soul of our people, or to become obsessed with taking revenge and destroying the other. No one achieves inner peace or returns to a normal life in that way.

244. Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation. Conflict between different groups “if it abstains from enmities and mutual hatred, gradually changes into an honest discussion of differences founded on a desire for justice”.

245. On numerous occasions, I have spoken of “a principle indispensable to the building of friendship in society: namely, that unity is greater than conflict... This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism, or for the absorption of one into the other, but rather for a resolution which takes place on a higher plane and preserves what is valid and useful on both sides”.[\[229\]](#) All of us know that “when we, as individuals and communities, learn to look beyond ourselves and our particular interests, then understanding and mutual commitment bear fruit... in a setting where conflicts, tensions and even groups once considered inimical can attain a multifaceted unity that gives rise to new life”.[\[230\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 238, 241, 242, 244, 245

April 18, 2021

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

Repent and be converted

Ps 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9

The LORD will hear me when I call upon him

1 Jn 2:1-5a

He [Jesus Christ] is expiation for our sins and . . . for those of the whole world.

Lk 24:35-48

repentance, for the forgiveness of sins,
would be preached in his name to all the nations

April 22: [International Mother Earth Day \(A/RES/63/278\)](#)

83. The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things.^[53] Here we can add yet another argument for rejecting every tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings over other creatures. The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things. Human beings, endowed with intelligence and love, and drawn by the fullness of Christ, are called to lead all creatures back to their Creator.

100. The New Testament does not only tell us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout creation by his universal Lordship . . . Thus, the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence.

221. Various convictions of our faith . . . can help us to enrich the meaning of this conversion. These include the awareness that each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us, and the security that Christ has taken unto himself this material world and now, risen, is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light. Then too, there is the recognition that God created the world, writing into it an order and a dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore. We read in the Gospel that Jesus says of the birds of the air that “not one of them is forgotten before God” (Lk 12:6). How then can we possibly mistreat them or cause them harm? I ask all Christians to recognize and to live fully this dimension of their conversion. May the power and the light of the grace we have received also be

evident in our relationship to other creatures and to the world around us. In this way, we will help nurture that sublime fraternity with all creation which Saint Francis of Assisi so radiantly embodied.

*** *Laudato Si* 83, 100, 221

59. The ancient commandment to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18) . . . In the first century before Christ, Rabbi Hillel stated: “This is the entire Torah. Everything else is commentary”.^[55] The desire to imitate God’s own way of acting gradually replaced the tendency to think only of those nearest us: “The compassion of man is for his neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings” (Sir 18:13).

60. In the New Testament, Hillel’s precept was expressed in positive terms: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt 7:12).

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 59, 60

April 25, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 4:8-12

If we are being examined today

Ps 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good

1 Jn 3:1-2

See what love the Father has bestowed on us

Jn 10:11-18

He works for pay and has no concern for the sheep

Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/preamble/>

75th Anniversary of the United Nations: <https://www.un.org/en/un75>

Role of the Augustinians at the United Nations (Augustinians International): www.augustinians-un.org

14. The businesses, national or international, which harm the Amazon and fail to respect the right of the original peoples to the land and its boundaries, and to self-determination and prior consent, should be called for what they are: injustice and crime. When certain businesses out for quick profit appropriate lands and end up privatizing even potable water, or when local authorities give

free access to the timber companies, mining or oil projects, and other businesses that raze the forests and pollute the environment, economic relationships are unduly altered and become an instrument of death. They frequently resort to utterly unethical means such as penalizing protests and even taking the lives of indigenous peoples who oppose projects, intentionally setting forest fires, and suborning politicians and the indigenous people themselves. All this accompanied by grave violations of human rights and new forms of slavery affecting women in particular, the scourge of drug trafficking used as a way of subjecting the indigenous peoples, or human trafficking that exploits those expelled from their cultural context. We cannot allow globalization to become “a new version of colonialism”.[\[9\]](#)

15. We need to feel outrage,[\[10\]](#) . . . as God does in the face of injustice (cf. Am 2:4-8; 5:7-12; Ps 106:40). It is not good for us to become inured to evil; it is not good when our social consciousness is dulled before “an exploitation that is leaving destruction and even death throughout our region... jeopardizing the lives of millions of people and especially the habitat of peasants and indigenous peoples”.[\[11\]](#)

19. Today the Church can be no less committed. She is called to hear the plea of the Amazonian peoples and “to exercise with transparency her prophetic mission”.[\[19\]](#) At the same time, since we cannot deny that the wheat was mixed with the tares, and that the missionaries did not always take the side of the oppressed, I express my shame

*** *Querida Amazonia* 14, 15, 19

9. At the same time,[\[Patriarch\]](#) Bartholomew has drawn attention to the ethical and spiritual roots of environmental problems, which require that we look for solutions not only in technology but in a change of humanity; otherwise we would be dealing merely with symptoms. He asks us to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which “entails learning to give, and not simply to give up. It is a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what I want to what God’s world needs. It is liberation from fear, greed and compulsion”.[\[17\]](#) As Christians, we are also called “to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale. It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet”.[\[18\]](#)

219. Nevertheless, self-improvement on the part of individuals will not by itself remedy the extremely complex situation facing our world today. Isolated individuals can lose their ability and freedom to escape the utilitarian mindset, and end up prey to an unethical consumerism bereft of social or ecological awareness. Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deed.

220. This conversion calls for a number of attitudes which together foster a spirit of generous care, full of tenderness . . . By developing our individual, God-given capacities, an ecological conversion can inspire us to greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world’s problems and in offering ourselves to God “as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable” (Rom 12:1). We do not understand our superiority as a reason for personal glory or irresponsible dominion, but rather as a different capacity which, in its turn, entails a serious responsibility stemming from our faith.

*** *Laudato Si* 9, 219, 220

17. To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home. Such care does not interest those economic powers that demand quick profits. Often the voices raised in defence of the environment are silenced or ridiculed, using apparently reasonable arguments that are merely a screen for special interests.

257. Since conditions that favour the outbreak of wars are once again increasing, I can only reiterate that “war is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples. To this end, there is a need to ensure the uncontested rule of law and tireless recourse to negotiation, mediation and arbitration, as proposed by the Charter of the United Nations, which constitutes truly a fundamental juridical norm”.[\[238\]](#) The seventy-five years since the establishment of the United Nations and the experience of the first twenty years of this millennium have shown that the full application of international norms proves truly effective, and that failure to comply with them is detrimental. The Charter of the United Nations, when observed and applied with transparency and sincerity, is an obligatory reference point of justice and a channel of peace. Here there can be no room for disguising false intentions or placing the partisan interests of one country or group above the global common good. If rules are considered simply as means to be used whenever it proves advantageous, and to be ignored when it is not, uncontrollable forces are unleashed that cause grave harm to societies, to the poor and vulnerable, to fraternal relations, to the environment and to cultural treasures, with irretrievable losses for the global community.

(Pope Francis: [\[238\] Address to the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations, New York](#) (25 September 2015): AAS 107 (2015), 1041.)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 17, 257

May 2, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 9:26-31

The church was being built up and walked in the fear of the Lord,

Ps 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32

Let the coming generation be told of the LORD

1 Jn 3:18-24

We should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,
and love one another just as he commanded us.

Jn 15:1-8

Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit



[Link to SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation](#)

May 8 (Second Saturday in May): [World Migratory Bird Day](#) [UNEP]

1. “*LAUDATO SI*’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs”.^[1]

47. True wisdom, as the fruit of self-examination, dialogue and generous encounter between persons, is not acquired by a mere accumulation of data which eventually leads to overload and confusion, a sort of mental pollution....

For this reason, we should be concerned that, alongside the exciting possibilities offered by these media, a deep and melancholic dissatisfaction with interpersonal relations, or a harmful sense of isolation, can also arise.

62. Nonetheless, science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both.

67. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. “The earth is the Lord’s” (Ps 24:1); to him belongs “the earth with all that is within it” (Dt 10:14). Thus God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me” (Lev 25:23).

71. Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans and foreigners in their midst: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, neither shall you gather the gleanings after the harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner” (Lev 19:9-10).

93. Whether believers or not, we are agreed today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone.

*** *Laudato Si* 47, 62, 67, 71, 93

7. I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features.

33. I urge the young people of the Amazon region, especially the indigenous peoples, to “take charge of your roots, because from the roots comes the strength that will make you grow, flourish and bear fruit”.[\[38\]](#)

68. On the one hand, a fruitful process takes place when the Gospel takes root in a given place, for “whenever a community receives the message of salvation, the Holy Spirit enriches its culture with the transforming power of the Gospel”.[\[92\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 7, 33, 68

11. Once more we are being reminded that “each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day.

41. I realize that some people are hesitant and fearful with regard to migrants. I consider this part of our natural instinct of self-defence. Yet it is also true that an individual and a people are only fruitful and productive if they are able to develop a creative openness to others.

53. We forget that “there is no worse form of alienation than to feel uprooted, belonging to no one. A land will be fruitful, and its people bear fruit and give birth to the future, only to the extent that it can foster a sense of belonging among its members, create bonds of integration between generations and different communities, and avoid all that makes us insensitive to others and leads to further alienation”.[\[50\]](#)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 11, 41, 53

May 9, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

In truth, I see that God shows no partiality

1 Jn 4:7-10

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God

Jn 15:9-17 (56)

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

84. Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe

speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning

142. If everything is related, then the health of a society's institutions has consequences for the environment and the quality of human life. "Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment".[\[116\]](#) In this sense, social ecology is necessarily institutional, and gradually extends to the whole of society, from the primary social group, the family, to the wider local, national and international communities.

230. Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness.

*** *Laudato Si* 84, 142, 230

63. An authentic option for the poor and the abandoned, while motivating us to liberate them from material poverty and to defend their rights, also involves inviting them to a friendship with the Lord that can elevate and dignify them. How sad it would be if they were to receive from us a body of teachings or a moral code, but not the great message of salvation, the missionary appeal that speaks to the heart and gives meaning to everything else in life.

91. The Eucharist is also the great sacrament that signifies and realizes the Church's unity.[\[134\]](#) It is celebrated "so that from being strangers, dispersed and indifferent to each another, we may become united, equals and friends".[\[135\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 63, 91

154. The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good.

180. Recognizing that all people are our brothers and sisters, and seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, is not merely utopian. It demands a decisive commitment to devising effective means to this end. Any effort along these lines becomes a noble exercise of charity.

198. If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 154, 180, 198

May 16, 2021

SUNDAY OR THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Acts 1:1-11

This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven
will return in the same way

Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9

God reigns over the nations

Eph 4:1-13

Equip the holy ones for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ

Mk 16:15-20

Go into the whole world
and proclaim the gospel to every creature

May 22: [International Day for Biological Diversity \(A/RES/55/201\)](#)

14. I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.

15. It is my hope that this Encyclical Letter, which is now added to the body of the Church's social teaching, can help us to acknowledge the appeal, immensity and urgency of the challenge we face.

155. The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology.

235. The Sacraments are a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life.... "Christianity does not reject matter. Rather, bodiliness is considered in all its value in the liturgical act, whereby the human body is disclosed in its inner nature as a temple of the Holy Spirit and is united with the Lord Jesus, who himself took a body for the world's salvation".[\[165\]](#)

*** *Laudato Si* 14, 15, 155, 235

56. Let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense that so often we let languish. Let us remember that "if someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we

should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple”

65. Any project for growth in the Christian life needs to be centered continually on this message, for “all Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma”.[\[82\]](#)

*** *Querida Amazonia* 56, 65

74. “Do you wish to honour the body of the Saviour? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honour it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold”.[\[58\]](#) Paradoxically, those who claim to be unbelievers can sometimes put God’s will into practice better than believers.

273. The root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights that no one may violate – no individual, group, class, nation or state. Not even the majority of the social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority”.[\[262\]](#)

280. For “in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:13), in which each member has his or her distinctive contribution to make. As Saint Augustine said, “the ear sees through the eye, and the eye hears through the ear”.[\[276\]](#) It is also urgent to continue to bear witness to the journey of encounter between the different Christian confessions. We cannot forget Christ’s desire “that they may all be one” (cf. Jn 17:21)

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 74, 273, 280

May 23, 2021

PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-11

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit

Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth

1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body

Jn 20:19-23

As the Father has sent me, so I send you

58. In some countries, there are positive examples of environmental improvement: rivers, polluted for decades, have been cleaned up; native woodlands have been restored; landscapes

have been beautified thanks to environmental renewal projects... These achievements do not solve global problems, but they do show that men and women are still capable of intervening positively. For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care cannot but well up within us, since we were made for love.

73. The writings of the prophets invite us to find renewed strength in times of trial by contemplating the all-powerful God who created the universe. Yet God's infinite power does not lead us to flee his fatherly tenderness, because in him affection and strength are joined. Indeed, all sound spirituality entails both welcoming divine love and adoration, confident in the Lord because of his infinite power.

106. . It is the false notion that "an infinite quantity of energy and resources are available, that it is possible to renew them quickly, and that the negative effects of the exploitation of the natural order can be easily absorbed".[\[86\]](#)

118. There can be no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself. There can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology.... Human beings cannot be expected to feel responsibility for the world unless, at the same time, their unique capacities of knowledge, will, freedom and responsibility are recognized and valued.

164. A global consensus is essential for confronting the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries. Such a consensus could lead, for example, to planning a sustainable and diversified agriculture, developing renewable and less polluting forms of energy, encouraging a more efficient use of energy, promoting a better management of marine and forest resources, and ensuring universal access to drinking water.

*** *Laudato Si* 58, 73, 106, 118, 164

60. The Church, with her broad spiritual experience, her renewed appreciation of the value of creation, her concern for justice, her option for the poor, her educational tradition and her history of becoming incarnate in so many different cultures throughout the world, also desires to contribute to the protection and growth of the Amazon region.

70. For the Church to achieve a renewed inculturation of the Gospel in the Amazon region, she needs to listen to its ancestral wisdom, listen once more to the voice of its elders, recognize the values present in the way of life of the original communities, and recover the rich stories of its peoples.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 60, 70

30. Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes".[\[28\]](#)

55. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth,

goodness and beauty, justice and love... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile".[\[52\]](#)

77. Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies.

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 30, 55, 77

May 30, 2021

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Dt 4:32-34, 39-40

Fix in your heart, that the LORD is God
in the heavens above and on earth below

Ps 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22

Our soul waits for the LORD,
who is our help and our shield.

Rom 8:14-17

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit
that we are children of God

Mt 28:16-20

And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age

128. We were created with a vocation to work. The goal should not be that technological progress increasingly replace human work, for this would be detrimental to humanity. Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment. Helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work.

151. There is also a need to protect those common areas, visual landmarks and urban landscapes which increase our sense of belonging, of rootedness, of "feeling at home" within a city which includes us and brings us together.

156. An integral ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics. The common good is "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment".[\[122\]](#)

172. For poor countries, the priorities must be to eliminate extreme poverty and to promote the social development of their people. At the same time, they need to acknowledge the scandalous level of consumption in some privileged sectors of their population and to combat corruption more effectively. They are likewise bound to develop less polluting forms of energy production, but to do so they require the help of countries which have experienced great growth at the cost of the ongoing pollution of the plane

246 A prayer for our earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

*** *Laudato Si* 128, 151, 156, 172, 246

41. Setting others free from their forms of bondage surely involves caring for the environment and defending it,[\[46\]](#) but, even more, helping the human heart to be open with trust to the God who not only has created all that exists, but has also given us himself in Jesus Christ.

94. For wherever there is a particular need, he [the Holy Spirit] has already poured out the charisms that can meet it. This requires the Church to be open to the Spirit's boldness, to trust in, and concretely to permit, the growth of a specific ecclesial culture that is distinctively lay.

*** *Querida Amazonia* 41, 94

3. Unconcerned for the hardships and dangers involved, Francis went to meet the Sultan with the same attitude that he instilled in his disciples: if they found themselves "among the Saracens and other nonbelievers", without renouncing their own identity they were not to "engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake".[\[3\]](#)

6. I offer this social Encyclical as a modest contribution to continued reflection, in the hope that in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others, we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words.

8. Fraternity between all men and women. "Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together..."

*** *Fratelli Tutti* 3, 6, 8