Church and State – Part 19 The 7 Year Laudato Si Action Plan!





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The Great Controversy between God and Satan is primarily over

"WORSHIP"

Who will you Choose?



Get into the Ark Sanctuary





And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Exodus 25:8

Psalms 77:13



Health Snippet - Arracacha

Health Benefits of Aonori (Seek Medical Advise) Arracacia xanthorrhiza is a plant native to Andes of the Apiaceae /Umbelliferae family. It is sweet and nutty tasting root vegetable with smooth white skin. The young leaves and stems are consumed as greens or added to salads.

Heatlh Benefits of Arracacha:

100 grams of Arracacha provides 0.505 g protein, 0.28 g fat, 26.7 g carbohydrate and 0.85 grams of dietary fibre. It grants 9 mg Iron, 4.3 mg Vitamin B3, 23 mg Vitamin C, 63.05 mg Magnesium and 50 mg of Phosphorus.

- 1. Iron helps to treat chronic diseases of excretory and intestinal system and renal failure anemia.
- 2. Vit B3 helps weak muscles, pellagra or skin irritation and is also able to lower atherosclerosis.
- 3. Vitamin C helps prevent gout and cancer of mouth, lung, vocal chords, rectum, throat, colon, stomach & esophagus.
- 4. Vitamin B1 assists in neurotransmitter acetylcholine production which prevents congestive heart failure and enhances the body's ability and acts as the anti-stress.
- 5. Study shows that it is found in the weight loss regime.
- Flavour is aromatic combination of potato, carrot & celery.

Arracacha Benefits & Properties

Cardioprotective, digestive

Main Applications

- Promoting digestive health
- Supporting cardiovascular health

Supportive Compounds

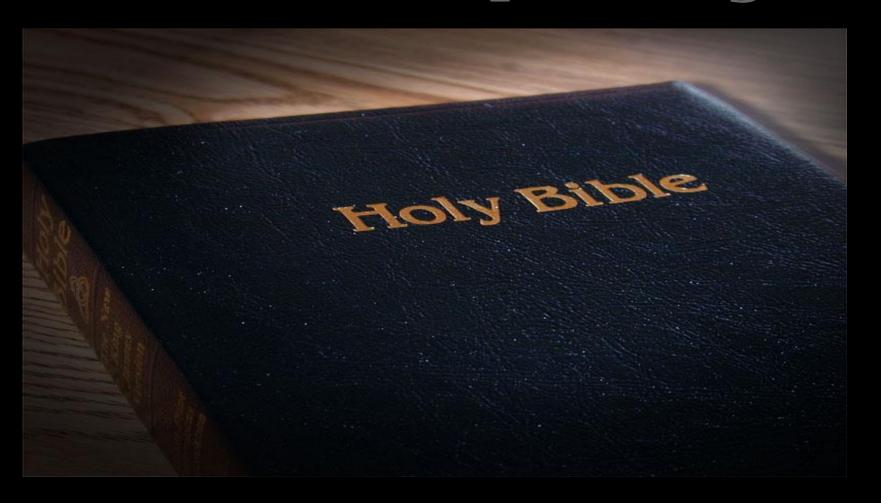
- Resistant starch
 Carotenoids
- Amino acids
- Phenols

Medicinal Actions

Arracacha is rich in **resistant starch**, a type of carbohydrate that is slowly digested and passes into the large intestine where much of it is used as a food source by the healthy bacteria, promoting a balanced microbiota and delaying glucose absorption, which prevents sugar spikes after meals.

Arracacha's cardiovascular benefits hail from carotenoids and phenols, as well as amino acids that contribute to its protein content.

Can We Trust Bible Prophecy?





Yes we Can!

Exodus 20:8-11 (KJV)

- 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:
- 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:
- In For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.



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Introduction

God has revealed in Scripture the authentic and historical account of His creative activity. He created the universe, and in a recent six-day creation the Lord made "the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them" and rested on the seventh day. Thus He established the Sabbath as a perpetual memorial of the work He performed and completed during six literal days that together with the Sabbath constituted the same unit of time that we call a week today. The first man and woman were made in the image of God as the crowning work of Creation, given dominion over the world, and charged with responsibility to care for it. When the world was finished it was "very good," declaring the glory of God. (Genesis 1-2; 5; 11; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalms 19:1-6; 33:6, 9; 104; Isaiah 45:12, 18; Acts 17:24; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2; 11:3; Revelation 10:6; 14:7.





Introduction (cont'd)

Not only did God "rest" on the seventh day, but He set this day aside for rest for mankind. He made it holy and blessed it, and commanded His living creation to rest as well.

The fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) instructs mankind to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. That remembrance is talking about the culmination of this very week of creation, when God made time to enjoy this world with the human race He created.

Because the heavens and earth were finished, God paused. He asks us to pause with Him each week, as a reminder that He is our Creator, and this world was given to us to live in and help take care of.

We owe our very being to Him, and by spending time appreciating His creation, we honour Him and grow closer to Him.



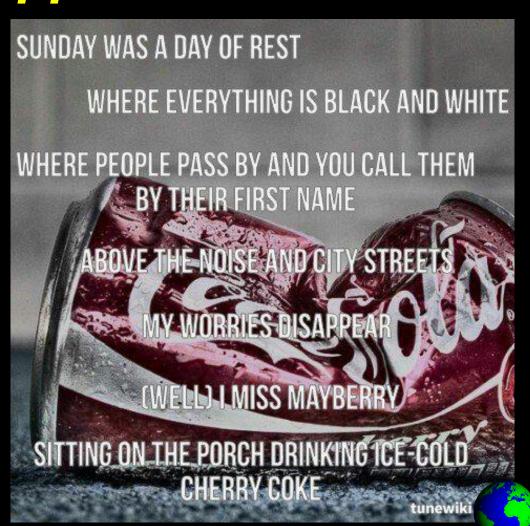
It's not just nostalgia. Many pandemic-weary souls want to make Sunday a day of rest again.

In a hit song two decades ago, country music group Rascal Flatts offered banjo-tinged commentary on "the world spinning faster than it did in the old days."

"Sunday was a day of rest," the group proclaimed in its ode to a bygone era. "Now, it's one more day for progress."

Some of us are old enough to remember when most businesses — not just Chick-fil-A — closed on Sundays.

It seems quaint now, but I did an Associated Press story in 2003 on Family Christian Stores — then the nation's largest Christian retail chain — deciding to open on Sundays.



But in 2016, I was surprised during a reporting trip to North Dakota when I found an empty parking lot at a Bismarck Walmart — and then at Super Target — while looking to buy a few snacks and supplies.

I learned that for more than a century, the state had required most retailers to close from midnight to noon on Sundays. North Dakota finally became the last state to lift that ban in 2019.

I bring up this subject not just for nostalgia but because the day of rest — or the lack of it — is drawing renewed consideration nationally.

In a recent piece, Deseret News religion reporter Kelsey Dallas explains "why some political commentators and legal scholars are tweeting their support for taking a Sabbath":



Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, Americans were overworked and tightly wound. In the past two years, the situation's only gotten worse.

Pandemic-related stress and a widespread desire for more time to rest are among the factors fuelling the "Great Resignation." They also help explain why some political commentators and legal scholars spent the weekend debating the Sabbath. ...

Sabbath laws, which are also known as blue laws, were once a major part of American life. Although they came in a variety of forms, the policies had a shared purpose: limiting certain commercial activities to six days per week.

In other words, blue laws forced both business owners and the people they served to take a day of rest. And under past policies, that day was almost always Sunday.





Dallas' report points to an interesting Wall Street Journal essay by Sohrab Ahmari that explores "what we've lost in rejecting the Sabbath."

A writer for Crisis, an online magazine that describes itself as "America's most trusted source for authentic Catholic perspectives on church and state, arts and culture, science and faith," also supports returning to a quieter Sunday.

Writer Casey Chalk declares, "Americans in those early quarantine days—after the haze of their Netflix-binge had evaporated—woke up with a surprised appreciation for what earlier generations had considered normal: Sunday laws, otherwise known as blue laws. As America returns to normality, we should consider these laws and their manifold benefits afresh."





Chalk also approvingly quotes attorney Jay Lefkowitz, who wrote in The Washington Post about the blessings of the seventh-day Sabbath, known as Shabbat in Hebrew. "Shabbat is also a reminder of other forms of separation that add meaning to our lives—between hard work and play, and between pursuing our own dreams and caring for others," Lefkowitz states. "Shabbat is about balance or, to use a modern word, mindfulness."

Chalk goes on to write: "The writer also references the recent experience of Poland, whose population is overwhelmingly affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church: "In Poland, the 2017 Sunday trading ban was 'about helping small family stores, but also about letting people who are effectively forced to work on Sundays be free,' said President Andrzej Duda. Since the ban's introduction, Duda has noted, more families have engaged in outdoor activities, and the domestic tourism industry has benefited." – Bobby Ross Jr. | Every Friday, "Weekend Plug-in" features analysis, fact checking and top headlines from the world of faith.



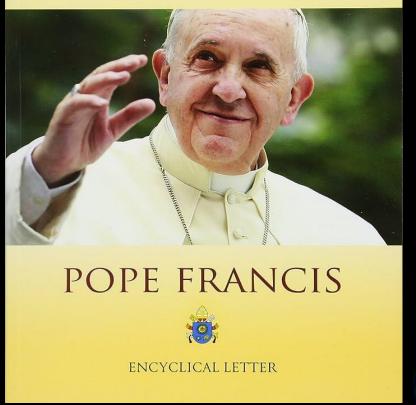
Laudato Si: Everything is Connected

"I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home." (3) With these words Pope Francis enters new territory for an encyclical which is usually written for members of the Catholic Church. He underlines the importance of "a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversion which includes everyone," he writes, "since the environmental challenge we are undergoing and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (14)

The title of the encyclical, Laudato Si' (Praised Be to You) is taken from the famous "Canticle of the Sun" by St. Francis of Assisi. The subtitle "On Care for Our Common Home" expresses his deep understanding of both Earth as oikos which is the Greek root of the word "ecology" and means "home", as well as the importance of caring, a significant element in the liberation theology of Latin America.

LAUDATO SI'

ON CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME





He begins the encyclical by quoting from earlier Popes as well as St. Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew, on the environment. He also recognizes United Nations (UN) and civil environmental initiatives, mentioning specifically the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the Earth Charter and the Rio+20 Earth Summit in 2012.

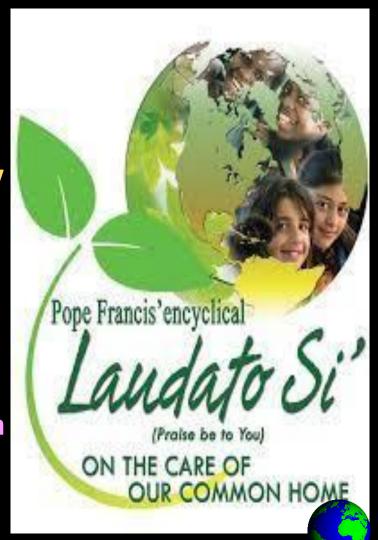
Pope Francis spent more than a year writing Laudato Si'. The final document reflects not only his own understanding of scientific concepts, but also represents input from many theologians, philosophers, and scientists. He timed the release to influence three major world events: the international Financing for Development Conference in Ethiopia in July of 2015, the ratification of the Sustainable Development Goals by the UN General Assembly in September of 2015 and the Conference of the Parties, a gathering of world leaders on the climate issue, in Paris in December of 2015.





The thread which ties the key concepts of the encyclical together is Francis' continued repetition that everything is connected; that we are interdependent and the actions of one individual or one country affects the whole. He continually emphasizes that the problems facing humanity are not isolated but integrally connected. In his own words "The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. (48) He sees addressing both environmental and social crises as a moral issue stating that "Authentic human development has a moral character" and that "it presumes full respect for the human person, but must also be concerned for the world around us." (5)

He states very clearly that "a very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system...accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level...an increase of extreme weather events..." and that "a number of scientific studies indicate that global warming in recent decades is due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases released mainly as a result of human activity." (8)



Quoting from the Bolivian Bishops' Conference he states that "Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest." (26) The connection made between climate change and poverty is reiterated throughout the document and supports the finding of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN IPCC) report of 2014 which also clearly articulates the connection between climate change and poverty with these words "...those who are 'socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally or otherwise marginalized' will be most affected by drastic changes in the climate." The IPCC continues, "Climate change produces more extreme weather. And when horrible storms hit, poor communities are affected worse than rich ones."



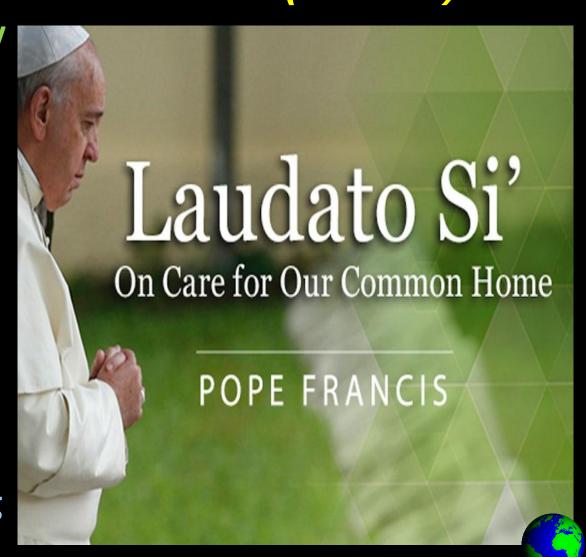


Another theme which surfaces repeatedly is the concept of the common good as illustrated in the following passages:

"Human ecology is inseparable from the notion of the common good, a central and unifying principle of social ethics." (156)

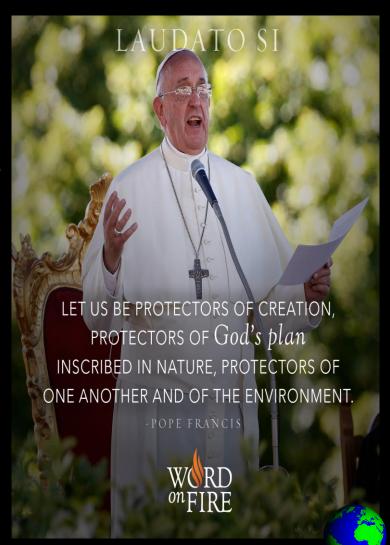
"...the common good calls for social peace, the stability and security provided by a certain order which cannot be achieved without particular concern for distributive justice." (157)

"The climate is a common good belonging to all and meant for all." (23)



He challenges politicians not to allow themselves to be subject to the economy nor "the economy subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy." (169) He minces no words when he states that "Politics itself is responsible for the disrepute in which it is held on account of corruption and the failure to enact sound public policies." He states clearly that "What is needed is a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis...if politics shows itself incapable of breaking such a perverse logic, and remains caught up in inconsequential discussions, we will continue to avoid facing the major problems of humanity." (197)

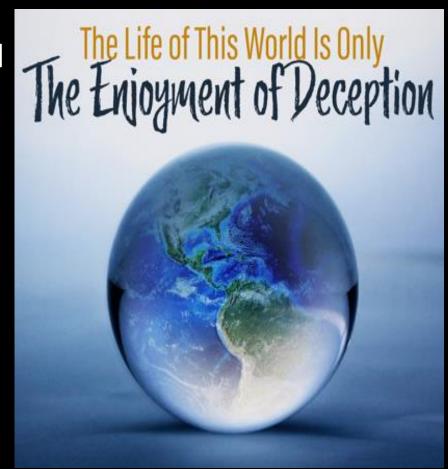
On the role of technology he cautions that every advance must not be viewed simply in terms of its economic benefits without concern for the potentially negative impact on society. He further cautions against an overreliance on technology to solve environmental and social problems without recognizing the "mysterious network of relations between things" lest one problem is solved only to create others. - by Caroljean Willie, SC, Ph.D. | Dec 6, 2020 | Formation, Reflections



A world living in deception

The term sustainable development is commonly used to mean economic growth that conserves the environment, an outcome which sounds beneficial and desirable, but the real goal of that concept is to demonstrate that population growth is the real cause of underdevelopment and environmental degradation.

The concept of development is a key factor in understanding to what extent environmental ideology propaganda has distorted the public's understanding of reality. We have reached the point that a totally wrong idea of nature's mechanisms, human relationships with nature and with each other, prevails. Previous instalments explained how development (industrialised countries, which use fossil fuels) came to be considered the cause of all current evils, in the environment in general and the climate in particular. Even if the truth is, underdevelopment with all its implications, holds the real threat to the environment.

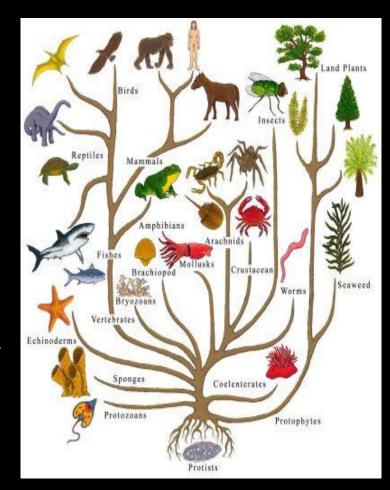




This is the background - and the false belief - that gave rise to sustainable development becoming the presumed "cure." The concept "sustainable development" is now an undisputed global slogan. Even the Church - as we will see later - recently included the term in its Magisterium.

The term sustainable development is commonly used to mean economic growth that conserves the environment, an outcome which sounds beneficial and desirable. But such a sweeping statement, theoretically could lead to a number of different concrete choices. The only way to understand what is really intended by sustainable development, is to refer to the original definition of the concept.

It is important to note though, that the concept of sustainability is taken from biology: it is used for example in the 1950s in a study of the reproductive rates of fish to establish the sustainability of fishing. It is therefore, a classic example of the translation of scientific theories from the animal world to the human world according to a typical cultural pattern attributable to social Darwinism, which tends to deny the uniqueness of the human species with respect to the various animal species.





The first attempts to promote the concept of sustainable development by applying it to human beings take place in the 1970s, but the actual consecration take place with the UN International **Commission on Environment and** Development, also known as the **Brundtland Commission named after the** former Norwegian premier Gro Harlem Brundtland who was in charge. The Commission, established in 1983 by the then secretary general of the UN Perez de Cuellar, ends with the publication in 1987 of the Report entitled Our Common Future'. Here sustainable development is defined as "the development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the possibilities for future generations to meet their needs."



The blueprint might appear basic common sense, but the real goal of that report is to demonstrate that population growth is the real cause of underdevelopment and environmental degradation. For example, let's examine an extract from the chapter on 'Population and Human Resources': "Every year the number of human beings increases, but the amount of natural resources with which to support the population and improve the quality of life in order to eliminate mass poverty, remains defined ... Current population growth rates cannot continue. In this way, they question the ability of many governments to provide education, health services and food security for the population, not to mention the possibility of raising living standards. While the splitting of numbers and resources, is reinforced by the fact that most of the population growth is concentrated in low-income countries and in ecologically disadvantaged regions."





The Environment Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, requested by the Brundtland Commission was to be held along the same lines. There the Heads of State and **Government of over 170 countries sign** Agenda 21 (reference to the 21st century) and the Action Plan which are based on two clear objectives: birth control in poor countries, curbing the development of rich countries. It is precisely on these two goals that all the current global environmental policies are grafted, including those specifically focused on climate change. For example, the number 5.3 of Agenda 21 states: "The combined growth of the world population and production with unsustainable consumption levels puts the capacity of our planet to sustain life under hard and increasing pressure."

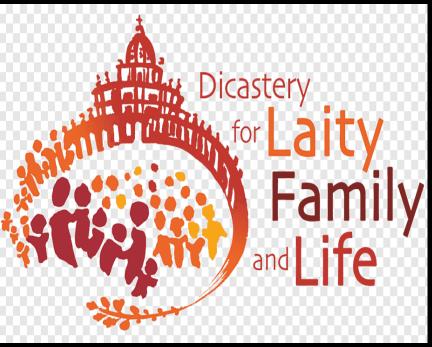




It is because of this negative conception of man, that the Church rejected the use of the concept sustainable development from the beginning. It's suffice to recall a 1994 document, published by the Pontifical Council for the Family, 'Ethical and Pastoral Dimensions of Demographic Trends': "According to this current of thought - states the document in no. 24 -, birth control is the indispensable pre-condition for the sustainable development of poor countries.

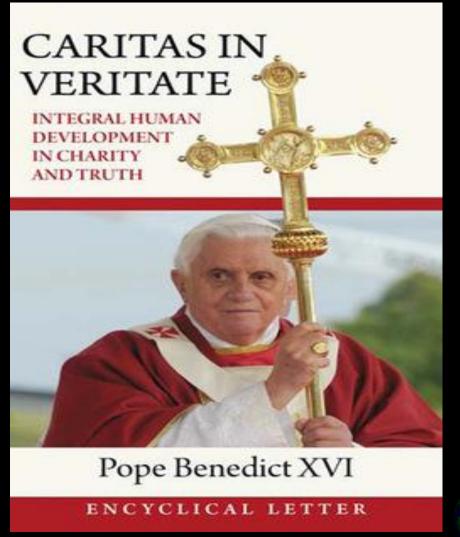
Sustainable development means a development where the various factors (food, health, education, technology, population, environment, etc.) are harmonised so as to avoid unbalanced growth and the waste of resources. Developed countries define what sustainable development means for others, from their perspective. This explains why certain rich countries and important international organisations want to help these countries, but on one condition: that they accept programs for systematic birth control."







Moreover, the universal affirmation of the concept of "sustainable development", has led to pressure also being applied within the Church to adopt this notion in ecology. Strong pressures were already present during Benedict XVI pontificate, notably by some European episcopates, with the Germans leading the way. The best opportunity to come their way seemed to be with the social encyclical Caritas in Veritate. But Benedict XVI re-proposed the concept of "integral human development" and the attempt was ultimately not successful. The substantial difference between "integral human development" and "sustainable development" is apparent from the first paragraphs of the encyclical, in which Benedict XVI illustrates how "integral human development" is a "vocation" (no.4) that arises from the fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God.





Precisely for this reason, the encyclical exalts the dignity and uniqueness of man, his central role in the plan of Creation, while - as we have seen - the idea of "sustainable development" conveys a negative conception of human beings.

In fact, Benedict XVI clearly denounces the humanitarian ideology - dominant for example in the UN agencies - because "humanism that excludes God is an inhuman humanism" (no.78). While the "integral human development" is "aimed at the promotion of every person and of the whole person" (no.18), "sustainable development" justifies the sacrifice of a part of humanity, with policies on birth control (no.28) which are based on the "incorrect" consideration that "population increase" is "the main cause of underdevelopment." (no.44).





The present pontificate, however, has made radical changes and the concept of "sustainability" is an integral part of Pope Francis' magisterium: not only are there abundant references in the encyclical 'Laudato Si', but it's promoted in Vatican conventions and talks, not to mention the individuals like the economist Jeffrey Sachs, who have built a career on sustainable development and now dictate to the Vatican. – by Riccardo Cascioli, CLIMATE FOLLIES



THE LAUDATO SI' GOALS

Urging people active in all sectors of society to "work together," the pope insisted that "Only in this way will we be able to create the future we want: a more inclusive, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world."

Father Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam, coordinator of the "Ecology and Creation" office of the Vatican department for Integral Human Development, outlined the different stages in the implementation process, which he said will be a "synodal process."

Kureethadam said the reason for a 7-year plan is based on the biblical significance of the number seven.

These seven goals provide guidance on urgent and immediate actions each one of us can take in the care of our common home. "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents" (Laudato Si' 14)



1 - Response To The Cry Of The Earth

The Response to the Cry of the Earth is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability. Actions could include the adoption of renewable energies and energy sufficiency measures, achieving carbon neutrality, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture, and guaranteeing access to clean water for all.

Target group in the 1st year 2021:

Ecological conversion begins with Families – Collaborating with families.

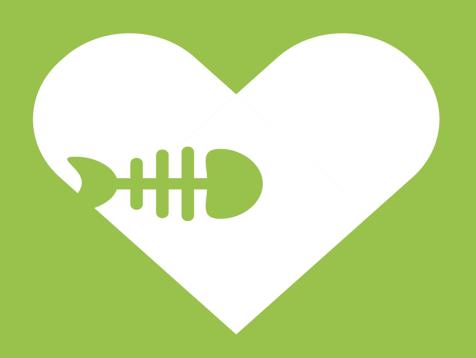


2 - Response To The Cry Of The Poor

The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. Actions could include projects to promote solidarity, with special attention given to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, and children at risk, analysis and improvement of social systems, and social service programmes.

Target group in the 2nd year 2022: Parishes and Dioceses.

RESPONSE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR



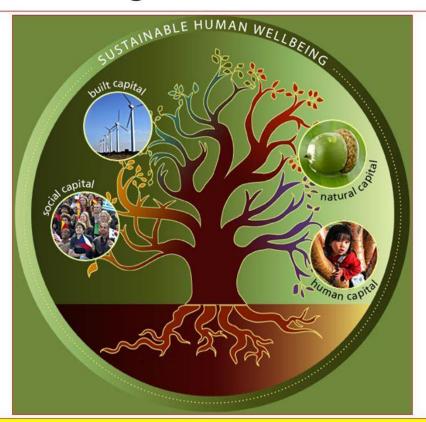


3 - Ecological Economics

Ecological Economics acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere-our common home. Actions could include sustainable production and consumption, ethical investments, divestment from fossil fuels and any activity harmful to the planet and the people, supporting circular economies, and prioritizing care labour and protecting the dignity of workers. Target group in the 3rd year 2023:

Education and institutions – schools and universities.

Ecological Economics



Taking ecology into the economy



4 - Adoption Of Sustainable Lifestyles

The Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles is grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. Actions could include reducing waste and recycling, adopting sustainable dietary habits (opting for a more plant-based diet and reducing meat consumption), greater use of public transport, active mobility (walking, cycling), and avoiding single use items (e.g. plastic, etc.).

Target group in the 4th year 2024: Hospitals and Health Care Centres.





5 - Ecological Education

Ecological Education is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology in order to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. Actions could include ensuring equitable access to education for all and promoting human rights, fostering Laudato Si' themes within the community, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities.

Target group in the 5th year 2025:

Economy – Businesses, co-operatives and farms.





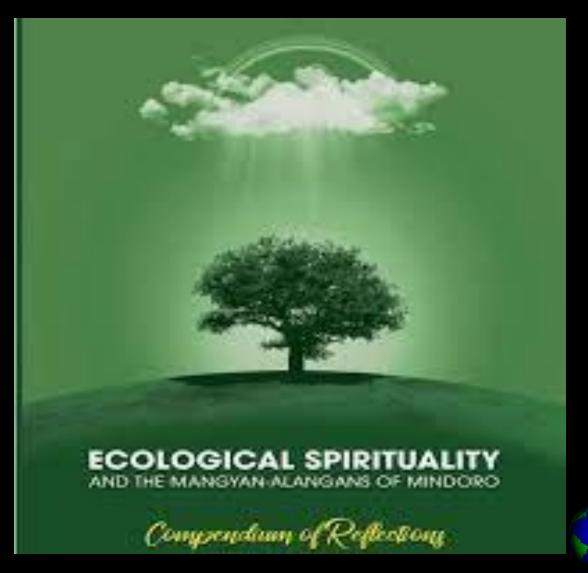


6 - Ecological Spirituality

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to "discover God in all things", both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities. Actions could include promoting creation-based liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats and formation programmes, etc.

Target group in the 6th year 2026:

Organizations – Sports groups, NGOs, communication centres, all groups.



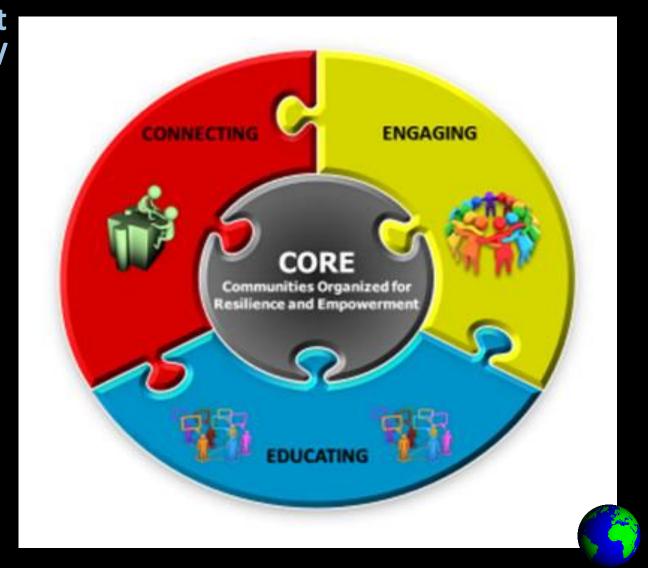
7 - Community Resilience And Empowerment

Community resilience and empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels. Actions could include promoting advocacy and developing people's campaigns, encouraging rootedness and a sense of belonging in local communities and neighbourhood ecosystems.

Target group in the 7th year 2027:

Religious Orders – Provinces, Communities, Congregations.

• So, the idea is to propose to families, parishes, businesses, schools, groups, religious orders, in the 7 years to become a Laudato Si Family. Laudato Si School, Laudato Si Business, Laudato Si Religious Order, Laudato Si Parish.



The Laudato Si Action Plan

The 7-year journey will begin at the close of the Laudato Si year in May 24 2021.

- In the first year we need to begin planning. To adapt. To learn.
- The next five years are about action.
- The seventh year is the sabbatical year. A year of rest. Do not work all the 7 years. Keep the seventh year to give thanks and to give praise to God.
- If a school is going to join in the second year, they still need to do planning.
- There will be a Laudato Si Planning Web site. The Web site will be in 9 languages.
- There will be an action platform steering group with Caritas International. Working very much with the global Catholic Climate movement.
- There are youth groups and ecclesial networks who are becoming involved.

In each area there are at least one leader and sub-leaders. These leaders are trying to make it more concrete to reach the Laudato Si goals.



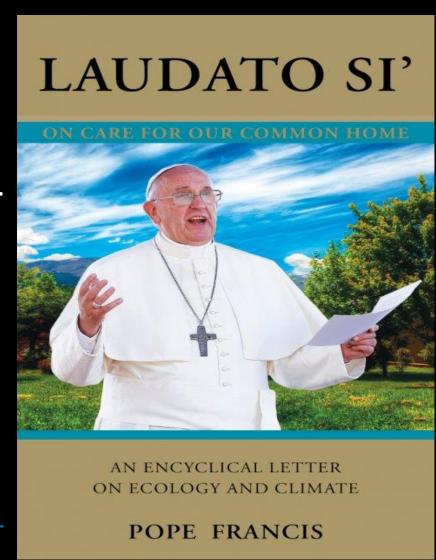
The Laudato Si Action Plan (cont'd)

We have people who will accompany you - with schools, with hospitals, with businesses. It is a journey together.

We will begin in 2021. But, in 2022 we hope another group will join. Some groups, schools, may not join in 2021, but they are invited to join in 2022. In 2023 another group will join and do their 7-year journey. We hope that in every year passing we will keep on doubling the Laudato Si Action Plan. So, in 2021 if there 2000 schools, we hope in 2022 there will be 4000 schools. The idea is that we grow exponentially.

Why is this important? We want to create a "critical mass". Any change will take place only when there is "critical mass". That is the group of people who will change the entire system. We can see Mahatma Gandhi did in India, we can see Nelson Mandela did in Africa. Even the Berlin Wall came down in 1993.

For the entire system to change we need 21 to 25% of all people. We hope to create a "critical mass". We hope to work with other churches, ecumenical, and inter-religious and inter-faith. - https://jpicblog.maristsm.org/marist-family-l-si-7-yr-action-platform

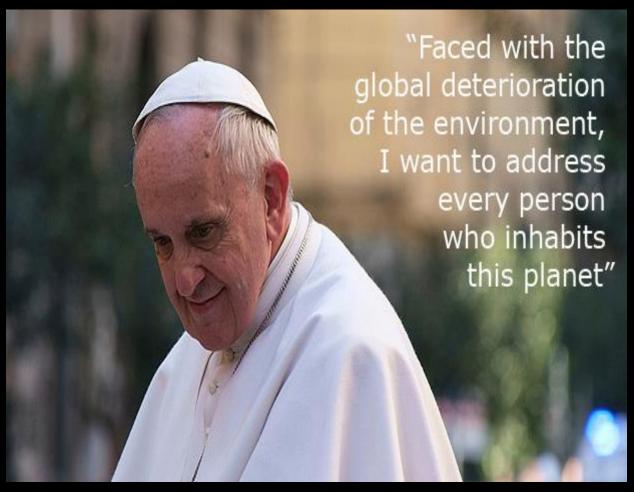


Praising God for Prophecy

Pope Francis projects no minor vision—his revolutionary encyclical is addressed to "every person living on this planet" (par. 3). The pope and his advisors call for massive changes in almost every area of human activity. The encyclical asserts that the way our global, complex society goes about our industrial, financial, and resource allocation activities is reflective of selfishness and greed. Pressing his case, the pope says that this selfishness and greed, and the resulting massive (and growing) gap between rich and poor around the world, inflict tremendous and disproportionate suffering on the poor—which is immoral. The pope further asserts that this same greed and selfishness drive industrial production and societal consumption practices that in turn are causing profound and accelerating global environmental decline.

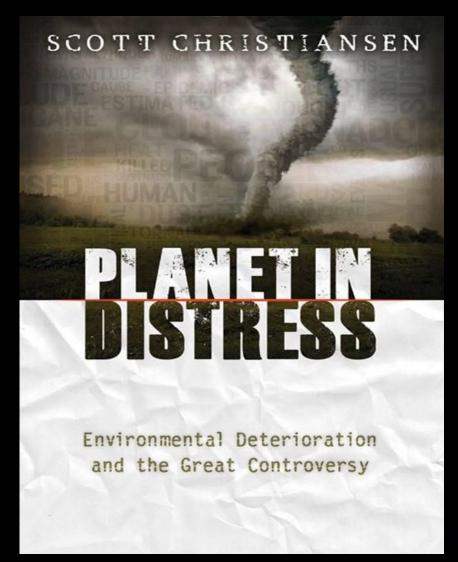


As a result the poor of the world, who are most at risk, suffer more sickness, dramatically increased food prices, decreased access to water, and hardships of every kind. Having framed his premise, Pope Francis lays out his vision of a radically changed world where we no longer consume obscene amounts of resources, where there is social justice and material equity, where there is dramatically decreased pollution, and where thoughtful policy and a God-centered morality drive all these changes.



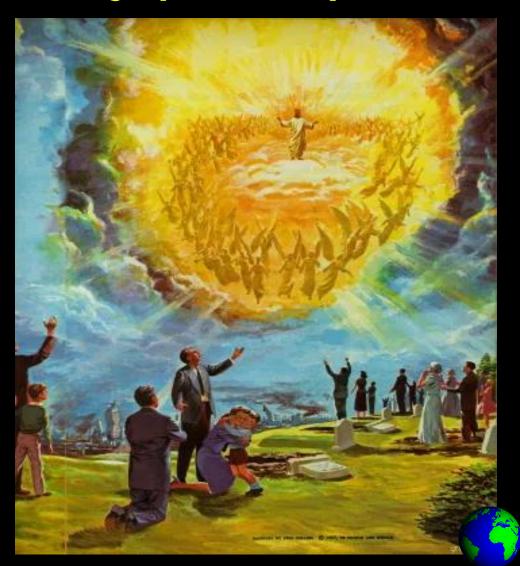


I share a great deal of common ground with the pope in regard to his premise. Having worked among the poor and downtrodden as a country director for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), I've experienced first-hand the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged in the developing world. I know that it is indeed sin, in the form of greed and selfishness among all humans, that is the root cause of the suffering of billions in this world. From my time in ADRA and from my years of focused study and research, I also know that the pope is quite correct in linking sin with our global industrial and production patterns, and in connecting those with environmental decay and human suffering. I made the same connections in my book Planet In Distress (Review & Herald 2012).





I largely agree with the pope's analysis, and am encouraged that he does more than merely criticize. But I find myself shaking my head in wonder at his proposed solutions. His noble and biblical desire to serve and comfort the poor and downtrodden focus him on fixing this world with no apparent grasp of Scripture's focus on preparation for the personal, visible, bodily, saving return of Christ to destroy sin and Satan, and set up again His perfect kingdom. My years of studying environmental issues and their impact on human society have given me a good understanding of the pope's concerns. But I have a hard time reconciling his thinking with what he surely ought to know. Sadly, he seems to miss where prophecy tells us we are in human history. The Bible clearly speaks of a natural world in spectacular decline in its final days: the earth will grow old like a garment does (Isaiah 51:6).



This picture of a threadbare rag perfectly describes what is happening to God's world and the life webs He created. Christ's description of the final days in Matthew 24 (and its parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21) reveal a dysfunctional natural world prior to the falling of the seven last plagues that will specifically punish those who have rejected God's love and chosen evil living instead. Revelation 11:18 speaks of God's anger directed at "those who destroy the world." Prophecy's information about God's anger directed against destroyers speaks both to the fact of their guilt for this pernicious action, and to how God feels about it.



As sin is destroying both humans and the world itself those who study Scripture recognize that the rapid and accelerating decline of natural systems of the earth means that very little time is left for the present order. Pope Francis may be focused on Matthew 25 in his care for the earth's downtrodden, but he has missed the thrust of all Jesus' teaching from Matthew 24:1-25;46 and if he cannot see that earth's time is winding down. Just now the Lord's servants should be putting all possible energy and resources into proclaiming salvation through Christ and His soon coming to bring in new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13). The fundamental question must be: is the pope's re-visioning of human society and his prescription for global management what the Bible calls for at this time?



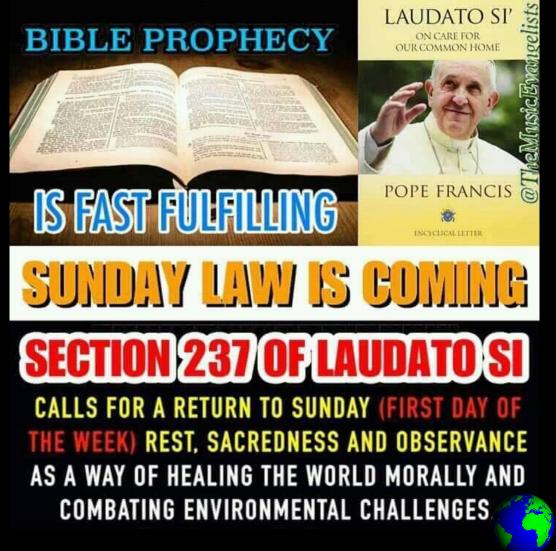


The world does not seem to be burdened with the questions I am asking. The massive global media response to the encyclical is proof that the world is wondering after the pope. He has a tremendous amount of influence and is enormously popular. And he seems destined to gain more; as the sin-induced accelerating decline of the world's natural systems continues, he will not only have pointed to what is coming; he will have prescribed the solution—a sweeping morality-based re-visioning of human society. Note that this re-visioning is beyond the implementation capacity of national governments or even of the United Nations without the inspired human development guidelines he proposes that are found in his Christian tradition (par. 15). The pope's encyclical recommends nothing less than a spiritual and technical approach to managing the world and its problems. His political, social, technological and economic commentary notwithstanding, none can miss the passion of his fervour for the spiritual solution he proposes.



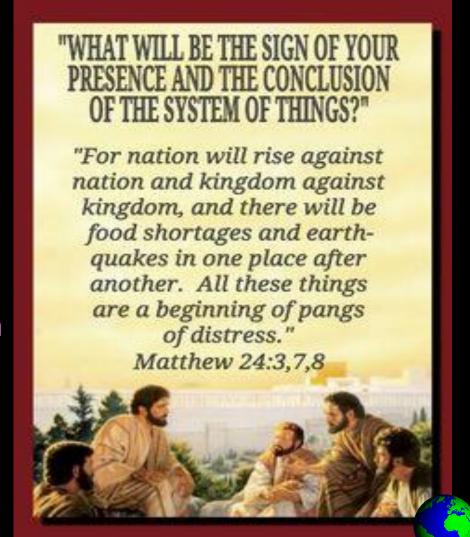


We may expect increasing demands for change all over the earth as things rapidly get worse. And Pope Francis has already eloquently and rationally, if somewhat mystically, pointed the direction in which he believes the world needs to go. That spiritual direction involves the Sacraments, "a privileged way in which nature is taken up by God to become a means of mediating supernatural life" (par. 235). The Eucharist, particularly, is "a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation" (par. 236). Participating in the **Eucharist on Sunday "has special importance"** (par. 237). And the celebration of Sunday itself can save us from "that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else" (ibid.).

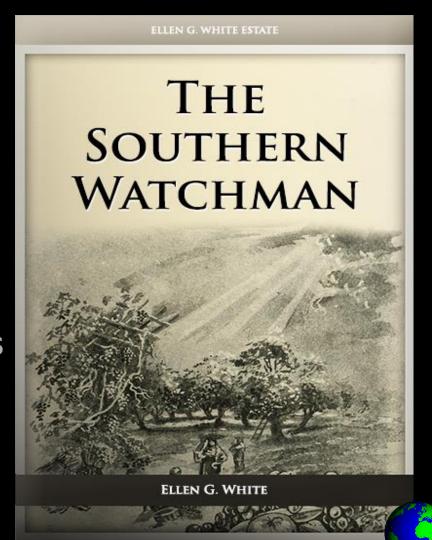


For students of prophecy the pope's encyclical appears at a very interesting time, as the effects of sin bring to life before our eyes Jesus' predictions on wars, famines, earthquakes, etc., that are "the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:6-8). The world is not suffering from some mere shortage of management. "It is because of man's sin that 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together" (Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 443). Simply put, no management plan, even a spiritually-based one, can reverse the effects of sin.

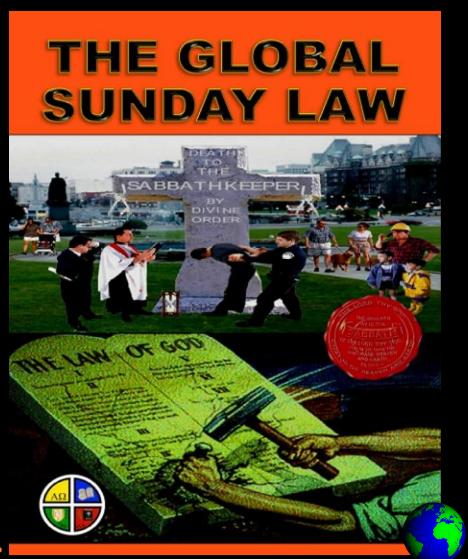
The evidence of the accelerating decline of the earth and its natural systems is made clear through an abundance of observations and scientific studies. Each day the news media is full of reports on such studies that include a more than tripling in natural disasters over the last 35 years. Prophecy specifically advises that a dramatic increase in such disasters will create an insistence for a Sunday law:



"Men in responsible positions will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but from the sacred desk will urge upon the people the observance of the first day of the week, . . . They will point to calamities on land and sea—to the storms of wind, the floods, the earthquakes, the destruction by fire—as judgments indicating God's displeasure because Sunday is not sacredly observed. These calamities will increase more and more, one disaster will follow close upon the heels of another; and those who make void the law of God will point to the few who are keeping the Sabbath of the fourth commandment as the ones who are bringing wrath upon the world" (Ellen White, The Southern Watchman, June 28, 1904).



The rate of disasters has not yet reached the point where it has the attention of the world as described above. Prophecy indicates that it soon enough will. The recent encyclical, with it's glorification of the Sacraments, the Eucharist, the divinity of Mary, and the blessedness of Sunday rest advances papal arguments that fly in the face of Scripture and God. Given his address to everyone on the planet Pope Francis may be heard as contending that if the earth is to be healed, then Sunday rest and worship, including consuming the body of Christ on Sunday, needs to become global practice. We may not yet be able to clearly connect his argument to the castigation of commandment keepers, but the light of prophecy already shines most brightly on the times in which we live and those just before us. Ultimately, Sabbath keepers will be blamed for epic disaster after epic disaster because they stubbornly insist on keeping God's law including 7th day Sabbath.



With or without Francis' letter to his bishops and the world, the signs that our Lord is coming very soon are all around us, if we will let the lamp of prophecy enlighten our souls and light the world's darkness. With or without the encyclical, our duty is clear—to carry on Christ's ministry of love and compassion to all, and particularly to the least of His brethren, in context of urgently announcing the nearness of His return and the salvation He is and is bringing for all who love His appearing (2 Timothy 4:8). Perhaps the encyclical will serve as a wake-up call to all humanity, as yet one more sign that prophecies are being fulfilled now, in real time.



The pope has a sweeping and unique vision for his work. Seventh-day Adventists have a sweeping, unique, and prophetically ordained vision. We understand the battle between Christ and Satan and prophecy articulates the significance of our role in that battle: "Go tell the world" is our commission, and then the end will come. Disasters have their warning role, and the devil will employ them for his malicious ends. But the climax through proclamation is part of our prophetic privilege. We proclaim by words that testify to gospel truth, and by lives that are faithful to the Person of our Saviour who is Truth and Way and Life. Then let us arise; let us shine; for the light of prophecy has come into our souls, and all along our road. The time is short; let us fully engage for a lost humanity, and for the Lord. "We have a most reliable prophetic word, and you would do well to pay attention to it" (2 Peter 1:19). Praise God for the light of prophecy! https://adventistreview.org/praising-god-for-prophecyone-adventists-response-to-the-recent-papal-encyclical/





Conclusion

Belonging is a fundamental desire in each of us. Knowing we play a part in the big picture, that we are significant, that we are loved—these are key ingredients to fulfilment. Having a space and a purpose is necessary for our happiness and mental health.

Knowing we were created, and knowing the way we were created, also helps us know ourselves better. We have complementary masculine and feminine characteristics because God made us to fit together like the most intricate of puzzle pieces.

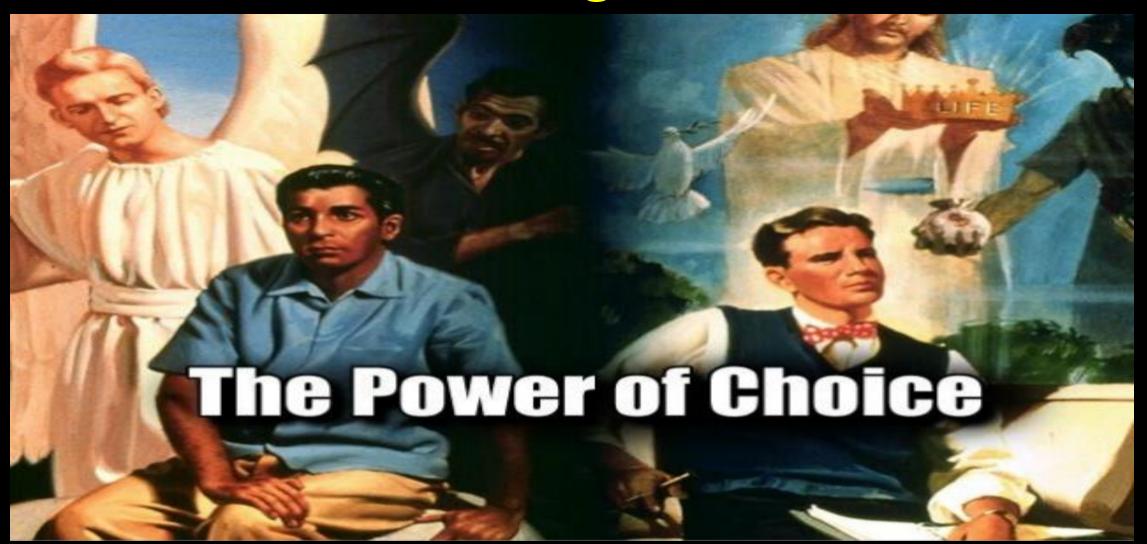
We have a home because God created it, making sure it was good and perfect before He put us there. Unfortunately we have almost destroyed it in almost 6000 years. Correcting this may be impossible.

If only since creation of Adam and Eve, humanity followed God's design of 6 days of caring for the creation and 7th day Sabbath rest. We would not have been in this situation today! The focus today is still to follow that order - 6 days care of creation 7th day Sabbath rest (Saturday the 7th day of the week).

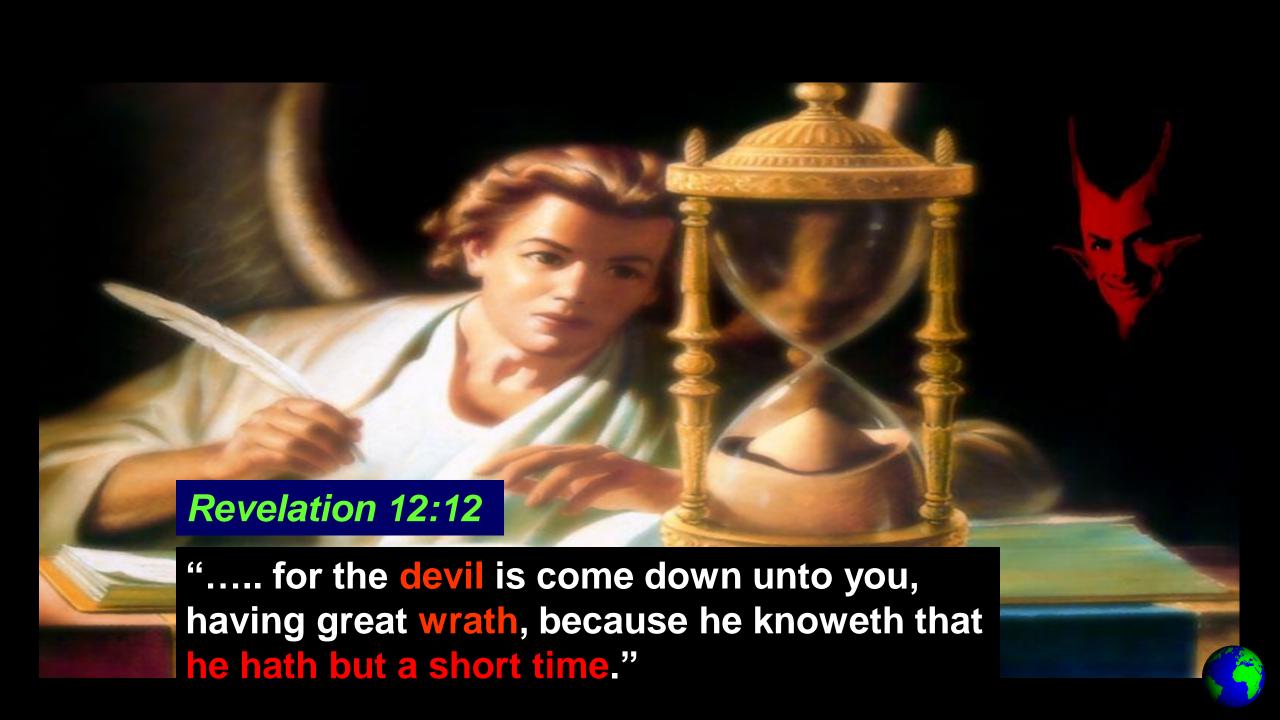


When the observance of Sunday be mandatory, each person must decide whether to accept the sign of authority of God (Sabbath) or the authority of men (Sunday)

God has given all:







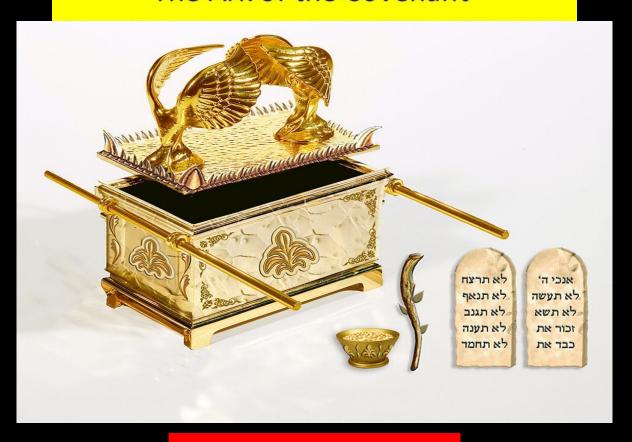
Enter The Ark of Hope

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

- John 10:16



The Ark of the Covenant



Psalms 77:13

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. -Revelation 3:20





