

**A Brief Commentary  
on Pope Francis' Encyclical:  
Care for Our Common Home by Fr. Ed Ciuba**



*Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. Even more imminently, in terms of our present corona virus pandemic, we can draw some needed values and ideas of how we might better understand and cope with our own ominous situation.*

The encyclical covers three major points:

***Created life is a network of relationships.***

We are incredibly inter-connected with all created reality and with everything and everyone on this planet Earth. We are a web of relationships. The human community and the earth community are related. We depend on one another. As we are related to trees, plants, animals, soil and water, we are also dependent on one another. To the extent that we destroy our earth community, we destroy ourselves. To the extent we violate these relationships, we destroy also the potential for harmony, mutual support, cooperation, and peace that should exist with one another. We can cause disharmony and chaos.

***Most ecological crises have human roots.***

Modern technology has brought us enormous benefits as well as power. If we don't use our power wisely, it can become greed. Power has to be accompanied by human responsibility, ethical values and conscience. Our responsibility over Mother Earth is not dominion, but responsible stewardship. As responsible stewards, we can't interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention to the consequences of such interference in other areas. Could this not have responsible applications in indiscriminate molecular and genetic manipulations? Could this possibly come into play, as we still search for the origins of the corona virus? Was it a mistake, an accident, or, God forbid deliberate? Are we in certain cases overstepping our boundaries? As indicated in point 1, we are "kin;" we have responsibilities to one another.

***We are summoned to profound interior conversion.***

The ecological crisis which is become increasingly apparent, as well as the Covid 19 virus which we are presently experiencing is a call to profound interior conversion. What personal values do we want to guide us as we push on into an uncertain future? If we can overcome realities like greed, a compulsive consumerism, unrestrained self-centeredness, an unwillingness to accept limits, we will never be able to experience the profound peace with ourselves, the world around us, and the God who loves us and in whom we place our trust.