

Scientific evidence for the future of Laudato si' Encyclical

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NATURALISM—AS RELIGION, WITHIN RELIGIONS, OR WITHOUT RELIGION?

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Church teaching in Western Christianity stands on two pillars. The main symbolizes God-inspired words of the Bible. The other one divides, and signifies the wisdom of Saints and Fathers of the Church for Catholics, and the authorities of Reformation in Protestantism. Theologians refer the latest pair as a Church tradition, which along with the Holy Scripture underlay morality and ethics. Westerners join those transcendent ethics with the Antique humanism.

Pope Francis in the Encyclical Laudato si' expands Catholic teaching. He exposed the importance of human-nature relationships and ecology. Avoiding anthropocentrism, which confines the relational experience to the exclusive one-side profit, but preserving a distinctive status of the human in the Universe, he tried to find reliable assistance for a new Christian ethic. Most of the new ethical topics won the support of scientific evidence.

Climate and its changing is the problem that deviates. Here, Pope uses the wording »A very solid scientific consensus« (LS23). His teaching, interestingly, accents human agreement instead of scientific facts for the top subject of today's environmental crisis, and in the discipline with an outstanding quantity of meteorological and alike data.

In the study, I analyse two fundamental shifts in Church teaching. First, the enrolling of natural science to underpin Christian ethic, morality and behaviour as a new pillar. Second, interpreting the consensus among scientists for encouraging changes in Christians' life, specifically, ecological conversion. The first concept agrees human's experience. During centuries after Enlightenment, Westerners accept that science describes the reality we can comprehend, along with the awareness of its paradigmatic limits. As a contrast, I claim, we have not adopted the idea of the scientific consensus yet.

Highly appreciating the concept and the goals of the Encyclical, my (kind of) critique of the vague diction in article 23 will help us dialectically expose the other issues the Document discussed. I'll stress the importance of its naturalistic background especially for those eco-ethical concepts, where science identifies interrelatedness as ecological and evolutionary fact, and which are at the same time becoming a valuable part of our experience. I claim that we change behaviour, shift ethics, or develop excellence primarily after embracing the ideas and concepts, which we comprehend as valuable.

Considering that humans perceive nature as a common good, we naturally prefer for environmental issues the naturalistic evidence above the scientific consensus. Consequently, Laudato si' – despite being a religious document and authoritative by its form – is expected to get a better real-life implementation on the topics, which underlay its new Christian ethics by the scientific evidence.