**THE NEW CHALLENGES OF DIALOGUE WITH CREATION FROM INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON LAUDATO SI’ ENCYCLICAL LETTER**

**OF POPE FRANCIS AND PARIS AGREEMENT**

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I – INTRODUCTION

* This special program of Silsilah called “Silsilah School of Dialogue with Creation” introduces to us a very alarming situation of the world today that is climate change.
* We started to present in the first lecture what religions say about Dialogue with Creation, especially Islam and Christianity. In the second lecture, we focus on Climate Change as an alarming reality in the world and the need for a Holistic approach of Culture of Dialogue — Path to Peace that, for us, in Silsilah means Dialogue with God, with self, with others and with creation. Today, we present the encyclical letter of the Pope Laudato Si’ in the context of many other international agreements that is worthy to know using some educational material that we choose from YouTube.
* The international community aware of the alarming effects of climate change has moved in recent times with more determination. Maybe we can say that it is still too little, but it is a sign of hope.
* We present here the most relevant international agreements starting from the Montreal Protocol of thirty years ago before focusing on the Laudato Si’ of Pope Francis.

**II – THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL**

* **1987: The Montreal Protocol** is an international [treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty) designed to protect the [ozone layer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ozone_layer) caused by numerous substances that are responsible for [ozone depletion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ozone_depletion). It was agreed on 16 September 1987, and entered into force on 1 January 1989. Climate projections indicate that the ozone layer will return to 1980 levels between 2050 and 2070. Due to its widespread adoption and implementation it has been hailed as an example of exceptional international co-operation, with [Kofi Annan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kofi_Annan) quoted as saying that "perhaps the single most successful international agreement to date has been the Montreal Protocol".
* **Documentary Video on the Montreal Protocol**

**III – THE EARTH SUMMIT**

* **1992: The Earth Summit** in 1992 is the first conference of its kind, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly referred to as the Rio Conference or Earth Summit, which succeeded in raising public awareness of the need to integrate environment and development. The conference drew 109 heads of state to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to address the urgent problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development.  The Earth Summit influenced subsequent UN conferences, including Rio+20 and set the global green agenda.
* **Documentary Video on the Earth Summit**

**IV – THE KYOTO PROTOCOL**

* **1997: The Kyoto Protocol** is an international [treaty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty) which extends the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Framework_Convention_on_Climate_Change) (UNFCCC) that commits State Parties to reduce [greenhouse gas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenhouse_gas) emissions, based on the [scientific consensus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientific_opinion_on_climate_change) of [global warming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming). **The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in**[Kyoto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kyoto)**,**[Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan)**, on December 11, 1997** and entered into force on February 16, 2005. There are currently 192 parties to the Protocol.
* **Documentary Video on the Kyoto Protocol**

**V – THE COPENHAGEN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE**

* **2009: The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference** ([December 2009](http://unfccc.int/meetings/copenhagen_dec_2009/meeting/6295.php) ) raised climate change policy to the highest political level. Close to 115 world leaders attended the high-level segment, making it one of the largest gatherings of world leaders ever outside UN headquarters in New York. More than 40,000 people, representing governments, nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, faith-based organizations, media and UN agencies applied for accreditation. It was a great event with a lot of expectations, but it was not enough and especially the poor countries expressed their feeling of being disappointed. They know that climate change deterioration is caused especially by richer countries where the progress is faster without giving attention to the consequences and climate change. However, the Copenhagen conference can be considered as an important step to create a new awareness.
* **Documentary Video on The Copenhagen Climate Change Conference**

**VI – THE CANCUN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE**

* **2010: The Cancun Climate Change Conference**( [November 2010](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cancun_nov_2010/meeting/6266.php) ) drew almost 12,000 participants, including 5,200 government officials, 5,400 representatives of UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations, and 1,270 accredited members of the media. The meeting produced the basis for the most comprehensive and far-reaching international response to climate change the world had ever seen to reduce carbon emissions and build a system which made all countries accountable to each other for those reductions.
* **Documentary Video on The Cancun Climate Change Conference**

**VII - LAUDATO SI'**

* **MAY 24, 2015:Laudato Si'** (Medieval Central [Italian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_language) for "Praise be to you") is an [encyclical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclical) letter of [Pope Francis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis). This encyclical letter has the subtitle "On Care for Our Common Home". In it, the Pope critiques [consumerism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumerism) and [irresponsible development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overdevelopment), laments [environmental degradation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_degradation) and [global warming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_warming), and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action". **The encyclic, dated 24 May 2015,** was a prophetic voice to the Paris Agreement and still remains an important voice for humanity in this alarming time of Climate Change.
* This is not an international conference, but it is a message of Pope Francis for all and the impact has been bigger that many other international agreements because the Pope presents the situation of “the common house”, the earth, touching the hearts of all.
* **Documentary Video on Laudato Si’**

**VIII - THE PARIS AGREEMENT**

* **Dec. 15, 2015: The Paris Agreement** for the first time brings all nations into a common cause based on their historic, current and future responsibilities. **The Paris Agreement** is an historic agreement to combat climate change and unleash actions and investment towards a low carbon, resilient and sustainable future was agreed by 195 nations in Paris.
* To reach these ambitious and important goals, appropriate financial flows will be put in place, thus making stronger action by developing countries and the most vulnerable possible, in line with their own national objectives.
* **Documentary Video on the Paris Agreement**

**IX – FROM LAUDATO SI TO SILSILAH DIALOGUE WITH CREATION PARTNERS MOVEMENT**

* At this point we give a special attention to Laudato si'. We can say that Laudato si' is a new source of inspiration for all and encourages us in the Silsilah Dialogue Movement in our advocacy to take good care of the environment.
For Silsilah, the Encyclical letter is a sign of the times. The pope says: “**I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet**”.
* **Documentary Video on Laudato Si’**
* When Silsilah started in 1984, its first members agreed to follow a spirituality of life-in-dialogue based on the four pillars of dialogue identified as Dialogue with God, Dialogue with the Self, Dialogue with Others, and Dialogue with Creation.
* The “Dialogue with Creation” is becoming an urgent sign of the times and a new challenge. It urges people, Muslims and Christians and all people of good will, to work together for the common good. This is true especially here in Mindanao where the projected “future Peace” is focused too much on local interests and is therefore putting little attention on a holistic dialogue with creation.Laudato si’comes as a new challenge, one that has to be faced together because it goes beyond the territorial and political issues.
* The Encyclical letter Laudato Si’ says that the climate “**is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all**” (23). This is true for all around the world. Each one has to “think globally and act locally.” For Silsilah, “Dialogue with Creation” is a continuous reminder and, on some occasions, had been a great challenge. One such occasion was few years ago when the need to work together for the protection of the Ayala Watershed arose. Muslims and Christians worked hand in hand with Silsilah against the coming of a mining company whose exploration was already supported by some sectors of the government.
* On that same occasion, Silsilah spearheaded the group known as “Friends of Ayala Watershed”. The movement’s presence became frequently felt in radio, television, and other forms of advocacy. The most touching experience was when two lawyers, one Muslim and one Christian, offered their services for free to support our advocacy in front of the city councilors. After facing different challenges, this effort has been able to gather ten thousand people from all walks of life belonging to diverse faith affiliations in a rally at the very heart of Zamboanga City. Surely, that activity created a certain impact that led to a great achievement. Thanks to God, the voice of the people was heard and the permit given to the mining company was canceled. Aside from being an achievement, the occasion served as an opportunity to show solidarity among Muslims and Christians.
* Encouraged by this positive experience, Silsilah is still on the move in protecting all the watersheds in Zamboanga as a concrete commitment to “care for our Common Home” (the earth). Laudato Si’encourages each one to come together, people of different cultures and religions, convinced that humanity is a “**universal fraternity**” (228).
Moreover, the clear vision of the “spiritual perspective” given primacy by the pope in the encyclical letter is also a source of great inspiration. This perspective is taken as a fundamental part in environmental discernment. Laudato si’states: “**We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us… This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature…This responsibility of God’s earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the law of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world” (67, 68).**
Focusing on “Human Fraternity” and Environmental Discernment, Pope Francis quoted the story of the two brothers Cain and Abel – a story well known among Muslims and Christians as it is related both in the Bible and in the Qur’an. From this terrible story, the Holy Father made one of the most dramatic reflections in Laudato si’ saying: **“God asks: ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ Cain answers that he does not know, and God persists: ‘What have you done?**’ (Gen. 4:9-11).”
* Furthermore, those who thought to find in Laudato si’ a scientific and academic presentation on “Climate Change” will not find all the answers. With them also those who are involved in aggressive economy without ethical principles in using natural resources will be disappointed. For sure, the letter is a strong message that would touch the conscience of every person who reads it. God’s question addressed to Cain, “**What have you done**?” comes as a basic question worth reflecting upon today in the light of Laudato si’. The same question reminds us that “***When nature is viewed as source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of ‘might is right’ has engendered immense inequality, injustices and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since resources end in the hand of the first comer or most powerful: the winner takes all***” (82).
We are the Cain of the modern society if we do not listen to the voice of conscience echoed in Laudato si’. How can we say that we are a civilized and religious people and yet continue to abuse the creation?
* **VIDEO PRESENTATION ON LAUDATO SI SONG**
* All these international agreements and the experiences that we have seen in the Philippines about climate change urged us in Silsilah to continue our commitment. It is our desire to launch at the end of this School of Dialogue with Creation, a movement called **DIALOGUE WITH CREATION PARTNERS MOVEMENT.**
* I’m sure that all of us will be interested to join this movement. The future of the world is alarming for many reasons and one of this is the “greed” that nations continue to practice without proper attention to the common good.
* I end with a message from Mahatma Gandhi **“THE WORLD CAN ANSWER TO THE NEEDS OF ALL BUT NOT TO THE GREED OF ALL.”**. Transformation can happen if we are ready to move with determination starting from the **“ecology of the heart”**. This is a challenge for all of us. Padayon!