

POPE FRANCIS

Laudate Deum

Apostolic Exhortation

TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL
ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

With Selections from the Encyclical
Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home

And with an *Introduction* by ERIN LOTHES BIVIANO
Preface by TOMÁS INSUA

ORBIS  BOOKS
Maryknoll, New York 10545

Introduction

Erin Lothes Biviano

“Praise God” is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God’s place, they become their own worst enemies.

—*Laudate Deum*, 73

In dark times the prophet cries out: There is danger on the horizon; the priest preaches: there is only one God, the Almighty Creator; and the poet looks ahead to a future that is new and bright. Pope Francis, in the apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* (*LD*) promulgated October 4, 2023, writes from all these roles. Most of all, he writes as a pastor, deeply concerned for people throughout the world, and above all for those who are poor.

In the simplest terms, *Laudate Deum* is a prophetic text that denounces the powerful for their failures to “respond adequately” to the climate crisis, calling them to conversion. But who are these powerful agents, what have they done or failed to do, and how must they make amends?

Pope Francis names some and hints at other agents. Still, the reader must grapple with the pope's assessment of social and personal complicity in the looming crisis, and choose how to respond.

Laudate Deum confronts the complexity of personal responsibility within a global energy system into which every person is born, without consent—as with original sin. Pope Francis previously diagnosed a “technocratic paradigm” driving a global energy system in his magisterial encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home* (LS), in which he identified “one complex crisis which is both social and environmental” (LS 139). The deeper dynamics of that technocratic paradigm are now recognized theologically as sin and idolatry. Though there may appear at first to be less spiritual or doctrinal content in this new document, the title offers the essential interpretive key. *Laudate Deum*, a song of praise taken from the liturgy, is a reminder that Catholic faith is fundamentally theocentric, centered on praise of the Almighty God, Who is Creator of Heaven and Earth, as stated in the first article of the creed. When humankind is seduced by a technocratic paradigm to exploit the Earth for self-interest, an “economy that kills” is further exposed as an *idolatry that kills*. Against this darkness, the Pope calls us to inaugurate “the globalization of hope”¹ guided by true worship of the one true God.

¹ Address of the Holy Father, Second World Meeting of Popular Movements, July 5–13, 2015, 1.

Before unpacking the powerful punch of *Laudate Deum*, a brief review of magisterial teaching on the environment sets the stage for the unique focus of this terse document.

Explicit Catholic teaching on care for creation has existed at least since 1972, when Pope Paul VI sent a Vatican delegation to the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.² Subsequent magisterial texts include Pope St. John Paul II's 1990 World Day of Peace Message, in which he stated that "Today the ecological crisis has reached such proportions as to be *the responsibility of everyone*" (15). Pope Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* (CV) (2009), the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good," (2001), statements from Bishops and theologians around the world, and, most definitively, *Laudato Si'* amplify the crescendo of Catholic teaching on the imperative to care for Creation.

These teachings affirm that Catholic faith is lived out within the world's social, economic, and political spheres. As *Laudato Si'* emphasizes, "everything is interconnected" (LS 70). It is increasingly clear that a degraded environment threatens human dignity on every level. Pope Francis writes, "The destruction of the human environment is extremely

² Marjorie Keenan, *From Stockholm to Johannesburg: An Historical Overview of the Concern of the Holy See for the Environment, 1972–2002* (Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2002); United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good* (June 15, 2001).

serious, not only because God has entrusted the world to us men and women, but because human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement” (LS 5). Human dignity depends on a healthy environment, and the gifts of the earth are meant for all: “God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone.”³

As the first encyclical to focus entirely on the environmental crisis, *Laudato Si'* was a tremendous high-water mark of this established tradition. There is a special spiritual quality to *Laudato Si'* in its very title and opening invocation of St. Francis of Assisi's *Canticle of the Creatures*, invoking familial communion with all creatures. All creatures give praise to God through their intrinsic worth as beloved by their Creator (LS 11, 12, 140). By reverently honoring God as Creator, human persons affirm that we are ordained to tend the Garden.

The newest document in this tradition, *Laudate Deum*, consistently links commitment to the poor with care for creation. The Gospel commitment to the poor is very clear in Matthew 25:35: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.” Whenever one cares for the needs of another, practicing corporal works of mercy, these caring acts are offered to Jesus Himself. Significantly, this reference to

³ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), 1711.

Matthew 25 is highlighted in the pope's first footnote citing a document from the United States bishops, pastors of a superdeveloped nation. The catastrophe of the climate crisis impacts the poor first and worst, while consumers in superdeveloped nations must acknowledge their special responsibility for action.

Beyond its Catholic audience, *Laudato Si'* was widely and enthusiastically received by interfaith groups, many of which published their own manifestos, by environmental advocacy groups, by scientists celebrating a moral communicator of their own message, and by policy-oriented bodies such as the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations itself. That broad audience was intentional. The Pope strategically published *Laudato Si'* in advance of the Climate Change Conference of 2015 in Paris, before his address to the United States Congress, and a visit to the United Nations that same fall. Now, eight years later, the lack of action has created a crisis point, and the stage shifts from Paris to Dubai.

The haste that characterizes a prophet's timebound warning is palpable. The pope has put aside a patient introduction to "what is happening to our beautiful home," which he provided in *Laudato Si'*. In *Laudate Deum* there is no time to review in depth what is no longer called "climate change," but is starkly stated to be the "climate crisis." The signs "are here and increasingly evident" (*LD* 5). Scientists can increasingly link specific extreme events to the influence of climate change, and even calculate

their economic impact.⁴ Research from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health shows that “[w]orldwide, air pollution from burning fossil fuels is responsible for about 1 in 5 deaths.”⁵

In terse language, Francis simply details the alarming statistics confirmed by science. Nor does the pope pause to reassure those who question the authority of the Church to “proclaim upon science.” *Laudato Si’* already addressed that question (LS 61). The realities of the crisis threaten his flock, the evidence is plain to all with eyes, and scientific authority stands in consensus. If any justification is needed, Francis links the crisis to the fundamental mission of the Church to protect life: “This is a global social issue and one intimately related to the dignity of human life” (LD 3).

Yet despite scientific consensus, strong action is not evident. Rather than speak of “increasing sensitivity to the environment” (LS 19), Francis emphasizes just how much clear recognition of the crisis is derailed by resistance, confusion, derision, ridicule, simplification, key omissions, and outright obfuscation. This denunciation of deception is central to his message. And it targets everyone.

Each of us must be mindful of our complicity in “small ecological damage” (LS 8). But now it is increasingly clear

⁴ Chelsea Harvey, “Attribution Science Linking Warming to Disasters Is Rapidly Advancing,” *Scientific American*, June 3, 2022.

⁵ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, C-Change, “Fossil Fuel Air Pollution Responsible for 1 in 5 Deaths Worldwide,” February 9, 2021.

that powerful elites are deceiving society, as they attempt “to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue” (LD 5). They issue illusory promises that progress is being made. This new form of denialism—a pretense of action that stymies real change—is ultimately a lie perpetuated to protect the idols of power and to protect the profits of the fossil fuel industry. Claims that the poor need energy of any kind, that the costs of transition are too much to bear, or will cost jobs, ignore the already massive suffering of the poor, the greater costs of inaction, and the potential for new jobs in a clean economy.

By perpetuating fossil fuel structures, these powerful groups are degrading the global common good and depriving others of a safe, stable climate. In effect, they are exploiting and enslaving others within a system that must change now. In *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) Pope Francis wrote trenchantly of “an economy that kills,” buttressed by the “globalization of indifference.” Now, *Laudate Deum* shows that the deadly, but passive, globalization of indifference has festered into the active sin of aggressive, deliberate deceit.

Who is causing “resistance and confusion”? Various actors are suggested:

- “great economic powers” who seek “the greatest profit possible at minimal cost” (LD 13);
- economists, financiers, and experts in technology, attracted to the idea of unlimited growth because

they correlate technological and economic power with goodness and truth (*LD 20*);

- those with knowledge and economic resources to wield technology's capacities for dominance over humanity (*LD 23*);
- those who employ marketing and false information to shape public opinion, and mislead those affected by development projects, thus showing the "ethical decadence of real power" (*LD 29*);
- "false prophets" issuing "illusory promises," which seek maximum gain yet do not aid the poor (*LD 31*);
- negotiators who focus on the "short-term interests of certain countries or businesses" at the United Nations climate conferences instead of considering "the common good and the future of their children" (*LD 60*).

Meanwhile, in the context of the upcoming U.N. Climate Change Conference in Dubai, Francis notes, "gas and oil companies are planning new projects there, with the aim of further increasing their production. To say that there is nothing to hope for would be suicidal, for it would mean exposing all humanity, especially the poorest, to the worst impacts of climate change (*LD 53*)."

While the powerful employ deception to perpetuate the status quo of fossil fuel infrastructure, self-deception is also convenient for everyone who benefits from their present lifestyle. Given this, it is not that difficult for powerful

interests to take advantage of personal self-deception to evade strong action.

This vice was already diagnosed in *Laudato Si'*.

As often occurs in periods of deep crisis which require bold decisions, we are tempted to think that what is happening is not entirely clear. Superficially, apart from a few obvious signs of pollution and deterioration, things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time. Such evasiveness serves as a license to carrying on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption. This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen (LS 59).

The dilemma of responsibility thus entangles ordinary people who do not intend to expand the infrastructure of fossil fuel extraction, but who do not resist it either. Quoting the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in *Laudato Si'*, Francis notes that persons commit “small ecological sins,” and thereby contribute to greater structures of social injustice. The call to ecological conversion therefore invites transformation at multiple levels of personal agency.

Conventional choices usually reflect what is best for a society. But when times change, conventional choices may no longer serve the common good. The deep tragedy of

being born into a fossil-fuel powered society is that, in itself, the industrial revolution was not an evil development. Technology is not evil *per se*, nor is meaningful work, nor is ethical profit, nor virtuous striving for self-improvement. The excesses of technology and the perpetuation of fossil fuel expansion become evil when their massively destructive impacts are ignored, and chances to build life-sustaining alternatives are passed by.

Crucially, the polluting injustice of fossil fuel expansion unjustly and selectively impacts marginalized groups. The dynamic of resource extraction from marginalized neighborhoods, primarily benefitting the privileged, while leaving toxins behind, has long been documented as environmental racism.⁶ Hence the call to work for change is especially pointed for privileged consumers, who may often choose to remain blind to the true costs of their comfort.⁷

The powerful second section, “A Growing Technocratic Paradigm,” that lays bare these dynamics of distorted power concludes with the inspiring question: “In conscience, and with an eye to the children who will pay for the harm done by their actions, the question of meaning inevitably arises: ‘What is the meaning of my life? What is the meaning of my time on this earth? And what is the ultimate meaning of all my work and effort?’” (LD 33). Francis does not linger

⁶ Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., and Charles Lee, “Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States,” Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, 1987.

⁷ Julie Hanlon Rubio, “Cooperation with Evil Reconsidered: The Moral Duty of Resistance,” *Theological Studies* 78, 1 (2017): 113.

on this question, but here is the invitation to ecological conversion. For renewed attention to the meaning of our lives liberates the inspiration to work for change. As he wrote elsewhere, “We love people.... Commitment, true commitment, is born of the love of men and women, of children and the elderly, of peoples and communities.... From those seeds of hope patiently sown in the forgotten fringes of our planet ... great trees will spring up, great groves of hope to give oxygen to our world.”⁸

Hope springs up because despite the many ways conventions reinforce the status quo, persons remain fundamentally free to advocate for change, becoming an ally, not a bystander.⁹ Persons have choices regarding consumption, community life, and citizenship, and can generate a new culture of life, sustainability, and solidarity. Each person co-creates society all the time. We inherit it, we perpetuate it *and* we can send out ripples to change it. This is the hope of the butterfly effect. The world has seen this hope in the determined witness of a small girl, seated outside the Swedish Parliament, setting in motion a courageous global uprising that can inspire us all.

The next three sections are highly specific to the United Nations Conference of the Parties meeting in Dubai, as the section headings indicate: 3. *The Weakness of*

⁸ *Popular Movements*, 2.

⁹ Daniel K. Finn, editor, *Moral Agency within Social Structures and Culture: A Primer on Critical Realism for Social Ethics* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Press, 2020).

International Politics, with the sub-section “Reconfiguring multilateralism,” 4. *Climate Conferences: Progress and Failures*, and finally, 5. *What to Expect from COP28 in Dubai?*

Regarding these conferences to forge international emissions-reductions treaties, Francis rejects phony critiques of multilateralism as a ploy to instate power “concentrated in one person” (LD 35). To the contrary, a broad-based “authority regulated by law” should engage increased participation from the grassroots. No longer can such institutions “preserve the rights of the more powerful without caring for those of all” (LD 43).

Francis reviews the history of the conferences as if conducting an examination of conscience. Where, at each moment, was the opportunity to do good taken? Where was it lost? Salvadoran Jesuit Jon Sobrino has reframed a deep Ignatian prayer to ask: What have I done to put poor people on the cross? Today, in effect, the pope is asking us: How are we putting the earth on the cross? In the end, the examination of conscience shows that nothing has changed since the Rio Accords. “Today we can continue to state that, “the accords have been poorly implemented, due to lack of suitable mechanisms for oversight, periodic review and penalties in cases of noncompliance. The principles which they proclaimed still await an efficient and flexible means of practical implementation” (LD 52 citing LS 167).

Hence what appear to be mundane recommendations for procedural reform, at a deeper level, are precisely the prophet’s call for a public, immediate, and covenantal

conversion to justice. That is, the antidote to the deception driving the demonic extension of the technocratic paradigm is a transparent commitment to an energy transition that is “efficient, obligatory and readily monitored” in a process that is “drastic, intense and counts on the commitment of all” (*LD 59*).

This is the moment in the prophetic story where the prophet confronts the king, the wealthy, and the elite, and rebukes them for their idolatry. Conversion and a change of heart must be immediately demonstrated. In Jonah’s time, to his surprise, the king of Nineveh instantly declared a season of repentance throughout the land.

In our time, it is the corporate leaders, political elites, negotiators, power brokers, and others capable of enacting change at the COP, who are singled out and called to conversion. And similarly, so is every person. As provocative as it may seem to highlight U.S. emissions vis-à-vis China and developing nations, it is empirically true that per capita emissions are higher in the United States.¹⁰ But note that the pope does not then scold U.S. citizens for their emissions—although certainly they should reduce them. It is global culture that must adapt, in “a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model,” to evolve toward a culture of solidarity and sustainability, of simplicity and spirituality.

¹⁰ Michon Scott, NOAA Climate.gov, “Does It Matter How Much the United States Reduces Its Emissions if China Doesn’t Do the Same?” August 30, 2023.

The Catechism teaches that all are called to be co-creators, neither vandals who destroy the natural order of creation, nor misers who hoard our power and profits out of narrow self-interest. Creation is ongoing and change is part of it. To develop as a society is to adopt ever more beautiful cultural habits, choosing sustainability and health, embracing the best of technology and the traditional wisdom of simplicity, focusing on decent work, family and community life. The just transition will certainly bring both challenging disruptions and exciting innovations. Every person of good will should accept the process of change because in accepting the process of a just transition, and the demands it makes of us, the bonds of solidarity are strengthened.

Recalling that care for creation is essential to protecting those on the margins and respecting the sacred order of nature, Francis repeats that taking decisive action at the United Nations Conferences to address climate change, “ennobles us as human beings (*LD 59*).” Decisive action to care for creation is not “optional” (*LS 217*): it is the human vocation. “I cannot fail in this regard to remind the Catholic faithful of the motivations born of their faith [which] sheds light on our relationship to others and with creation as a whole” (*LD 61*).

The times may seem dark, and the suffering and death of countless victims remain a “dangerous memory” none can forget. Privileged nations whose development has cost so many greenhouse gas emissions owe an ecological

debt to those nations still planning their development, for which they must atone with restitution and reparation. A repentant recognition of the damage we have caused and the lives that have been lost can seem to challenge Resurrection faith. Yet in another way, apart from these dreadful moments of suffering, the challenges of change lead to new life. “Unless a grain of wheat fall to the earth and die, it remains a single grain.” After the transition comes the harvest—the harvest of a fruitful new culture and economy rooted in care for the rights of every person, and for ourselves. For we know that none can thrive if the global common goods of fresh water, healthy air, clean soil, and a stable climate are lost. Any growth or transition requires change; the costs of avoiding this change are far, far greater than the costs of wise, prudent, and decisive action in the present.

As noted, *Laudate Deum* is above all a stern reminder that our faith is theocentric. Our faith is in Almighty God, the Creator of all. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” and we dare not tamper with its sacred order. The human is to tend to the garden, not destroy it, and certainly not to allow our misuse of it to be a means of exploitation and death.

That powerful elites are intensifying the tactics of deception that Francis calls out may be a sign that the tides are in turning, and a just transition cannot be held back. Options for renewable energy increase, amidst a surge of popular demands for change—showing that the

fossil fuel industry is facing its demise. The International Energy Agency, the world's leading energy analyst, reports authoritatively that clean energy, whose cost is plummeting, will make it possible for the world to meet its goal to keep temperature increases under 1.5°. ¹¹

There are other real signs of hope. The rate of Amazon deforestation is markedly slowing under new policies in Brazil. A more sustainable culture of eating local produce and less meat is thriving among many. Powerful movements such as the Fossil Fuel Nonproliferation Treaty, the Youth Climate Manifesto, and the worldwide sustainability project of the Catholic Church, the *Laudato Si* Action Platform, offer inspiration and guides for practical action.

In *Laudato Si*, Francis wrote: “Through Noah, who remained innocent and just, God decided to open a path of salvation. In this way he gave humanity the chance of a new beginning. All it takes is one good person to restore hope! The biblical tradition clearly shows that this renewal entails recovering and respecting the rhythms inscribed in nature by the hand of the Creator.” Here in *Laudate Deum* he reminds us, “The world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to care for it?” (LD 65). All as part of the global family are called to be creators of a new culture of life. In this, the Holy Spirit is leading us

¹¹ *The Path to Limiting Global Warming to 1.5° C Has Narrowed, but Clean Energy Growth is Keeping It Open* (International Energy Agency, September 26, 2023).

forward and God, ever Creator, is the One who redeems life anew. The prophet's final word of hope in Isaiah 43 comes from the power of God:

“Do not remember the former things nor consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”

***Erin Lothes** is a Catholic theologian and author of *Inspired Sustainability: Planting Seeds for Action* (Orbis, 2016) and *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: The Loss of Self, The Gift of Self* (Herder and Herder, 2007). Dr. Lothes was an associate professor of theology for ten years, and is now senior manager of the Laudato Si' Animators Program with the Laudato Si' Movement.*



APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
LAUDATE DEUM
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS

TO ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL
ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

1. “Praise God for all his creatures.” This was the message that Saint Francis of Assisi proclaimed by his life, his canticles and all his actions. In this way, he accepted the invitation of the biblical Psalms and reflected the sensitivity of Jesus before the creatures of his Father: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these” (Mt 6:28–29). “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s

sight” (Lk 12:6). How can we not admire this tenderness of Jesus for all the beings that accompany us along the way!

2. Eight years have passed since I published the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, when I wanted to share with all of you, my brothers and sisters of our suffering planet, my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home. Yet, with the passage of time, I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. In addition to this possibility, it is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc.

3. This is a global social issue and one intimately related to the dignity of human life. The Bishops of the United States have expressed very well this social meaning of our concern about climate change, which goes beyond a merely ecological approach, because “our care for one another and our care for the earth are intimately bound together. Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community. The effects of climate change are borne by the most vulnerable people, whether at home or around the world.”¹ In a few words, the Bishops

¹ UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS, *Global Climate Change Background*, 2019.

assembled for the Synod for Amazonia said the same thing: “Attacks on nature have consequences for people’s lives.”² And to express bluntly that this is no longer a secondary or ideological question, but a drama that harms us all, the African bishops stated that climate change makes manifest “a tragic and striking example of structural sin.”³

4. The reflection and information that we can gather from these past eight years allow us to clarify and complete what we were able to state some time ago. For this reason, and because the situation is now even more pressing, I have wished to share these pages with you.

1. The Global Climate Crisis

5. Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident. No one can ignore the fact that in recent years we have witnessed extreme weather phenomena, frequent periods of unusual heat, drought and other cries of protest on the part of the earth that are only a few palpable expressions of a silent disease that affects everyone. Admittedly, not every concrete catastrophe ought

² SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE PAN-AMAZONIAN REGION, *Final Document*, October 2019, 10: AAS 111 (2019), 1744.

³ SYMPOSIUM OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR (SECAM), *African Climate Dialogues Communiqué*, Nairobi, 17 October 2022.

to be attributed to global climate change. Nonetheless, it is verifiable that specific climate changes provoked by humanity are notably heightening the probability of extreme phenomena that are increasingly frequent and intense. For this reason, we know that every time the global temperature increases by 0.5°C, the intensity and frequency of great rains and floods increase in some areas and severe droughts in others, extreme heat waves in some places and heavy snowfall in others.⁴ If up to now we could have heat waves several times a year, what will happen if the global temperature increases by 1.5°C, which we are approaching? Those heat waves will be much more frequent and with greater intensity. If it should rise above 2 degrees, the icecaps of Greenland and a large part of Antarctica⁵ will melt completely, with immensely grave consequences for everyone.

Resistance and confusion

6. In recent years, some have chosen to deride these facts. They bring up allegedly solid scientific data, like the fact that the planet has always had, and will have, periods of

⁴ Cf. INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC), *Climate Change 2021, The Physical Science Basis*, Cambridge and New York, 2021, B.2.2.

⁵ Cf. ID., *Climate Change 2023, Synthesis Report, Summary for Policymakers*, B.3.2. For the 2023 Report, see https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf.

cooling and warming. They forget to mention another relevant datum: that what we are presently experiencing is an unusual acceleration of warming, at such a speed that it will take only one generation—not centuries or millennia—in order to verify it. The rise in the sea level and the melting of glaciers can be easily perceived by an individual in his or her lifetime, and probably in a few years many populations will have to move their homes because of these facts.

7. In order to ridicule those who speak of global warming, it is pointed out that intermittent periods of extreme cold regularly occur. One fails to mention that this and other extraordinary symptoms are nothing but diverse alternative expressions of the same cause: the global imbalance that is provoking the warming of the planet. Droughts and floods, the dried-up lakes, communities swept away by seaquakes and flooding ultimately have the same origin. At the same time, if we speak of a global phenomenon, we cannot confuse this with sporadic events explained in good part by local factors.

8. Lack of information leads to confusion between large-scale climate projections that involve long periods of time—we are talking about decades at least—with weather forecasts that at most can cover a few weeks. When we speak of climate change, we are referring to a global reality—and constant local variations—that persists for several decades.