

CHAPTER TWO:
THE GOSPEL OF CREATION

In the second chapter, Pope Francis shares several biblical accounts and calls us to the “tremendous responsibility” of humankind for creation, the intimate connection among all creatures, and the fact that “the natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.”

1. In the biblical account of creation, what are the “three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships” that ground human life?
2. Why is the traditional understanding of humanity’s “dominion” over the earth an incorrect interpretation?
3. What does the “priority of *being* over that of *being useful*” mean to you?
4. Pope Francis writes, “Everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.” What evidence do you see of this in your own life and family?
5. “The Spirit of God has filled the universe with possibilities and therefore, from the very heart of things, something new can always emerge.” How does this give you hope for the future of both humanity and the earth?

CHAPTER THREE:
THE HUMAN ROOTS OF THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

In Chapter Three, Pope Francis explores the power imbalance inherent in technological advancement and calls us to re-examine our definition of progress in relation to human relationships. He reminds us that human life is important and should not be disregarded in our increasingly throwaway society.

1. How can we both appreciate and respect the progress that technology has afforded us and still be cautious of the evils that can accompany such technology?
2. Pope Francis writes that, at times, life can become “a surrender to situations conditioned by technology, itself viewed as the principal key to the meaning of existence.” Have you experienced this among your family and friends?
3. Reflect on this statement: “We cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships.” What does this mean to you? How can you begin to heal your “fundamental human relationships”?
4. How is concern for the environment incompatible with abortion?
5. How does “the rise of a relativism which sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one’s own immediate interests” lie at the heart of our environmental issues?