

[Pope Francis's Vision for Civic and Political Love in the Context of Care for our Common Home](#)  
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Home is defined as *A house, apartment, or other shelter that is the usual residence of a person, family, or household*. That is true in a sense that, the roof we live under is our “home”, but Pope Francis helps us think of “home” in a much deeper meaning. In his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis refers to earth as our common home, the home that each of us share with one another. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs” (*Laudato Si'*, 1). The message Pope Francis tries to convey is with the earth we share, we are responsible for how we treat it, for it is our common good. In chapter 6 section 5 of *Laudato Si'*, the idea of civic and political love is introduced. This type of love can be described as a love that is extended to our neighbors and not just ourselves. As we move through this encyclical letter, Pope Francis expresses that the love for our society and commitment to our common good, helps aid in our ability to expand our civic and political love even when we may fail to realize that we share a common home.

In this section, Pope Francis introduces the idea of us living together in communion, by saying, “Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a “universal fraternity” (*Laudato*

Si', 228). He brings light to us sharing a common father, God, making us brothers and sisters, expressing that we are all connected. He makes it known that fraternal love can only be gratuitous, making it possible to love our enemies. An example of this idea is thoroughly expressed through the film, *The Mission*. This film follows an individual, Rodrigo, a mercenary who is out looking for a specific group of individuals to use as slaves, and trade them. These individuals were known as the Guarani tribe and they were found in Argentina. The importance of this film in relation to us living in communion is that Rodrigo initially started to capture the Guarani tribe as slaves, but things started to change through the course of the film. As time went on, Rodrigo met father Gabriel, a Jesuit priest who teaches Rodrigo about Christianity. This influenced his realization that this tribe of people weren't "animals" and that they were people too. He started to teach them the ways of Christianity and fought beside them when it was necessary. This is what Pope Francis means when expressing that we are able to love our enemies. Rodrigo was able to find love within people he once considered "enemies". The film exemplified that as we all come from God, we are all family, and are our care for others is what helps our universal fraternity grow.

As we move along with this encyclical letter, Pope Francis expresses that living in community is needed. He says, "We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment" (Laudato Si', 229). Social interaction is a human activity that is needed. Without

that, you are stuck with your own thoughts and feelings with no one to express them to. As a student of the Panuska School of Professional Studies (PCPS), we are very focused on *cura personalis*. *Cura personalis* is a Latin phrase we use that translates to “care for the whole person”. It is an expression that is typically used as a staple for Ignatian spirituality. Within PCPS we are individuals who are very motivated and dedicated to help one another. Pope Francis expressed that all of us have a shared responsibility and in doing so, us being good is worth it. Being part of the health profession, it always feels good to care for one another and in a sense, does not feel like a responsibility, but more so a fulfillment of joy within myself.

In Dante Alighieri's *The Divine Comedy*, we are met with Dante the main protagonist of the book. Throughout this book, he is accompanied by his guide, Virgil, who he eventually starts to become closer with. At a certain point, Dante is able to meet God, and this only occurred because Virgil was able to guide him through right and wrong. The importance of it all is that the relationships we make are important. Most of the time, our action of good, is influenced by our desire to help someone else. So, with this, it exemplifies the need for others in your life to build relationships and have them help guide you throughout life.

Our reliance on one another is essential and Pope Francis does not want that to disappear. At this day and age, we heavily rely on technology on all accounts. This gets rid of our need for human interaction, but does not justify that our human interaction isn't necessary. With the click of a button, we are able to order that cool shirt that we've had our eye on for a while, or a nice meal from our favorite restaurant. Pope Francis does not want us to completely forget that before technology was present, we had to do all of these things on our own surrounded by everyone alike. He does not want us to get so caught up in ourselves and technology and wants us to continue creating relationships with one another in person.

Our time is on this Earth is just as important as the relationships we make on this earth. Pope Francis wants us not to take time for granted and to show our love and affection toward one another. He says, “Saint Therese of Lisieux invites us to practice the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms” (Laudato Si’, 230). He introduces this idea from Saint Therese of Lisieux, wanting us to practice a love that does not require much effort, but is still deemed beneficial. As this type of love is important, we are challenged to think about where we are in life in order to put forth that love. At this very moment and moments before, incidents throughout the world have occurred indiscriminately. Specifically, we are currently living in a society where human interaction is discouraged by others. We were unaware of the damage that COVID-19 would bring to people and businesses all around the world. This is a prime example of why we should not take our moments on this earth for granted. We are unable to see our family and friends, but in the end, it is so that we can gain that interaction back with one another. It is unknown when this specific issue will be over, but it is important to remember that it is our responsibility to continue to love to ensue life as we remember, together.

As previously mentioned in the passage, we are placed in a world not completely filled with good. This gives an opportunity to briefly speak about a social injustice that is very relevant in society today. For me, having an immigrant mother is a blessing. She came to the United States to ensure that she provides a better life not only for her kids, but also for herself. Every day I get to tell her how much I love her, but unfortunately that is not the case for everyone. I see this part of the passage bringing light to expressing your emotions to everyone around you and

showing your love in order to build your relationships. The sadness of it all is that we live in a society where U.S. citizens are being stripped away from their families without being able to give their final goodbye's. Saint Therese expresses that our consumption of sin and violence is a world which mistreats life in all forms. We fail to realize, that some things we do that are not entirely humane are still considered "right". Basically, what I want to express is that showing love to each other is a privilege that should not be taken for granted.

Our love for one another is very important to our concept our common home, but it is also important to love others in a sense of political love. Pope Francis says, "Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also "macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones".[156] That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a "civilization of love".[157] Social love is the key to authentic development: "In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity".[158] In this framework, along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a "culture of care" which permeates all of society. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us" (Laudato Si', 231). Many times, politics is where individuals tend to disagree. The message Pope Francis is wants to convey is that with love, we are able to overcome our problems. In a political sense we need, rules to be made in order to guide us. There is sometimes

a lack of love when creating these rules, so love needs to be in place when creating what is best for a society. These actions will help us progress and encourage our responsibility of all throughout society. Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” This helps us understand that we should have faith in the people who are in charge because what they are trying to achieve, is something that will benefit all.

Lastly, it is made clear that not everyone is made out to engage in political life. There are other ways that individuals are able to provide love within a society. Pope Francis says, “Not everyone is called to engage directly in political life. Society is also enriched by a countless array of organizations which work to promote the common good and to defend the environment, whether natural or urban. Some, for example, show concern for a public place (a building, a fountain, an abandoned monument, a landscape, a square), and strive to protect, restore, improve or beautify it as something belonging to everyone. Around these community actions, relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges. Thus, a community can break out of the indifference induced by consumerism. These actions cultivate a shared identity, with a story which can be remembered and handed on. In this way, the world, and the quality of life of the poorest, are cared for, with a sense of solidarity which is at the same time aware that we live in a common home which God has entrusted to us. These community actions, when they express self-giving love, can also become intense spiritual experiences” (Laudato Si’, 231). In this section, we are able to incorporate the four types of love: Storge, Philia, Eros and Agape. As mentioned before we are able to show love in different ways. The most important one is Agape; the unconditional “God” love that is shown through actions. Our concern for how we treat the earth is important because it is our civic duty to ensure we create an environment that is beautiful and safe for everyone. Through charity and community, we are able to do these things together in

order to better treat our common home.

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