

The Eco-theological Dimension of the Concept of Universal Communion in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*

Jean Loustar Jewadut^{1*}  <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3936-4502>
Alexander Jebadu²  <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1771-4301>
Ferdinandus Sebho³

¹Saint Paul Catholic University of Indonesia, Ruteng, Indonesia

^{2,3}Ledallero Institute of Philosophy and Creative Technology, Maumere, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

The current global ecological crisis demands a repositioning of the relationship between humans, other creatures, and the Creator. This study aims to explore the ecotheological dimension in Pope Francis's Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, with a specific focus on the concept of universal communion. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative method through a textual study approach (theological hermeneutics), this research dissects how the encyclical deconstructs radical anthropocentrism, which tends to be exploitative. The results indicate that the ecotheological dimension in *Laudato Si'* views the entire universe as an interconnected and interdependent cosmic family. The concept of universal communion affirms that every living creature possesses intrinsic value in the eyes of the Creator, rather than being mere object to satisfy human needs. This interconnectedness gives rise to a theological calling for humans to fulfill their role as stewards of creation, rather than destructive rulers. The implications of this concept manifest in the call for ecological conversion, a spiritual and moral transformation that alters human perspectives and behaviors toward the environment. This study concludes that the idea of universal communion in *Laudato Si'* offers a solid theological foundation for interfaith and intercultural ecological solidarity movements to preserve the earth as our common home.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Ecotheology; *Laudato Si'*;
Universal Communion;
Ecological Conversion

Article History:

Received: 17 July 2026

Revised: 9 September 2026

Accepted: 10 September 2026

Published: 15 October 2026

How to Cite in APA Style:

Jewadut, J. L., Jebadu, A., Sebho, F. (2026). The Eco-theological Dimension of the Concept of Universal Communion in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*. *JPAK: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katolik*, 26(2), 357-371

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Introduction

The 21st-century global ecological crisis is no longer merely a future threat but an ongoing, destructive reality. Global warming, massive deforestation, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution are the tangible impacts of radical anthropocentrism, a paradigm that views nature solely as an object of exploitation to fulfill human economic needs (Jewadut et al., 2026b). When technocratic and market economic approaches failed to provide holistic

*Corresponding author : Jean Loustar Jewadut  jewadutj@gmail.com
 <https://doi.org/10.34150/jpak.v26i2>

solutions, the academic world began to turn to cultural, spiritual, and theological dimensions (Denar et al., 2025; Jewadut & Denar, 2024). In this context, ecotheology emerged as a faith-based response that seeks to redefine the relationship between God, humans, and the rest of creation (Denar et al., 2023).

One of the most influential contemporary documents that comprehensively elaborates ecotheology is the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* issued by Pope Francis in 2015. This encyclical is not only intended for the internal interests of the Catholic Church, but also serves as a global call for everyone living on this planet to carry out ecological conversion (Sina et al., 2025). The uniqueness of *Laudato Si'* lies in its success in integrating scientific analysis of environmental damage with the theology of creation, morality, and social justice, which later became known as the concept of integral ecology (Jewadut & Dedon, 2025).

In *Laudato Si'*, there is a radical but fundamental idea, namely universal communion. Pope Francis emphasized that everything in this universe is interconnected. Humans are not absolute rulers (despotic dominators), but rather a part of one large, interdependent family of creation (Jewadut et al., 2026a). This idea of universal communion breaks down the dividing wall between the sacred and the profane, and demands that humans treat non-human beings with respect and ethical responsibility.

While much research has been conducted on *Laudato Si'*, most previous literatures tends to focus on aspects of socio-economic justice (social ecocentrism) or macro-scale climate policy. There remains ample academic space to specifically examine how the ecotheological dimension of the idea of universal communion can be operationalized as a critique of the modern existential crisis. How does this idea of communion transform the ontology of humanity's relationship with nature? And to what extent does this ecotheological dimension offer a new methodology for contextual theology amidst increasingly severe environmental degradation?

The main aim of this research is to elaborate in depth on the ecotheological dimension of the idea of universal communion contained in the *Laudato Si'*. More specifically, this study aims to unravel the biblical and theological foundations that shape the concept of universal communion, analyze how this concept deconstructs the deviant paradigm of anthropocentrism, and formulate its theological significance in offering a new direction for contemporary ecological spirituality. By achieving these objectives, this study is expected to contribute a significant theoretical basis for the development of ecotheological discourse in Indonesia and the world, while also offering a solid theological foundation for an environmental conservation movement based on faith and a sense of cosmic solidarity.

Method

This research is a qualitative research with the type of library research. The library research method is conducted by interpreting and analyzing various relevant literature sources in accordance with qualitative data collection methods (Purba et al., 2025). This research focuses on the analysis of texts, documents, and literature relevant to the object of study. The approach used in this research is a theological-philosophical approach. On the one hand, the theological approach is used to dissect the ecotheological dimension (the relationship between God, humanity, and the universe) contained in the

encyclical text. On the other hand, the philosophical approach is used to critically analyze the concept of universal communion as an existential idea about the interconnectedness of all creatures.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories. First, the primary data source is the encyclical text *Laudato Si'* issued by Pope Francis in 2015, especially the chapters that explicitly discuss universal communion (for example, Chapter II on the Gospel of Creation and Chapter IV on Integral Ecology). Second, the secondary data sources include supporting literature that enriches the analysis includes such as books on environmental theology (ecothology), scientific journals, articles, and other Catholic Church documents related to the theme of ecology and the thoughts of Pope Francis.

Data collection was carried out through documentary studies using the following steps. First, heuristics: searching, collecting, and mapping literature and texts of *Laudato Si'* both in the official Indonesian translation (KWI) and in the original English text to maintain the authenticity of the terms. Second, the active reading method: reading the encyclical text in depth and repeatedly focusing on keywords such as ecotheology, universal communion, integral ecology, interconnectedness, and creation. Third, categorization: grouping quotations, ideas, and arguments in the encyclical that contain eco-theological dimensions and universal relatedness.

Results

Significance of the Encyclic Laudato Si'

The Anthropocene era is marked by various environmental crises such as pollution, deforestation, ozone depletion, and climate change, which ultimately spill over into social and economic problems. In response to this critical situation, Pope Francis issued the *Laudato Si'* as a manifestation of his concern for the future of the earth and humanity. According to Celia Deane-Drummond, this global initiative, which transcends religious boundaries, confirms Pope Francis' role not merely as the leader of the Catholic Church, but as a priest and prophet for the modern world (Deane-Drummond, 2016).

After being officially released, *Laudato Si'* received a variety of positive responses. Various media outlets considered this document a major innovation within the Church. One such statement was made by Mikayla Dorff, who stated that Pope Francis had succeeded in mobilizing humanity to safeguard its own survival through concrete actions to save the environment (Dorff, 2020). In the modern environmental movement, the presence of the *Laudato Si'* is considered as one of the most important historical milestones (Dorff, 2020). The impact of encyclical is not limited to global Catholics alone, but extends to the realm of geopolitical policies and agreements. One concrete example of this is the encyclical's contribution to influencing the substance of the Paris Agreement, which focuses on addressing climate change (Burke, 2016).

Through *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis expressed deep concern over the destruction of ecosystems and the decline in human well-being resulting from the excessive exploitation of nature. He emphasized that the earth is currently suffering from irresponsible human actions that deplete God's creation (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art.2). He highlighted that the environmental crisis, triggered by human activity, is rooted in modern society's lifestyle. This lifestyle is dominated by the ideologies of anthropocentrism and technocracy, which are

manifested in the liberal capitalist economic system. As a result, in the pursuit of economic growth, the sustainability and integrity of ecosystems are often sacrificed.

In Pope Francis' view, the ecological crisis does not merely damage ecosystems but also has fatal consequences for humanity. Among all levels of society, the poor are the most vulnerable (Nae & Jewadut, 2025). Therefore, Pope Francis pays close attention to this urgency, noting that limited access and the lack of adequate protection make these marginalized groups the primary victims of environmental degradation.

Through *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis points out that environmental degradation directly impacts the decline of human dignity and quality of life. Phenomena such as climate change, pollution, and deforestation significantly trigger droughts for farmers, threaten children's health, and undermine the supply of clean air. Given these close links, the encyclical criticizes the modern mentality and the misuse of exploitative technology. The Pope calls on the world to shift to alternative economic and development models that respect every living creature, build ecological awareness through honest deliberation, and strengthen global and local policies. Concrete steps begin with abandoning the throwaway culture and adopting healthier lifestyles.

Pope Francis emphasized that saving the environment and improving the lot of the poor are interrelated. Alexander Jebadu noted that the core of the Church's mission today demands that the option for the poor be combined with the protection of nature. This mission also firmly opposes the domination of the rich and the unfair economic system that oppresses others (Jebadu, 2023).

Conceptualization of Universal Communion in Laudato Si'

In *Laudato Si'* (art. 89-92), Pope Francis articulates the concept of universal communion through a theocentric lens. Referring to article 89 and the theological affirmation in the Book of Wisdom 11:26, it is emphasized that all created entities belong inherently to God. This recognition of one and the same Creator shifts the anthropocentric paradigm to a cosmic consciousness, where all living things are seen as one universal family unit. The implication is that relationships within creation must be based on noble respect, gentleness, and a spirituality of humility.

According to Pope Francis, all living entities on earth exist within an integral relational network. This concept demonstrates that the interconnectedness of living beings is a fundamental principle in maintaining the balance of nature (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 92). This relationship reflects the interdependence of living beings in ensuring the continuity of their respective existences. This reciprocal phenomenon is clearly visible in the relationship between humans and the environment, where nature provides the means to sustain life, while humans act as stewards. Therefore, humans bear a moral responsibility to apply the principles of sustainability and wisdom in interacting with other ecological entities.

The integration of ecological and social dimensions is a crucial focus, where commitment to environmental sustainability cannot be separated from harmonious relationships between humans (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 90). This synchronization between environmental and social justice indicates that humans are essentially relational agents. This relational characteristic affirms the

intersubjective nature of human existence (Pasi, 2020). As a given condition, this relational and intersubjective dimension is inherent in human nature, although its optimal manifestation in order to achieve complete humanity still requires a continuous process of education and socialization.

"The relational dimension affirms that human existence is inherently never solitary. Referring to Riyanto's phenomenological perspective, this dimension encompasses all activities and dynamics of human life in actualizing oneself as an interconnected agent. Therefore, the presence of others is not merely an external factor, but rather a constitutive element that shapes and supports human identity as a social being from the very beginning (Riyanto, 2018)."

Ontologically, human existence is defined not only by its rational capacity but also by its inherent relational dimension. Human relationships always manifest in a space of intersubjectivity with others. In Christian theology, particularly with reference to the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 2:15-18), this principle is reflected in the creation of Adam and Eve as equals. This text dogmatically confirms that from the beginning, the Creator has designed human nature to live in an order of equal, balanced, and non-dominant social relations.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis emphasized that the interaction between humans and the universe should ideally be built on a foundation of empathy, compassion, and social concern (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 91). There must be continuity between the ecological care movement and the care for human dignity. However, environmental exploitation often goes hand in hand with the moral degradation of fellow human beings. Ecological commitment becomes inconsistent when the defense of nature ignores human dignity. Therefore, universal ecological awareness must integrate social justice, because greed in exploiting natural resources tends to trigger exploitative actions and domination of fellow individuals.

Pope Francis affirms that all forms of destruction of living beings essentially negate the dignity of humanity itself (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 92). In the context of universal communion, the manifestation of true love demands concrete action to oppose the exploitation and oppression of the environment. Therefore, humanity bears a moral responsibility to integrate peace, justice, and the integrity of creation as an interdependent and inseparable conceptual whole (Dominggus & Pandor, 2022). This reality reflects the absolute interconnectedness of living beings, where humans are positioned as fellow pilgrims on earth with an obligation to care for the universe. This cosmological relationship is compellingly depicted in *Laudato Si'*, through the personification of natural elements as part of a sacred universal brotherhood.

The concept of universal communion is reaffirmed in the closing chapter of the encyclical in which Pope Francis outlines the urgency of ecological conversion as a universal calling. This conversion is manifested through the integration of various attitudes that collectively foster genuine concern (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 220). In principle, ecological conversion is rooted in the awareness that all creation is interconnected in a harmonious cosmic order. Consequently, damage or suffering experienced by one created entity will have a direct impact and be felt by other elements of creation.

Laudato Si' conceptualizes the idea of universal communion by affirming the intrinsic value inherent in every created being. To strengthen this thesis, Pope Francis proposes three important points. First, he establishes a theological

basis that views the universe as the *locus* of the divine presence (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 88). This is based on the belief that the Spirit of God nourishes every created entity, thus radiating a profound mystical dimension. As elaborated in the encyclical, this transcendental reality materializes even in the smallest elements of nature and in the social reality of the marginalized (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 233). Consequently, human beings carry a spiritual responsibility to identify the Divine existence in the entire spectrum of creation (Edwards, 2016).

Second, God loves all creation. Pope Francis explains this by emphasizing that creation is linked to God's plan of love, in which every creature has value and meaning and is a reality illuminated by the love that calls us together into a universal communion (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 76). This divine love for every creature teaches humans to respect the existence of other creatures (Brazal, 2021).

Third, the Christian vision of the Risen Christ. Pope Francis sees all creation as destined to participate in the fullness of God achieved by the risen Jesus. This means that the final destiny of other creatures cannot be determined by humans. Pope Francis' eschatology embraces the idea that all other creatures, in their own way, will participate in the transformation of all things in Christ (Paus Fransiskus, 2016: art. 83).

The theology of hope reconstructs traditional medieval eschatology, which tended to limit salvation to human resurrection and macrocosmic transformation, by offering a concrete future perspective for flora and fauna as fellow creatures. Beltran (2020) asserts that the universe is an interconnected created entity moving toward a common eschaton. Although human conceptual and imaginative understanding of this cosmic eschatology is limited, its certainty rests on the promise of the divine resurrection. In line with this, Pope Francis emphasizes that every creature has an eschatological future in God, based on its intrinsic value (Edwards, 2016).

Christian Ecotheology: A Theological Response to the Ecological Crisis

The discourse of new ecotheology gained widespread public attention in the 1990s, as indicated by several crucial literary moments. Among them was the publication of David Hallman's edited work, *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North* (1994), by the World Council of Churches, as well as the metamorphosis of the journal *Theology in Green* (1992-1996) became *Ecotheology* (1996-2006). Subsequently, the journal was merged into *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*, which was launched in 2007 (Conradie, 2020). Since that transitional period, ecotheology has transformed into a dynamic and contemporary topic of discussion in the public sphere.

Etymologically, ecotheology integrates the concepts of ecology and theology, the understanding of which is deeply rooted in ecojustice discourse (environmental justice). Term ecojustice in the ecumenical realm reflects the urgency of holistic justice to anticipate the economic crisis, ecological damage, and the close relationship between the two phenomena. Conradie (2020) emphasized that the words ecology, economy, and ecumenical come from the same Greek root, namely *oikos* (household/earth). In the context of managing the earth as a shared home, ecology represents a system of scientific reasoning (*logos*), the economy establishes management regulations (*nomoi*), while

ecumenical (*home*) represents humanity as its inhabitants.

Manifestations of ecotheology can be traced across various theistic traditions. However, in order to construct a specific discourse, the attribution of Christian is crucial to emphasize the *locus* of Christian ecological studies. Scholarly discourse on Christian ecotheology itself began to emerge in the 1970s, triggered by the escalating global environmental crisis. One of the most prominent theological articulations in this realm was a defensive response to Lynn White's radical thesis. White argued that Christian doctrine, which was considered rife with anthropocentrism, was the primary determinant of ecological damage (White, 1967). This premise is reinforced by Van Dyk, who confirms that massive environmental degradation began to accelerate when local animist orders were disrupted and replaced by patriarchal monotheistic theologies, such as the Judeo-Christian tradition (Dyk, 2009).

There are three main arguments that underlie criticism of the Bible and Christian theology regarding their contribution to environmental degradation or the negative views that trigger the ecological crisis. *First*, the desacralization of nature, where Christian teachings are considered to eliminate divine elements, spirits, and divinity from the realm of physical creation. *Second*, Christian doctrine is considered very anthropocentric because it positions humans as images of God who have a special mandate to control and conquer nature and all its species. *Third*, the subordination of matter. Christian literary traditions and theological themes tend to reduce the status of the universe and material reality to an inferior position compared to the spiritual and divine dimensions (Pangihutan & Jura, 2023).

Through the lens of Judeo-Christian theology, Christian ecotheology critiques the impact of human activity on the modern environmental crisis while simultaneously formulating ethical-theological foundations for maintaining ecosystem stability. The core idea of this field is rooted in the belief that the universe is a sublime divine creation, and thus humans have a theological mandate to care for it as a form of glorification of God. This interdisciplinary discourse integrates natural law, moral theology, moral law, natural theology, environmental studies, and bioethics (Ituma, 2013).

Christian ecotheology serves a crucial dual function: critiquing the Christian tradition from an ecological perspective while simultaneously evaluating the environmental crisis through a theological lens. This characteristic parallels other liberation theologies, such as feminist theology (Jawadut et al., 2024) and black theology, which deconstruct the tradition's internal biases while offering prophetic critiques of structural inequalities (patriarchy and white supremacy). This article argues that the power of ecotheology lies in the dialectical integration of these two critiques. Forgoing internal critique would trap ecotheology in a shallow apology that merely reduces the issue to the concept of stewardship without engaging in radical dogmatic reform. Conversely, abandoning external ecological critique would eliminate the significance and unique contribution of theology to global ecological discourse (Conradie, 2020).

According to Deane-Drummond, ecotheology serves as a theological bridge to reconstruct the ideal interaction between God, humanity, and nature. This perspective seeks to restore humanity's anthropological position by affirming that the earth is a shared living space, where the dynamics of natural history and human civilization are intertwined (Deane-Drummond, 2008). Within an ecotheological framework, human responsibility to care for the environment is a

direct form of accountability to the Creator for an existential mandate from the beginning of creation. Therefore, the narrative of cosmic creation needs to be reinterpreted through the lens of universal fellowship that prioritizes equality and harmony among all created beings (Horrell et al., 2008).

Discussion

The Ecotheological Dimension of the Idea of Universal Communion in Laudato Si'

The main focus of the analysis is how Pope Francis deconstructs the anthropocentric perspective, which places humans as the absolute rulers of the earth, and replaces it with a faith-based awareness that every living creature has intrinsic value and is connected to an interdependent cosmic family. There are three ecotheological dimensions of the idea of universal communion, which are theocentrism, reciprocal relationship, and human relationship.

First, the principle of theocentrism. This means placing God as the epicenter of all existence, both as the creator and the supreme ruler of the universe. Within this paradigm, ecological ethics views every form of human moral interaction with the environment not as isolated, but as always spiritually bound and containing accountability to God as the creator of the cosmos (Ciszek, 2007).

Second, there is a reciprocal relationship between humans and nature. As part of the universal unity, humans and nature are inseparably connected. The Manggaraians, for example, beautifully illustrate this concept: humans are an integral part of the universe (macrocosm). This universal view firmly rejects the narrow anthropocentrism that positions humans as the center of everything. Instead, humans serve as both servants and bridges between the Creator and nature. Therefore, this relationship should not be based solely on exploitation for the sake of human ego, but rather should be oriented toward the well-being of all creation within divine unity (Widjaja, 2018).

Third, regarding the tridimensional aspect of human relationships, the concept of universal communion in the *Laudato Si'* emphasizes three dimensions: with God, with others, and with the environment. Humans are seen as an integral part of the divine family and the universe. As beings created in God's image, humans have a divine responsibility to care for and preserve nature. Therefore, the use of natural resources must be carried out wisely without damaging their integrity (Lolangion et al., 2021). The vertical relationship with the Creator must be realized through harmonious horizontal relationships with fellow humans and the natural world.

As God's creations designed to maintain the harmony of the universe, humans and nature have three essential aspects. *First*, the aspect of differentiation emphasizes that every living creature is unique. This uniqueness is divided into two dimensions: self-uniqueness (intrinsic value as a creation) and uniqueness of contribution (its functional role in the ecosystem). These two values are inseparable and must be respected. Consequently, the importance of a creation is not solely measured by its function in the environment, but primarily by the noble value inherent in it since its creation (Den, 2023).

Second, the aspect of interiority. This dimension emphasizes that every creature is endowed with an internal structure, spontaneity, and the independent ability to regulate itself and interact with other inhabitants of the universe. The logical implication is that all creation has an inherent right to life, growth, and

preservation. This right to life is not exclusive to humans, but encompasses all elements of nature. All the riches of the universe hold this right not because of human gifts or hard work, but rather as a direct gift from God the Creator.

The third aspect is relationality, which emphasizes the close reciprocal relationship and interdependence among all creatures. Human survival is impossible if humans completely separate themselves from the universe. Rather, survival depends heavily on harmonious interactions with nature, the source of life (Hukubun & Apituley, 2023). Therefore, all creation is fundamentally relational. This concept prioritizes the ethics of human responsibility for the preservation of nature and everything within it, in contrast to the Western perspective, which often emphasizes an ethics of ownership centered on material rights (Tynan, 2021).

Based on the Christian perspective rooted in Colossians 1:16, God's creation encompasses all tangible and intangible realities. The Apostle Paul affirms that the entire universe and its authorities were created by and for Christ. This verse conveys a message of inclusivity, that God's creation is not limited to humans alone, but encompasses the entire universe (cosmos) which originates from God and will be redeemed through Jesus Christ. Therefore, through an ecological lens, the text of Colossians 1:15-20 encourages the Church to no longer view the universe merely for its practical function for humans. Instead, nature's existence is recognized as part of the Body of Christ, a metaphor whose meaning has now been extended, not only to the fellowship of the Church, but also to the entire ecological community.

Practical Implications for Environmental Pastoral Care

Ecological Conversion as a Pastoral Strategy of the Church

Ecological conversion is not limited to environmental protection or natural resource management alone, but rather it is a manifestation of faith. This spiritual movement directs people to return to the divine calling and internalize God's presence in every aspect of creation. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the relational bonds between humans and nature, each other, and their Creator (Kriswibowo & Amtiran, 2024).

The Church's efforts to promote ecological conversion are an invitation to view nature as a tangible manifestation of God's love. Nature is not merely a symbol of His presence but also serves as an intermediary, like fellow human beings, for God to convey His love to us, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, humans are invited to actively participate in manifesting this divine love. Our responsibility in faith does not stop at loving God alone, but also includes a moral obligation to love others and care for creation (Aritonang et al., 2023).

In practice, the manifestation of love for God, fellow human beings, and the environment is often distorted by the shackles of sin and its impacts. The concept of sin in this context is not merely limited to the vertical relationship with the Creator, but also encompasses moral violations against fellow individuals and the destruction of the universe (Kurniawaty et al., 2024). This perspective on sin directly influences the concept of repentance. Humanity is called to repent not only for its wrongdoings toward God, but also for those toward fellow human beings and the environment.

Ecological conversion is a concrete manifestation of faith that encourages behavioral change in caring for nature as a response to Divine love. Therefore,

the ecological movement is essentially a profound spiritual manifestation. This movement demands inner transformation, concrete action, and a restoration of connection with the Creator through the universe, reviving the values of environmental harmony and becoming responsible stewards of creation (Beltran, 2020).

Ecological conversion is a movement for change that demands commitment from both individuals and communities. It has at least three crucial aspects. First, this conversion becomes a form of gratitude and recognition of nature as a divine gift, which is proven through real actions in maintaining environmental sustainability. Second, this concept places humans not as rulers, but as an integral part of all creation in a harmonious universal unity. Third, the faith underlying ecological conversion encourages people to be creative and enthusiastic in seeking solutions to the environmental crisis, as a form of life offering that pleases God. Thus, human intelligence truly functions as a tool for maintaining the harmony of nature, not exploiting it (Denar, 2020).

The spiritual aspect of ecological conversion emphasizes the crucial importance of aligning ethical and moral values within the theory and practice of the environmental pastoral movement (Arianto et al., 2001). The call to ecological conversion requires individuals and groups to reexamine their interactions with the universe to ensure the well-being of future generations. This awareness of intergenerational justice gives rise to a moral responsibility to wisely care for the earth. Therefore, a fundamental shift in personal values and systemic reform are needed to address the root causes of environmental degradation. Through a spiritual approach and an awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings, this ecological conversion movement provides a strong foundation for realizing environmental justice and sustainability (Nabung, 2024).

Cosmic Harmonization: Ecological Awareness and Solidarity Based on the Order of Creation

The concept of universal communion has led to the emergence of ecological awareness and solidarity in preserving the universe. In this regard, there are two main schools of thought in the development of environmental awareness. The first is anthropocentric ecology, which believes that addressing environmental crises is crucial for the survival of humanity itself. The second is holistic ecology, which views efforts to address environmental degradation not solely for human needs but also as a manifestation of concern and solidarity for fellow living beings sharing the same ecosystem.

The anthropocentric ecological paradigm tends to trigger the birth of shallow ecology. This approach is considered less effective in addressing the environmental crisis, because its primary motive still legalizes the exploitation of nature to meet limitless human needs. On the other hand, there is the concept of deep ecology, which aims to raise awareness that humans live side by side with other creatures. In this view, every creature has intrinsic value within itself. The fundamental differences between the two concepts can be seen in the following table 1 below.

Table 1. Differences Shallow Ecology and Deep Ecology

No.	Aspect Comparator	Shallow Ecology	Deep Ecology
1.	Position Man	Viewing humans as separate entities and outside the natural ecosystem.	Placing humans as an integral and inseparable part of nature universe.
2.	Rights Orientation	Human-centered (anthropocentrism), where the fulfillment of human rights is the most important thing.	Recognize the right to life of all creatures. Humans only may utilize flora and fauna for survival, not to destroy them.
3.	Focus on Empathy	Environmental concern is based solely on its impact towards comfort and human feelings.	Having universal empathy; feeling the suffering experienced by other living beings.
4.	Governance Know	Regulation and management natural resources are solely conditioned to human prosperity.	Nature policies and management are designed to maintain the sustainability of all living beings.
5.	Issue Population	Focusing on population restrictions, especially targeting developing countries develop.	Going beyond mere population control; emphasizing a commitment to conservation without coercive or exploitative actions.
6.	View Economy	Support and accept the concept of conventional economic growth openly.	Shifting orientation economic growth become sustainable ecologically to protect biodiversity and culture.
7.	Basis of Analysis	Environmental decisions are made based on material cost-benefit calculations.	Decisions are based on inner sensitivity and ethical intuition towards the order of nature.
8.	Orientation Time	Pragmatic in nature, prioritize targets and short-term planning.	Visionary, based on long-term vision and plans that are in line with ecological principles.
9.	Approach System	Trying to finish environmental problems by taking advantage of the existing social, political and economic systems.	Sue and criticize the current system, then move to find alternative new systems that imitate the way nature works.

Source: [Buntaran \(1996\)](#)

The main foundation of ecological solidarity is ecological awareness. Etymologically, the word solidarity is rooted in Latin, *solidus*, which means whole, solid, or united. In the context of living things, this term refers to causal relationships and interdependence, while generally describing a sense of shared responsibility within a group. When combined into ecological solidarity, this concept emphasizes human commitment and responsibility in preserving the environment ([Mathevet et al., 2018](#)).

The concept of ecological solidarity rests on two main pillars: ecological aspects (biophysical and functional relationships) and social bonds between people based on a shared vision and sense of togetherness. This concept emphasizes that humans and all elements of nature share a common future, making awareness of their interdependence essential in determining the

direction of development. Furthermore, ecological solidarity highlights the interconnectedness of all environmental elements within an integrated socio-ecological ecosystem (Mathevet et al., 2018).

Through *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reconstructs the concept of solidarity in Catholic social thought into an inclusive ecological category. This concept is no longer limited to relationships between humans, but expanded to include non-human beings as a unified ecological family. To understand the expanded meaning of this solidarity, especially in the context of a harmonious relationship with the earth, it is important to re-examine the roots of Catholic social thought. Pope Francis emphasizes that all creation, both human and non-human, exists within a single cosmological order that is interconnected like a family (Flores, 2018).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis that has been carried out, this article draws two fundamental conclusions related to the ecotheological dimension of the idea of universal communion put forward by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*. First, the deconstruction of dictatorial anthropocentrism. Theologically, the idea of universal communion in *Laudato Si'*, theologically, it undermines the dictatorial anthropocentric perspective that has legitimized the exploitation of nature. This encyclical affirms that all creation, both human and non-human, has intrinsic value given by God. The relationship among creation is no longer viewed hierarchically or dominantly, but rather relationally and fraternally. The environment is not a mere utilitarian object, but rather a subject sharing existence in a common home.

Second, synthesis of relational ecotheology. The ecotheological dimension offered through this universal communion is rooted in a trinitarian and Christocentric theology of creation. God's immanent presence in the creation demands that humans shift their paradigm from being masters of nature to being fellow pilgrims and guardians. Consequently, the current ecological crisis is not merely a technical or economic problem, but rather a spiritual and moral one. Therefore, resolving this crisis requires ecological repentance, manifested in cosmic solidarity, intergenerational justice, and an ascetic lifestyle.

Theoretically, this idea of universal communion enriches contemporary ecotheological discourse by bridging dogmatic theology and practical ethics. Practically, this conclusion calls for a reorientation of public policy, moral and religious education, and community action based on the awareness that everything in this world is interconnected.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion regarding the ecotheological dimension in the idea of universal communion in *Laudato Si'*, the author formulates several strategic recommendations which are divided into three main areas. First, in theoretical realm and academic development, further research is suggested to conduct comparative studies between the concepts of universal communion in *Laudato Si'* and ecotheological concepts from other religious traditions or from indigenous cosmologies. This is important for building a more grounded space for interfaith and intercultural ecotheological dialogue. Furthermore, future studies need to contextualize these theological

ideas with modern science, such as ecological network theory or posthumanist philosophy, in order to see to what extent universal communion can be justified scientifically and philosophically in contemporary era.

Second, practical realm and pastoral implementation. Religious educational institutions (especially Catholics) are advised to develop a curriculum based on ecological conversion that reduces rigid anthropocentric perspectives. The idea of universal communion must be taught not merely as theory, but as a daily spirituality that views nature as brothers and sisters. Furthermore, Basic Ecclesial Communities (KBG), parishes, and dioceses need to translate theology of *Laudato Si'* into practical guidelines for local regulations, reducing single-use plastics, utilizing tumblers to reduce the use of plastic bottles or managing church land assets based on environmental sustainability.

Third, we look at the socio-ecological and public policy realms. These theological ideas should not stagnate at or in the altar or classroom. Active collaboration between religious leaders and environmental activists is recommended to address agrarian issues and the local climate crisis, using the narrative of non-human rights as the moral basis for the struggle. Furthermore, recommendations are directed to public policymakers to ensure that the development paradigm is not solely oriented towards capitalist economic exploitation and the pursuit of profit, but rather adopts ecocentric principles that align with the core message of *Laudato Si'* about the integrity of creation.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to our institutions, including Universitas Katolik Indonesia St. Paulus Ruteng and Ledalero Institute of Philosophy and Creative Technology (*Institut Filsafat dan Teknologi Kreatif Ledalero*), for their continuous support us in completing this article.

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