



Written by [James Murphy](#) on April 9, 2020

Pope Francis: COVID-19 Might Be “Nature’s Response” to Climate Change

In an interview released on Wednesday, Pope Francis suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic now sweeping through the world may be one of “nature’s responses” to man-made climate change.

The *Tablet*, a Catholic weekly in the United Kingdom, asked the 83-year-old pontiff whether the virus might lead people to lead more ecologically conscious lives.

“There is an expression in Spanish: ‘God always forgives, we forgive sometimes, but nature never forgives,’” the Pope said.



Pope Francis believes that the virus and other recent events might just be nature’s way of giving us a wake-up call on climate change. “Who now speaks of the fires in Australia, or remembers that 18 months ago a boat could cross the North Pole because the glaciers had all melted? Who speaks now of the floods? I don’t know if these are the revenge of nature, but they are certainly nature’s responses.

The Pope has long been extremely vocal on his belief that global warming is man-made and is caused mainly by the consumer culture of western nations. The [Catholic Climate Covenant](#) is based specifically on the Pope’s 2015 [encyclical](#) on the subject, which refers to the planet as “our sister, Mother Earth.”

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her,” the encyclical states.

That doesn’t sound Catholic. It sounds pagan. The Catholic Climate Covenant calls for the world to live more “sustainably” and address “social justice” issues. It could have been written by the United Nations or by the authors of the [Green New Deal](#).

Like [many others](#), Pope Francis thinks that the coronavirus and the world’s response to it has the potential to be a pivotal turning point in human history, an opportunity to rethink how we do things which could lead to a “brighter” and, presumably, more socialist future.

“Every crisis contains both danger and opportunity: the opportunity to move out from the danger. Today I believe we have to slow down our rate of production and consumption (*Laudato Si’*, 191) and to learn to understand and contemplate the natural world,” Francis said. “This is the opportunity for conversion. Yes, I see early signs of an economy that is less liquid, more human.... This is the time to take the decisive step, to move from using and misusing nature to contemplating it. We have lost the contemplative dimension; we have to get it back at this time.”

The Pope seems to be calling for an economic system which is focused on the elimination of human suffering rather than strict issues of profit and loss. What exactly would that look like? Would a company who produces consumer electronics be forced to produce things useful for farming? Pope Francis calls for an economic “conversion,” but the change he wishes for doesn’t sound as if it would be consistent with a free society.



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The pontiff also pointed out what he sees as the hypocrisy some political figures have displayed throughout the pandemic. “This crisis is affecting us all, rich and poor alike, and putting a spotlight on hypocrisy,” he said. “I am worried by the hypocrisy of certain political personalities who speak of facing up to the crisis, of the problem of hunger in the world, but who in the meantime manufacture weapons.”

But pretty much everyone is guilty of hypocrisy on some level. The Catholic Church, for instance, is estimated to be sitting on assets worth \$30 billion. Why not, as Jesus suggested in Luke 18, sell all that they have and distribute it to the poor?

Because it’s not practical. Everybody understands that. It’s also not practical — or wise — to revamp the entire global economy in response to the coronavirus pandemic. And it’s definitely not wise to change the world in response to a made-up crisis such as anthropogenic global warming.



Photo: AP Images

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