

SPRING 2026 LAUDATO SI' CHALLENGE

Student Competition Guidelines

OVERVIEW

The Laudato Si' Challenge invites students to respond creatively and practically to the environmental crisis through the lens of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si'. This competition challenges participants to develop innovative, actionable solutions that embody the principles of integral ecology, connecting care for creation with justice for the poor and vulnerable.

Student teams will identify a specific environmental challenge addressed in Laudato Si', research its impacts, and propose concrete solutions grounded in the encyclical's vision of ecological conversion, sustainable living, and the common good.

Competition Format:

Team Structure

- Teams of **2–5 currently enrolled students**
- Interdisciplinary teams encouraged (any majors are welcome) • All members will present their presentation in **10–15 minutes with visuals**.

Format of Presentation:

- Choose a real environmental issue that could include climate change, pollution, water access, food systems, environmental justice, etc.
- Research its impact and find resources to help support that claim
- Develop a **realistic and actionable solution for your topic**

Competition Challenge

Teams could address more than one of the topics suggested below:

- 1. Climate change and global warming**
 - a. Ex: Rising temperatures and extreme weather events
- 2. Loss of Biodiversity**
 - a. Ex: Habitat destruction and species extinction
- 3. Water access and protection**
 - a. Ex: Protection of oceans, rivers, and aquifers
- 4. Pollution and waste**
 - a. Air, soil, and water contamination
- 5. Food systems and agriculture**
 - a. Ex: Food waste and hunger

6. Environmental Justice and the Cry of the Poor

- a. Ex: Disproportionate impact of environmental harm on marginalized communities

7. Consumerism and the Technocratic Paradigm

- a. Ex: Technology's role in environmental harm and healing

Required Project Elements

Each presentation should include:

1. Problem Analysis (20%)

- o Define the specific environmental challenge, evidence & its impact, how it relates to Laudato Si'.

2. Laudato Si' Foundation (25%)

- o Show how your solution reflects principles like integral ecology, care for the poor, and the common good.

3. Proposed Solution (30%)

- o Present a clear, actionable plan, explain feasibility (resources needed), explain how your solution promotes both environmental sustainability and human dignity, and consider different dimensions (community action, policy recommendations)

4. Impact & Implementation (15%)

- o Describe expected outcomes and benefits of your solution, address challenges or obstacles, and steps to make it happen

5. Creativity (10%)

- o Demonstrate original thinking and creative problem-solving, use engaging visuals, and show how your approach goes beyond "business as usual."

Evaluation Criteria

Faculty Judges will score based on:

1. Content and Understanding (40 points)

- a. Depth of engagement with Laudato Si' and its principles (15 points)
- b. Clear analysis of the environmental problem and its interconnections (10 points)
- c. Quality and feasibility of proposed solution(s) (15 points)
- d. Integral Ecology Approach (25 points)

2. Integration of environmental, social, economic, and spiritual dimensions (10 points)

- a. Attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable populations (8 points)

- b. Consideration of both individual and systemic change (7 points)
- 3. Creativity and Innovation (15 points)**
 - a. Originality and creative problem-solving (8 points)
 - b. Effective use of visual aids and presentation tools (7 points)
- 4. Practicality and Impact (10 points)**
 - a. Realistic implementation plan and timeline (5 points)
 - b. Potential for measurable, positive impact (5 points)
- 5. Team Collaboration and Presentation (10 points)**
 - a. Clear organization and communication (5 points)
 - b. Equal participation from all team members (3 points)
 - c. Professional delivery and time management (2 points)

Total: 100 points

Awards

1st Place: \$1,500 team award

2nd Place: \$750 team award

3rd Place: \$500 team award

Certificates will be awarded to all participants.

Resources & Support

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home (2015)
 - Available free online at: vatican.va
 - Additional Resources:
 - Laudato Si' Action Platform: laudatosiactionplatform.org
 - Vatican resources and study guides
 - Academic articles on integral ecology and environmental theology
 - Local and global environmental data and reports
 - Campus sustainability office resources
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Please subject Laudato Si' Challenge Project Submission

CONCLUSION

The Laudato Si' Challenge is an invitation to join Pope Francis in responding to "the urgency of the challenge we face" and to contribute your creativity, intelligence, and passion to care for our common home. As you develop your solutions, remember that you are part of a global movement of people committed to ecological conversion and integral ecology. May your work during this competition inspire ongoing commitment to environmental justice, sustainable living, and solidarity with all of creation. "As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life." — Laudato Si' #207

We look forward to seeing your innovative solutions!