Climate Change

“In the political world lies something that doesn’t work... We have sinned against the earth, against our neighbors. Because of our selfishness we have failed in our responsibility to be guardians and stewards of the earth.”

In Francesco, Pope Francis addresses our obligation to care for our common home, the Earth. He laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action." Pope Francis calls on us to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and join him in embarking on a new path.

Questions:
1. What are some of the biggest challenges to fighting climate change?
2. What can society do to help chart a new path for our treatment of the environment? What can you do in your every day life?
3. What can community leaders and activists do to follow the example set by Pope Francis on this issue?

Resources:
- Vatican Video of Laudato Si’ (Italian and English)
- Text of Laudato Si’
- Vatican News: Pope Francis’ Video Message to UN Climate Action Summit, 2019

Refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples

“In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. How many of us, myself included, have lost our bearings? We are no longer attentive to the world in which we live. And when humanity as a whole loses its bearings, it results in tragedies like the one we have witnessed.”

More than 79 million people—more than 1 out of 100 people in the world—have been forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, drought, flooding and other environmental dangers resulting from climate change, and violent environmental threats including gangs and extremism. In Francesco, we witness Pope Francis’ compassion for the mass migration of Syrian refugees as a result of a severe drought.

Questions:
1. What did you think of the global refugee crisis before watching Francesco? What impact has this had on your own thinking about refugees?
2. Is our indifference to the degradation of our environment linked to our indifference to the plight of refugees?
3. What can you do to help a refugee family from where you are?

Resources:
- UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) on Protecting Refugees
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Global trends in forced displacement, UNHCR
- Vatican: Video Message of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Seventy-fifth Meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations
Bringing Hope and Humanity to Conflict

“Peacemaking demands first and foremost, respect, for the dignity and freedom of every human person.”

In Francesco, you see how Pope Francis has continually traveled to non-Christian countries and interacted with leaders of other religions in conflict. He has shown his respect with numerous small gestures: taking off his shoes in a mosque, kissing a wall, touching a child, putting his hand on a casket. He shows humility, tenderness, and an honest connection to the pain and suffering of those he meets. By doing so, he has brought hope for peace and unity.

Questions:
1. Many conflicts originate in a difference of beliefs. Pope Francis works to bring reconciliation by finding the commonalities between religions. Give some examples of beliefs that all religions hold in common.
2. What significance can we find in interfaith dialogue and universal fraternity that Pope Francis promotes through his actions?
3. When Pope Francis visited the Central African Republic, there was no violence when he was there. What about his visit could have created such an impact?

Resources:
Vatican: Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the Celebration of the 54th World Day of Peace

Justice and Forgiveness

“We ask forgiveness for the abuses of power and conscience, sexual abuses on the part of representatives of the Church. We ask forgiveness for all those times when, as a Church, we did not offer to the survivors of any type of abuse, compassion and the pursuit of justice and truth by concrete actions. We ask forgiveness.”

To address abuse in the Catholic church, Pope Francis called the priests to Rome, requested their mass resignation, and defrocked the offenders. He changed canon law to criminalize not only sexual abuse but also cover up. Only then did he go to his Church members and ask for forgiveness. In Francesco, Juan Carlos, an abuse survivor shared, “I have received some kind of peace because his words were accompanied by actions.”

Questions:
1. What part do humility and transparency play in forgiveness?
2. What role do accountability and justice play in preventing crimes from being repeated?
3. Why do you think the Pope said that covering up sexual abuse by priests is as much a crime as the abuse itself? What were the ramifications of the cover ups?

Resources:
Presentation of the Vademecum on certain points of procedure in treating cases of sexual abuse of minors
Women on the Front Lines

“The world has a narrow view on women. I dare say that to this day, women are in second place. They are in second place. Even the great surprise when a woman is successful indicates that.”

Francesco highlights two women – Sister Norma Pimentel in Texas, and Daniela Pompei, Head of Refugee Services for the Community of Sant’Egidio, Italy -- who are working on the front lines of the refugee camps, saving lives and caring for traumatized children.

Pope Francis singles out Sister Norma at an event and thanks her, and through her, thanks “all the brave women who go out to meet their brothers and sisters in difficulty,” calling them a “sign of God’s closeness and compassion.” The Pope has elevated women in the Vatican and has brought them into the decision-making process, appointing women to positions that include the Vice Director of the Vatican Press Office and the Director of the Vatican Museum, two secretarial positions, and a seat on the court to the Roman Rota.

Questions:
1. The film says that Pope Francis was very much influenced by his grandmother. Once he was in the Vatican, how could this have impacted his decisions regarding women?
2. Why do you think women have been excluded from decision-making positions in the Vatican before now?
3. Sister Norma and Daniela Pompei focus their efforts on helping migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Reflecting on their perspectives and comments about their work, what are the similarities and differences in their motivations to help and in how they make and execute their decisions and actions?

Resources:
Spiritus Domini, Papal Decree Modifying the Role of Women in Ministries
“Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on access of women to the ministries of Lector and Acolyte”
Vatican News: ISG welcomes Mētu Proprio as response to dynamism of the Church

For more about Francesco, keep up with the documentary on social media:

Facebook: @PopeFrancisMovie Instagram: @francesco_movie

Learn more at discovery.com/francesco