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As Bishop of Oakland, I welcome Pope Francis' highly anticipated Encyclical Letter, *Laudato Si*. In it the Holy Father is speaking as a pastor offering moral guidance rooted in central Catholic teachings about care for others and care for God's creation. The poor suffer most when we don't responsibly care for God's creation. It's up to us to help them. The Pope is giving us the opportunity to reflect about a crucial question: "What kind of world do we want to leave to our kids and grandkids?" God gave us this world, and He asks us to take care of it. It is a gift. I would like to encourage the faithful of the Diocese of Oakland to take time to read, consider and discuss the content of the Holy Father's letter at home and in your parish groups. This is a teaching document, not a set of policy proposals. Together, let's prayerfully respond to Pope Francis' call for a change of hearts. Let's try our best to live rightly within the world we've been given, and with each other.

Two of the most powerful quotes I've found in the Letter are:

"We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us." – (§67)

"A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. That is how we end up worshipping earthly powers, or ourselves usurping the place of God, even to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample his creation underfoot. The best way to restore men and women to their rightful place, putting an end to their claim to absolute dominion over the earth, is to speak once more of the figure of a Father who creates and who alone owns the world. Otherwise, human beings will always try to impose their own laws and interests on reality. – (§75)

I believe this Encyclical will make as profound impact on the world as Pope John XXIII's Letter on Peace *Pacem in Terris*, did in 1963. I pray the world will listen, beginning with our own Church and country.

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For the greater glory of God