

## "WOW!"... A LITTLE GIRL'S WORD OF PRAISE IN LAUDATO SI' WEEK 2021

A Reflection written by her Grandparent

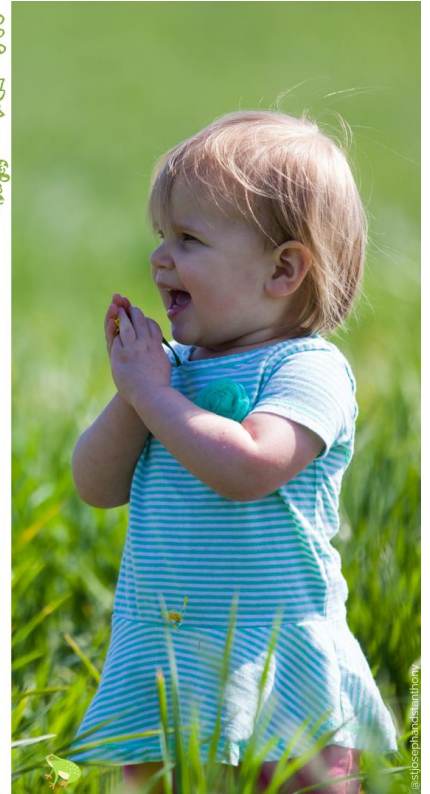
"Wow" was one of the first words our granddaughter learnt to say. And it was the way she used that word that made it even more special.

She would stop and point to a bird flying past or sitting in a tree and say, "Wow".

She would do the same when she saw a butterfly or leaves fluttering in the wind or a kookaburra laughing.

You could see the pure wonder and awe in her eyes as she was caught in the moment.

Seeing how the beauty of God's creation could hold a one-year-old so totally enthralled, it struck me that "Wow" could easily be another title for Pope Francis' beautiful encyclical "Laudato Si".



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"Laudato Si" means "Praise be to you", from "The Canticle of Praise" by St Francis of Assisi. In wonder and awe and gratitude, St Francis prayed, "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Our granddaughter's innate response to God's work was "Wow!"

I wonder if praise can be any more pure than that?

Pope Francis, in writing [Laudato Si' \(On Care for Our Common Home\)](#), took St Francis' praise for God's creation as the starting point for his message teaching all people of good will how we should respond to the serious challenges we face in caring for God's creation today.

Our first step is simply to be grateful to God for the gift of Creation, and then the Pope calls us to take up our responsibility to be caretakers of this gift as we respond to the "cry of the Earth, and the cry of the poor".

We all face choices in this response, but Pope Francis offers frank advice about the loss of biodiversity, the loss of all types of habitats from the mountains to the oceans.

He says in *Laudato Si'*: "Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right."

The Pope encourages us not to lose hope, because we do have choices, and our choices do make a difference.

He assures us: "In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.

Praise be to him!"