

*From Cosmic Dust  
to an Easter Garden*



*Laudato Si'*

LENT 2022

WITH ST MARY OF THE ANGELS



# A Lenten Journey of Conversion

From Cosmic Dust to an Easter Garden



## Introduction

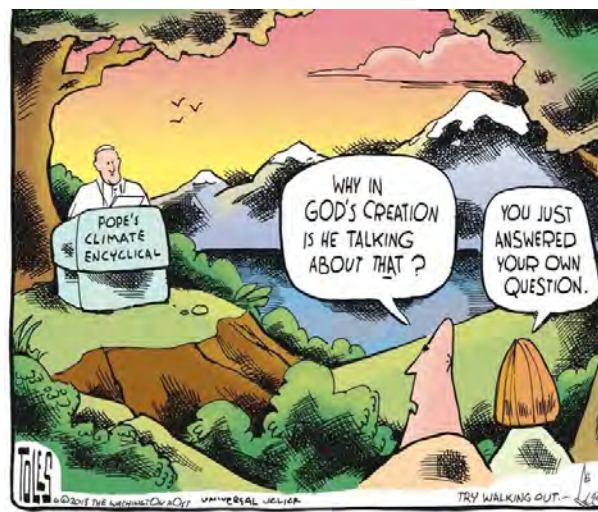
This resource has been created to help individuals and/or groups deepen their appreciation of Lent through Creation.

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter and the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. During this time of fasting and renewal, we will embark upon a journey of ecological conversion through reflection, repentance, and renewal. Together.

By committing to concrete changes through fasting and lifestyle changes, we will live more in solidarity with our Earth and each other and inspire our sisters and brothers to join this conversion process.

Sixty years after Vatican II, Pope Francis has given new meaning to conversion and baptism into Christ when he writes in his environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*:

**“...‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them (LS 217) ... We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart (LS 218) ... We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Genesis 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements.” (LS 3)**



As Pope Francis says:

**“Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God. Otherwise, it would be nothing more than romantic individualism dressed up in ecological garb.” (LS 119)**

Each week’s resources consist of Scripture readings and input that remind us about the awesome gift of fertile dust, seeds, branches and trees. There are suggested reflections and actions that we can take in our preparation for Lent this year. While taking care of the environment includes appreciating all the gifts that, as Saint Francis would say, "Mother Earth" shares with us, Pope Francis also exhorts us to prioritise the way we interact with nature and "to be protectors of God's handiwork".

## Creating a Prayer Space

Somewhere central to your home or your room, place a potted plant and a Crucifix. You may also want to have a candle or a purple cloth that reminds us of conversion. It could be in the centre of your dining table, or your living room, where it will remind you everyday of your commitment to care for this plant, which may represent caring for each other and all creation, as we all are gifted with a common world.

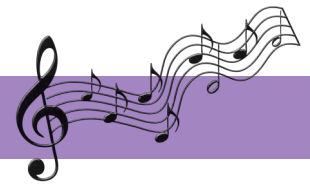
To involve everyone in the family, you could also be creative and have cards with Lenten commitments (see below) where our practices might create a better world, leading us to respect nature and each other by the way we interact with our global home. Let them serve as reminders of our Lenten resolution for these 40 days. This could involve everyone in the family.



## Suggestions of Commitments

- ✿ To cut down single-use disposable plastic products
- ✿ To simplify our meals such as soup and bread once a week
- ✿ To spend time appreciating nature with a walk in the park
- ✿ To prepare my confession remembering ecological sins I may have committed
- ✿ To cut down my use of air-conditioning
- ✿ To be aware of those affected by climate change and to pray for them
- ✿ To use only cold water and biodegradable detergent
- ✿ To read the Pope’s encyclical, *Laudato Si’*

## Music Suggestions



1. [Touch the Earth](http://www.ministryofhearts.org) by Kathy Sherman, CSJ ([www.ministryofhearts.org](http://www.ministryofhearts.org))
2. [In the Name of All That Is](http://www.JanNovotka.com) by Jan Novotka ([www.JanNovotka.com](http://www.JanNovotka.com))
3. [Canticle of the Sun](#) by Marty Haugen
4. [Canticle of Creation](#) by Dan Schutte
5. [Laudato Si! Be Praised O God](#) by Ricki Manalo
6. [Litany for the Earth](#) by Barbara Bridge
7. [Tend the Ground](#) by Curtis Stephan
8. [Sacred Creation](#) by Rufino Zaragoza
9. [As Christ Is For Us](#) by Janet Sullivan Whitaker
10. [God of Might and God of Mercy](#) by Michael Joncas
11. [Act Justly](#) by Bernadette Farrell
12. [Let Us Sing as We Go](#) by Jamie Cortez
13. [Every Creature Is Sister and Brother](#) by Bob Hurd
14. [All Creatures of Our God](#) and King by William Henry Draper

***“For God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son”***  
(John 3:16)



## Credits

- Content of this Lenten booklet has been adapted from resources available at [EcoSpirituality Resources](#).
- *Laudato Si'* Chaplet information taken from [Laudato Si' Movement](#).



# Ash Wednesday

## Renew & Repent

“We have forgotten that “we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”” (LS 2)

“Authentic human development has a moral character. It presumes full respect for the human person, but it must also be concerned for the world around us and ‘take into account the nature of each being and its mutual connection in an ordered system’” (St John Paul II, LS 5)

## 1. Introduction

As the Spirit invited Jesus into the wilderness, let us pray that the Holy Spirit will invite us into this time with Him. Because soil can be considered "the face of the Earth", pray together this adapted prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill our hearts and kindle in us the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and we shall be created, and you will renew the face of the Earth.*

## 2. From Scripture

📖 **1st Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17,**  
**Psalm: Ps 51: 1-17**  
**Second Reading: 2 Cor 5:12b - 6:10**  
**Gospel: Mt 6: 1-6, 16-21**

Prayer



Fasting

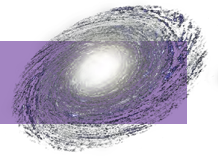


Almsgiving



Today’s Gospel invites us to consider the three basic elements of Lent that reflect our closeness to God, whose mercy never fails us and whose forgiveness abounds. **Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving** should always be part of our daily lives but are more accentuated during this season.

### 3. From *Laudato Si'*



We are actually from **stardust!** Eons ago, dying stars exploded particles and gases that came together and attracted more particles that formed new stars. Eventually stars produced required elements for life, like carbon and oxygen. Stellar dust became planets, and one of these became planet Earth – the only one we know with a living skin that supports life.



Approximately 140 - 130 million years ago, Earth became a garden in our galaxy with increasingly diverse and colourful flowers. The complex process of forming fertile soil (dirt) can take over 500 years; it is not the work of human hands. The divine Life Source lives and acts in our planet as soil forms, erodes, and is formed again. **Caring for deep, healthy soil is essential for life.**

The Genesis creation story (Genesis 2:7) reminds us that we come from earth. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'* writes: “*We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the Earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.*” (LS 2)

The Latin word for soil is "humus" [(h)yoōməs], from which comes the word "humility". The Hebrew meaning of "Adam" is "earth". Many of us grew up with the thinking that humans are separate from (and better than) the rest of God’s creation. We are becoming more aware that we, with our distinct abilities and responsibilities, are **interconnected with the rest of creation** — as was Jesus.

Mother Earth’s soil provides food, flowers, seeds, herbs and trees. It filters water and controls water runoff. It becomes habitat and migration routes for various species. It harbours incredibly complex life within the soil.

Mighty trees — and humans — eventually become soil, dust, earth: “... *and unto dust you shall return*”. How vital it is for us and future generations of all species!

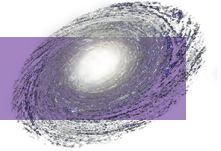






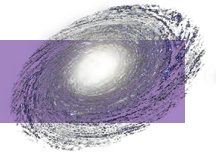
Without healthy soil (and water and sun), Christians would not have bread or wine for the Eucharist. Our Earth thus deserves reverence and care because we are all interdependent on it.

#### 4. What is God saying to us?

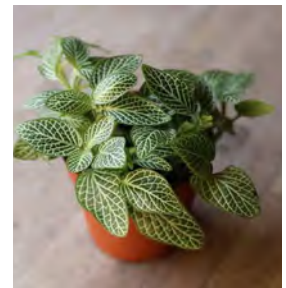


- ✿ What stories do we have from/about Jesus that include soil, seeds, plants, etc, and what lessons can we glean from these stories?
- ✿ How can our understanding of Lent be deepened by reflecting on soil?
- ✿ How can I be humble “soil” for others so that they may grow this Lent?
- ✿ What growing things delight and/or restore you?
- ✿ What practical things can I do to conserve electricity, water, other valuable resources etc and not waste food this Lent?

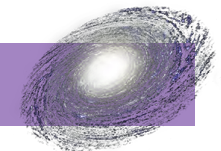
#### 5. What can we do for Lent this week?



- ✗ Place your plant (that you are taking care of) at your prayer space during Lent.
- ✗ Let it remind you of your interconnectedness that we share as a parish.
- ✗ **Lent is a call to repentance.** Identify someone whom you would like to reconcile with this Lent and make a commitment to do it.



#### 6. Closing



- Play, sing or read the chorus of the song [Touch the Earth](#).
- Take turns using the ash, symbol of life created from stardust, to bless one another for this year's Lent. (E.g., say: “Maria, may this soil be a reminder that you both need and give nourishment” or “John, let this soil remind you that you came from stardust and interconnect with everyone and everything.”)
- When finished, repeat the chorus.



# Lent, Week One

## Depending on God & One another

“... the gift of the earth with its fruits belongs to everyone. Those who tilled and kept the land were obliged to share its fruits, especially with the poor, with widows, orphans and foreigners in their midst.” (LS 71)

### 1. Introduction

- Gather around the prayer space.
- Play or say one verse of [Sacred Creation](#):

*Sacred the land, sacred the water,  
sacred the sky, holy and true.  
Sacred all life, sacred each other;  
all reflect God who is good.*



### 2. From Scripture

- 📖 **First reading: Deut 26: 1-11**
- Psalm: Ps 90: 1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15**
- Second reading: Rom 10: 8b-13**
- Gospel: Luke 4: 1-13**

In this first Sunday of Lent, we are invited to **trust fully in the Lord above all people and all things**. Moses invites his people to offer the Lord the first fruits of the earth, the best of the harvest, and to present themselves before God so that he may enrich and strengthen them.

We need to ask if we are presenting the best of us as we share in our world of creation. When we act towards creation out of greed and lack of respect for its order and beauty, we damage our relationship with God.







Similarly, in the Gospel (Luke 4:1-13) narrative of Jesus' temptation in the desert, we are invited to remember **our ultimate dependence on God** as the source, destination and foundation of our lives. Jesus rejects the temptation of worldly power and insists that God is the foundation of life.

### 3. From *Laudato Si'*



Our dependence on God as creatures is something we have in common with all creation. Once we recall this, we can recognise our call to act with brotherly and sisterly care for all people and life. How have we ignored our common dependence on God, acting in a spirit of domination over other people and wildlife? How have we supported systems that harm and dominate vulnerable people and ecosystems?

This week, let us pray for a *“loving awareness that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures, but joined in a splendid universal communion”* (*Laudato Si'*). Then, let us ask for mercy for the ways in which we contribute to breaking relationships with God, our brothers and sisters, and the earth, and for the courage to heal these relationships.

### 4. What is God saying to us?



#### 🌸 Ecological Sin: **Pride**

Pride can lead to *“usurping the place of God to the point of claiming an unlimited right to trample God’s creation underfoot”* (LS 75). Lent is a time to reflect on the ways that we have placed ourselves, instead of God, at the centre, and thus harmed God’s creation.

#### 🌸 Ecological Virtue: **Humility**

The virtue of humility reminds us that *“we are dust, and to dust we shall return”*. We are creatures, not Creator, and we are called to lie in deep communion with all of life.

- 🌸 What experiences have led you to remember your dependence on God?
- 🌸 Where do you witness harmful domination of vulnerable people and wildlife?



## 5. What can we do for Lent this week?



### ✘ Healing Action: **Fast**

Commit to giving up one thing this Lent to remind you of your complete dependence on God. Make your fast a way to protect creation, such as fasting from unnecessary shopping or car use, or eating more plant-based food.

- ✘ Take a break from electronic entertainment - television, computer or cell phone use.
- ✘ Pay attention to the people in front of you and the natural scenes around you instead.
- ✘ Try to grow comfortable with quiet and stillness.
- ✘ Have you ever mentioned an ecological sin in confession?
- ✘ Pray for those most affected by climate change – millions of fisher folk in the world whose livelihood is destroyed by warming oceans and ocean acidification.



## 6. Closing



- Listen to [Sacred Creation](#) as you reflect.
- End with “A Prayer for Our Earth” (taken from *Laudato Si'*):

*All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.*

*You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.*

*Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*

*O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.*

*We thank you for being with us each day.*

*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.*

*Amen.*







# Lent, Week Two

## Awakening & Transfiguration

“Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realise that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others.” (LS 159)



### 1. Introduction

- Play or say one verse of [Canticle of the Sun](#):

*The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
And all creation is shouting for joy!  
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,  
And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!  
Praise for the sun, the bringer of day,  
he carries the light of the Lord in his rays;  
the moon and the stars who light up the way  
unto your throne!  
The heavens are telling the glory of God,  
And all creation is shouting for joy!  
Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field,  
And sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!*



### 2. From Scripture

- 📖 **First reading: Gen 15: 5-12, 17-18**
- Psalm: Ps 276: 1, 7-8a, 8b-9abc, 13-14**
- Second reading: Philippians 3: 17-4: 1**
- Gospel: Luke 9: 28-36 (37-43a)**

The promise to Abraham in the first reading, of lands covering a vast area between two fertile rivers, has consequences for how we think about the environment. As a herdsman, Abraham received from God a right to use the

land but could have done with them as he pleased. He was not given dominion. These lands were shared, and within that cooperative arrangement Abraham had a stake. The inclusion of the rivers and fertility, gives the forces of environment a stake as well. The land belongs to the Creator and should be held with the divine purpose clearly in mind. Our belonging on the land and claims over land are **not about dominion but about relationship**.

In the second reading, Paul reminds us that all things are subject to Christ, in whom all things were made. Our minds are occupied with earthly things as opposed to with citizenship of heaven. Our fasting, prayer, almsgiving and good works should be bringing depth to our being citizens of heaven rather than feeding our stomachs.



In the Gospel, Peter, James and John are roused from their sleep to witness the Transfiguration. They are awakened to glory.

### 3. From *Laudato Si'*

We are called to reflect on larger issues of our use of the earth, mindful that all things belong to Christ. Our transformation as creatures and as a society cannot take place if we fail in how we treat the earth, the plants and any creatures.

We too need to be awakened to glory. It is an awakening of our own **responsibility as disciples and citizens of this Earth**, as well as the forces that have impacted our environment.



### 4. What is God saying to us?

#### 🌱 Ecological Sin: **Envy**

In our societies, the pursuit of happiness is often tied to having the latest gadget or chasing the next big purchase. This sin convinces us that our happiness is defined by possessing property, and that we can buy our happiness at the expense of the Earth's finite resources.





## ✿ Ecological Virtue: **Gratitude**

Gratitude is “recognizing that the world is God’s loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate His generosity in self-sacrifice and good works” (LS 220). How might we be grateful for what we have before us? How can we pass on the abundant blessings that we have been given?



### 5. What can we do for Lent this week?

#### ✘ Healing Action: **Redefine Happiness**

Reorient what makes you happy! This week, commit to not buying a single thing except the absolute necessities. Give generously to the Earth and your community by spending time with creation.

- ✘ At each meal, include thanks for the soil that gives us our food and for the farmers who care for God's dirt.
- ✘ At Mass, remember the soil that ultimately makes the Eucharist possible.
- ✘ Pray for those most affected by climate change – children of future generations who will pay the price of our selfishness today.
- ✘ Make a commitment to do something good for your neighbour. Share food, give a plant.



### 6. Closing

- Play [Canticle of the Sun](#) as you reflect.
- End with a prayer of thanksgiving together:  
*We give you thanks, almighty God,  
for these and all your gifts  
which we have received from your bounty.  
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*





*“Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.” (LS 217)*

## 1. Introduction



- Place your feet thoughtfully on the floor and remember, wherever we are, we are grounded on firm foundation, going all the way to Earth's core.



## 2. From Scripture

- 📖 **First reading:** Ex 3:1-8a, 13-15
- Psalm:** Ps 103: 1-8
- Second reading:** 1 Cor 10: 1-12
- Gospel:** Lk 13: 1-9

In the Gospel, the story of the gardener and the fig tree provides a good ecological reflection. That is, what our relationship to the Earth is: we are gardeners who are charged with care for the Earth, not dominion over it.



## 3. From Laudato Si'

Many great religious encounters recorded in Scripture took place near or in bushes, sheep pastures, deserts, the wilderness, on mountains and the shores of rivers and seas. Quietly recall the ones you remember.

Our first reading takes place on Holy Ground. Holy ground is essential for many things. With our increasing



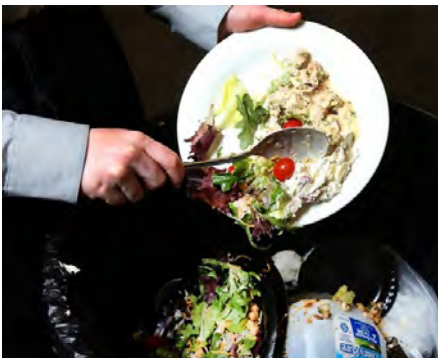


population, food growth will be especially important. In the 14th century, global population was approximately 370 million; by the late 19th century, the total reached around one billion. World population is currently close to 8 billion!

Feeding that many people is obviously challenging. It requires protecting land, water, and seeds; growing food sustainably; minimizing causes of climate change; and developing adequate transportation systems. Variations in climate, soil conditions, cultures, creative technological advances, government regulations, and business agendas all affect finding solutions. Keeping up to date and making informed personal choices about what to purchase and eat can be an expression of religious belief.



The health of farm-workers must always be protected. Multinational agribusinesses must allow input of native people and farmers when making decisions, and they must protect their human rights and land. Choosing organic produce, dairy and clothing (grown with natural fertilizers and pesticides, without artificial agents) benefits holy ground, which then protects our environment, our farm-workers, and other species.



Roughly one third of the food produced in the world for human consumption every year gets lost or wasted! Much of this loss is out of our control, but we can do our part by buying only what is needed, storing it wisely, and serving amounts with the goal of no left-overs. Compost anything (not meat) that cannot be used.

### Sharing:

- If possible, share any one moving experience you have had with dirt used for growing flowers and food.
- Or, share any other food-producing innovations about which you know (e.g., hydroponic, aquaponic, and vertical farms).

## 4. What is God saying to us?



- ✿ We need to make sure that Christ's imperative to feed the hungry is always possible.
- ✿ We need to remember and plan for both current and future generations.
- ✿ **Ecological Sin: Gluttony**  
Gluttony, often defined as over-eating and drinking, can be seen in our epidemic of waste. Around one-third of the world's food is lost or thrown away each year. Pope Francis reminds us that *“whenever food is thrown out, it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor”* (LS 50).
- ✿ **Ecological Virtue: Temperance**  
*Laudato Si'* invites us to *“replace... wastefulness with a spirit of sharing”* (LS 9). We all must consume resources to survive. We can do so with an understanding that we are not the only ones who require those resources, and that taking more than our fair share will inevitably leave us with nothing.



## 5. What can we do for Lent this week?

- ✗ **Healing Action: Eat and drink simply**  
Look at ways that you can eat more simply, such as striving to eat a local, plant-based diet. What are ways that you can also reduce waste in your household or community? Can you go without canned or bottled beverages this week?
- ✗ Be aware when shopping, every dollar we spend in some way affects Earth and Earth's people, flora and fauna.
- ✗ Fast from over-consumption. Refrain from shopping one day of the week.
- ✗ Use the money and time saved to pursue a hobby, build relationships, or support your community.



## 6. Closing



- Take a moment to save any thoughts from this session.
- Use the [Tangerine Meditation](#) in the **Resources** section of this booklet.
- If desired, listen to [Dirt Made My Lunch](#).





# Lent, Week Four Homecoming

“Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation’. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.” (LS 14)

## 1. Introduction

- Gather around the prayer space.
- Play or say one verse of [Sacred Creation](#):

*Sacred the land, sacred the water,  
sacred the sky, holy and true.  
Sacred all life, sacred each other;  
all reflect God who is good.*



## 2. From Scripture



**📖 First reading: Joshua 5: 9-12**  
**Psalm: Ps 32**  
**Second reading: 2 Cor 5: 16-21**  
**Gospel: Lk 15: 1-3, 11b-32**

## 3. From Laudato Si'

Watch the video [Healing the Land that Feeds Us](#) (7:10 min).  
As you watch, take note of your reaction to these images and words.

**Share reactions to this meditation and how Earth-care connects with our sacraments.**

When our Jewish brothers and sisters celebrate Passover, as when we come together for Eucharist, all eat and drink the "produce of the land". The bread and wine and other ritual necessities do not originate in stores, but ultimately from dirt. Healthy soil is also needed for our holy oils. Sacraments and sacramentals depend on Earth.



"Junk" food and drink damage the soil and our health. Overeating is a food hazard for people in some countries, while others face starvation. Obesity rates in the U.S. are among the highest in the world with an average of over 60% of adults being overweight or obese. What are some causes and ramifications of overeating?

Fasting and abstinence are traditional Lenten practices. We can choose to fast from foods that damage our health and our environment, and/or that increase hunger in countries that, e.g., grow grain to feed animals in wealthy countries rather than to feed the local populace.

In the Gospel of the Prodigal Son, we are reminded to "return home" this Lent to the right relationship with our Creator and all creation. "Prodigal" is defined as "spending money or resources freely and recklessly, wastefully extravagant". All too often we are prodigal in our use of water and other gifts of Earth - to the point of affecting the health and well-being of our planet and its climate. May we have the courage in our "homecoming" to draw us into healing and sustainable relationships within the Earth Community. We are all reminded to **reconcile with each other** so that we can continue rebuilding the Earth for our future generations.



#### 4. What is God saying to us?



##### 🌸 Ecological Sin: Lust

Lust is the inability to appreciate someone or something beyond its appearances, and to wish to obtain it because of its appearance. This sin cuts us off from forming deeper relationships with Creation, and through it, with God.



## 🌸 Ecological Virtue: **Self-control**

Self-control invites us to let Creation be what it is, rather than trying to shape it for our own wants. This virtue can help us form a deeper relationship with Creation to learn from its wisdom and appreciate our intimate connection.



- 🌸 Each new plant, blossom and flower is an unrepeatable revelation of the divine life living and acting in us and in our world.
- 🌸 What message(s) do you hear from them?

## 5. What can we do for Lent this week?



### ✘ Healing Action: **Pray outside**

Spend time praying outside to appreciate Creation as a gift from God, sacred in its own right.

Say a rosary, pray the **Laudato Si' Chaplet** (refer to the **Resources** section in this booklet) or listen to how God is speaking to you through creation.



- ✘ This week, avoid “junk” food and drink.
- ✘ Pray for those most affected by climate change – farmers whose livelihood is destroyed by irregular seasonal changes.
- ✘ Buy organic products whenever possible.
- ✘ Give a donation to an environmental organisation.
- ✘ Go for Confession. Reconcile with someone you may have caused hurt.
- ✘ Remember the hungry if any money is saved.

## 6. Closing



- Share any experience(s) you have had, or experiences of others, with people who suffer from hunger.
- Offer spontaneous prayers for those suffering from hunger right now.



*“To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God’s creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart.” (LS 218)*

## 1. Introduction



- Gather around the prayer space.
- Play or say one verse of [Canticle of Creation](#).

## 2. From Scripture



 **First reading: Isa 43: 16-21**

**Psalm: Ps 125: 1-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5, 6**

**Second reading: Phil 8-14**

**Gospel: John 8: 1-11**

In the Gospel, we are challenged to **forgive**; perhaps we are also challenged to recognise and confront systemic sin and systematic wrongdoing especially to the damage to our Earth such as the mass destruction of trees.

## 3. From Laudato Si'



Trees play a vital role in protecting land, water, air and climate. Humankind’s continued existence depends on trees. Trees “inhale” our carbon dioxide and “exhale” oxygen, thus purifying our air and reducing the rate of climate change. Trees provide food and habitat for humans, birds and animals; they provide medicines, absorb noise, and give shade; they inspire prayer and poetry; they teach us lessons about time, endurance, death and new life.





Planting and replanting trees engenders hope for the future. Studies show that fewer crimes are reported in “green” areas, possibly because vegetation alleviates mental fatigue and promotes a sense of community. How we use paper is one way to show reverence for God’s gift of trees. Don't print unless you need to and when you do, print on both sides of sustainable paper.

Recycling paper is important, but it will end in a landfill or incinerator (both bad for Earth) unless we purchase the products made from it: paper, tissue and toilet paper. Use wood that is recycled. Every 500 reams of recycled office paper used instead of virgin paper saves 20 trees and 523 cubic feet of landfill space.



Tropical deforestation causes more global warming pollution than the total emissions of every car, truck, plane, ship and train on Earth! Deforestation causes both drought and landslides. We can also support international agreements and legislation necessary to prevent deforestation.

## 4. What is God saying to us?



### ⚙️ Ecological Sin: **Greed**

Greed traps us into following a “*use and throw away*’ logic... because of the *disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary*” (LS 123). Greed breaks us away from being responsible for our own consumption, and from understanding the Earth’s limitations.

### ⚙️ Ecological Virtue: **Charity**

*Laudato Si'* reminds us that social love is a form of charity. “*Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals, but also ‘macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones’.*” (LS 231).

- ✿ God speaks to us in nature. Oils trace their life to trees.
- ✿ On Holy Thursday, bishops bless Holy Oils that are used for the celebration of the sacraments throughout the year. Oils are also used in daily life.
- ✿ Consider the benefits of oil and why they are part of the rituals for Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick.



## 5. What can we do for Lent this week?



- ✗ **Healing Action: Social love**  
How might you engage in a charitable act for the common good? Identify a local group engaging in caring for creation, and find a way to support them.
- ✗ Take a few moments to breathe deeply and become aware of the communion of air shared by all breathing things.
- ✗ Talk to a friend, family member, co-worker about what it has meant to you to live Lent with *Laudato Si'*.
- ✗ Reflect reverently on every cross, crucifix and tree you see this week, and especially on Good Friday.

## 6. Closing



- One person reads from Scripture or any book containing a section on Good Friday, while each member in turn reverently anoints the corpus and kisses the crucifix.
- When the group finishes, everyone says together:  
*We bless you, O Christ, and we are grateful,  
because by your holy cross  
you emptied yourself out completely  
so that love could be shared without limit.  
May we too, give of ourselves even when  
doing so might lead to suffering. Amen.*







⚙️ **[Encyclical Letter \*Laudato Si'\*](#) of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home**

⚙️ **[Overview of \*Laudato Si'\*](#)**

⚙️ **[Touch the Earth](#) chorus:**

*Touch the earth with gentleness, touch the earth with love,  
touch her with a future by the way you live today.  
God has given us the power to create the world anew  
if we touch the earth, together, me and you.*

⚙️ **A children's song:**

[Dirt Made My Lunch](#) by Mary Miche

⚙️ **A thought-provoking poem:**

[I Ate the Cosmos for Breakfast](#), in book by same name,  
by Melissa Studdard (2014, St. Julian Press)

⚙️ **Beautiful and informative information and photos about seeds:**

[thesouloftheearth.com](http://thesouloftheearth.com)

Go to Journals and see any of the three on seeds:  
The brilliance of seeds / The toxic gamble: genetically engineered  
seeds / Saving seeds

⚙️ **Video on Carbon Pollution:**

[The Cost of Carbon](#) (3:26 min)

<http://climaterealityproject.org/the-price-of-carbon/>

## Tangerine Meditation



While [Touch the Earth](#) or similar song plays, each takes a napkin and an organic peelable fruit from the table. Do not peel it yet.

### Read quietly:

This fruit is the result of dirt, water, air, the labour of multiple forms of life, farmers and pickers. Look carefully at this piece of fruit. Feel and see its texture, note its colours, and any distinguishing features. Follow its story back to the seventeenth century, when Galileo Galilei wrote the following words:

*"What greater stupidity can be imagined than that of calling jewels, silver, and gold "precious," and earth and soil "base"? People who do this ought to remember that if there were as great a scarcity of soil as of jewels or precious metals there would not be a prince who would not spend a bushel of diamonds and rubies and a cartload of jewels just to have enough earth to plant a jasmine in a little pot, or to sow an orange seed and watch it sprout, grow, and produce its handsome leaves, its fragrant flowers, and fine fruit."*

Fruit dates to about 130 - 100 million years ago when fruit first blossomed and diversified on Earth. (It, too, started with stardust.) Picture the tree, bush, or plant from which it came, and the land on which it grew.

Imagine the blossoms of your fruit in the sunshine and in the rain. See the petals falling down and the tiny green fruit appearing. The sunshine and the rain continue, and the tiny fruit grows. When ripe, someone picks it, probably a migrant worker. While considering the life of those workers, continue examining your whole fruit with gratitude.

### Leader reads the following:

Think gratefully of the people who have handled this fruit. Peel it slowly, noticing the mist and the fragrance. Study the internal structure. Now begin to eat, reverently. Eating the blessed earth is no ordinary thing! Savour each bite. Reflect on how this fruit will become part of you, and how we are affected by the quality of soil, water and atmosphere that fed it.

### End together:

*We give you thanks, loving Source of All Life, for the gift of this fruit,  
for all food, for those who grow and harvest it.  
Thank you for your presence, living and acting in us and all our world.  
May we deepen our awareness and appreciation of your presence  
and how all creation is interconnected. Amen.*



Note: It is recommended to pray the Chaplet outdoors and with a Rosary at hand. Silent spots immersed in nature are ideal, but it could be prayed in an urban setting with natural elements at sight. It can be prayed in a group (e.g. in a *Laudato Si'* Circle) or alone, and it can be combined with other prayer forms.

- **Introductory song of praise.** Some options: 1) [Laudate Omnes Gentes](#), 2) [Laudate Dominum](#), 3) Hallelujah (any version), or 4) any creation-themed hymn.
- **[Optional] Cantic of the Creatures:** pray the Cantic and, if the group is praying the Chaplet for the first time, introduce the themes of 'Praise' and 'Universal Fraternity' (see at the end of this Chaplet).
- **Laudato Si' Chaplet - The Praise verses:** pray the verses from the Cantic that praise God through the 4 elements , 10 times each (following the Rosary beads). As an optional thing, a short reflection or guided sensorial exercise could introduce each of the 4 elements.
  - **Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Air.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
- **[Optional] Laudato Si' Chaplet extension #1 - The Gratitude verses:** prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gifts of the 4 elements and all Creation:
  - **Thank you, my Lord, through Sister Air.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Thank you, my Lord, through Sister Water.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Thank you, my Lord, through Brother Fire.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
  - **Thank you, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth.** X10  
*Laudato Si chorus*
- **Contemplation of Creation:** spend a minimum of 5 minutes (ideally 10 or 15 minutes) in silence, inviting participants to listen to God's message in Creation.
- **Closing prayer and/or song:** could be an Our Father or the "Prayer for our Earth" from *Laudato Si'*; and/or one of the songs suggested above for the introduction.



## BACKGROUND ON THE *Laudato Si'* CHAPLET

The *Laudato Si'* Chaplet is a simple prayer technique to pray with creation, inspired by the Canticle of the Creatures of St Francis of Assisi. The Chaplet is meant to nourish and foster our 'ecological conversion' by:

- Developing spiritual attitudes of praise and gratitude towards God the Creator, and a sense of universal fraternity with all of Creation,
- Enhancing our capacity to contemplate the beauty of Creation with awe and wonder,
- Deepening interior peace and our relationship with God the Creator.

Ultimately, this “*ecological spirituality [will] motivate us to a more passionate concern for the protection of our world*” (LS 216).

## INTRODUCING THE CHAPLET TO OTHERS

If you were to introduce the Chaplet to other people (e.g. in a *Laudato Si'* Retreat), it is suggested that you provide some additional background about the importance of each of the 3 spiritual attitudes that are present in the chaplet. The *Laudato Si'* encyclical offers fabulous quotes to do such a thing.

- **Spiritual attitude #1:**
  - “*When we can see God reflected in all that exists, our hearts are moved to praise the Lord for all his creatures and to worship him in union with them.*” (LS 87)
  - “*The world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise*” (LS 12)
  - “*The Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator... They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created” (Ps 148:3-5)*” (LS 72).
- **Spiritual attitude #2: Universal Fraternity**
  - “[*St Francis*] response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a ‘brother’ or ‘sister’ united to him by bonds of affection.” (LS 11)
  - “*If we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters.*” (LS 11)
  - “*As part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect.*” (LS 89)

If you were to pray the “Gratitude verses” of the Chaplet, then you can use the following quotes to introduce the spiritual attitude of Gratitude:

- **Spiritual attitude #3: Gratitude**

- *“In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature”... Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all.” (LS 76)*
- *“This conversion ... entails gratitude and gratuitousness, a recognition that the world is God’s loving gift, and that we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in self-sacrifice and good works” (LS 220)*
- *“Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life ... a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us.” (LS 222)*

A vibrant, sunlit field of dandelions in full bloom. The foreground is filled with numerous white, fluffy dandelion heads on green stems, interspersed with blades of grass. The background is a soft-focus expanse of green foliage, with a bright, glowing sun in the upper right corner creating a warm, golden light and lens flare effect. The overall scene is peaceful and celebratory, evoking the spirit of spring and Easter.

*From Cosmic Dust  
to an Easter Garden*