

LENTEN REFLECTION 2020: REPENTING OF ECOLOGICAL SIN AND CULTIVATING ECOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Laudato Si' reminds us that "the ecological crisis is . . . a summons to profound interior conversion . . . which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change." (217- 218) At the recent Synod on the Amazon, ecological sin was defined "as an action or omission against God, against one's neighbour, the community and the environment." The seven deadly sins (pride, greed, lust, wrath, gluttony, envy, sloth) can be a way to examine where we have turned away from our Creator and creation. Below, each sin is examined through the lens of creation and is paired with an ecological virtue that can help us to restore our relationships and to live in sublime communion. (89) We invite you to reflect on one of these sins and virtues each week of Lent within your families, Laudato Si' Circles, or communities.

Week	ECOLOGICAL SIN	ECOLOGICAL VIRTUE	HEALING ACTION
Week 1: Feb 26	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 center, and thus harmed God's creation.	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 live in deep communion with all of life.	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 eat more plant-based food.
Week 2: March 1	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.	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.	PRAY OUTSIDE Spend time praying outside to appreciate creation as a gift from God, sacred in its own right. Say a rosary or listen to how God is speaking to you through creation.
Week 3: March 8	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.	GRATITUDE Gratitude is "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) How might we be grateful for what we have before us? How can we pass on the abundant blessings that we have been given?	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.

<p>Week 4: March 15</p>	<p>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)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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?</p>
<p>Week 5: March 22</p>	<p>WRATH It can be easy to judge or even dismiss others who do not share your same concern for Earth. Notice what thoughts or feelings arise when your efforts are dismissed or your perspective seems to be misunderstood.</p>	<p>PATIENCE However challenging, Laudato Si' calls us all to embark "on a path of dialogue which demands patience, self-discipline and generosity, always keeping in mind that 'realities are greater than ideas.'" (LS 201)</p>	<p>ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE Engage in one difficult conversation around your concern for the Earth. This might be talking to your community about an energy audit or divesting from fossil fuels. Before the conversation, pray for the grace of patience and listening.</p>
<p>Week 6: March 29</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>SOCIAL LOVE How might you engage in a charitable act for the common good? Identify a local group engaging in policy changes around the climate crisis and find one way to support them.</p>
<p>Week 7: April 5</p>	<p>SLOTH There is a risk of getting swept into the busyness of our lives that leaves us too tired or unmotivated to engage in solidarity. Pope Francis warns of this "globalization of indifference" and encourages us to live our lives responding to "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS 49).</p>	<p>DILIGENCE This virtue encourages us to be faithful in our daily efforts to care for our sisters and brothers and common home. We must confront the lethargy that can tempt us with inaction remembering that "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue" (LS 217).</p>	<p>COMMIT FOR THE LONG RUN As you enter into this holiest of weeks, ask for the grace to continue this journey of ecological conversion beyond Lent and the Easter Season. Identify one virtuous action to continue to live out your commitment to care for our common home.</p>