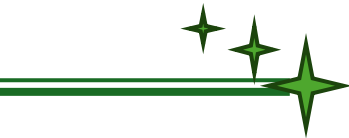


Ecological Retreat



on Laudato Si'

Dedication

To Pope Francis

In gratitude for his prophetic witness and pastoral heart

This Ecological Retreat on *Laudato Si'* is lovingly dedicated to Pope Francis, a shepherd who listened to both the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor. Through *Laudato Si'* and *Laudate Deum*, he awakened the global conscience to the sacredness of creation and to our shared responsibility for “our common home.”

His life and ministry have shown us that ecological conversion is not merely about conservation, but about communion—a rediscovery of our place in the great web of life and our call to live humbly, simply, and joyfully in God’s world.

Pope Francis leaves us a legacy of courage and tenderness, of wisdom rooted in wonder, and of a faith that embraces the entire cosmos in God’s love.

May his vision continue to stir our hearts to gratitude, justice, and praise.

“All it takes is one good person to restore hope.”

— *Laudato Si'*, 71

May this retreat honor his vision, deepen our reverence for creation, and renew in each of us the desire to live as faithful stewards of the Earth and of one another.

Ecological Retreat on *Laudato Si'*

A six-day journey of prayer, reflection, and action

Introduction

Welcome, Retreatant, and thank you for joining us (the IHM *Laudato Si'* committee and, more broadly, the world) in this six-day, self-directed journey to explore Pope Francis' invitation to "care for the Earth, our common home" in *Laudato Si'* and in his even stronger admonition to the world, *Laudate Deum*.

As Tomás Insua, leader of the *Laudato Si'* Center in Assisi, explains, the concepts of integral ecology and ecological conversion—embraced by millions worldwide—have not kept us from "racing toward the precipice." The climate crisis worsens (1). Science continues to sound alarms, yet too often its data is ignored, especially among the powerful.

As environmental lawyer Gus Speth once observed:

I used to think the top problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, and climate change. But I was wrong. The top problems are selfishness, greed, and apathy. For those, we need a spiritual and cultural transformation (2).

This retreat invites you into that transformation.

We proffer this retreat booklet as a guide to your exploration/consideration of the possible "transformations" needed in your life, the communities you serve/enjoy and the larger concerns of our "common home."

Each day you'll find:

- A passage from *Laudato Si'*
- A Scripture text
- A reflection for prayer and contemplation
- Questions to ponder
- Suggested practices to live out the call

May the spirit of Pope Francis, who now shares eternal communion with the Creator he so loved, inspire you as you begin this journey. His dream of an “integral ecology” is now entrusted to us. If we heed it, we may yet find a better world, a renewed Church, and a more deeply united people of God.

As Insua reminds us:

“Now that Francis of Rome has recently joined Francis of Assisi in standing face to face with God, let us honor their love for creation by uplifting their wisdom and turning it into action. The outcome is up to us.”

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1. Insua, Tomás, “Laudato Si’: A drop in the ocean or a powerful oceanic undercurrent? It’s up to us.” *National Catholic Reporter*. May 29, 2025.
 2. Speth, J.G. (1 October 2013). “Shared Planet: Religion and Nature.” BBC Radio 4.

Day 1 – What is Happening to Our Common Home

Laudato Si’

“Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it... For all our limitations, gestures of generosity, solidarity and care cannot but well up within us, since we were made for love” (LS 19, 58).

Scripture – Hosea 4:1–3

“Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes along with the animals of the field and the birds of the sky, and even the fish of the sea disappear.”

Reflection

In an article in the July 2015 issue of *America*, entitled “God’s Poor in God’s Creation,” Fr. Drew Christiansen, SJ, reminds us that *Laudato Si’* offers not only ethical and policy solutions, but also spiritual remedies. He proposes that social isolation is a source of environmental injustice. Healing comes through a vision of cosmic family: creatures of one God, called to live in harmony.

Like seeing a swimmer struggling, we are faced with a drowning world—the choice is ours. Will we ignore, delay, or creatively act—even in small ways—to help sustain life until others join in? No one of us can save creation alone, but together—with awareness, skill, prayer, and courage—we can help our common home breathe again.

Questions to Ponder

1. Have you allowed yourself to feel the suffering of creation?
2. What causes of environmental disregard do you recognize in yourself or in society?
3. How might you deepen your solidarity with creation and its creatures?

Suggested Practice

- Revisit *Laudato Si'* prayerfully.
- Intentionally follow news of environmental issues with a spiritual lens.
- Choose one concrete ecological action each week or month to integrate into daily life.

A Prayer for the Earth

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.

-Pope Francis

Day 2 – The Gospel of Creation

Laudato Si'

“Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures... Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes” (LS 92).

Scripture – Psalm 84

“How lovely is your dwelling place...As a sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for her young, my home is by your altars, my king and my God.”

Reflection

The Gospel of Creation tells us that in the beginning God gave us the command to cultivate and care for all He has created even to the least of beings. Throughout Scripture we are reminded that we are responsible for God’s gifts of the natural world. We need to protect it, share it with all people, and ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations.

Humans have increasingly lost respect for nature, for one another and for themselves. Our greed has polluted our waters and diminished our land. Our selfishness and indifference have caused increased numbers of poor in the world, an imbalance in society, and an unease among nations.

If God saw all of creation as “very good,” then we have a responsibility to sustain that goodness through conservation and renewal, through shared wealth and resources, and through respect for every aspect of our natural world.



Questions to Ponder

1. When have I been indifferent to the needs of creation or my neighbors?
2. What unseen bonds connect me to the “sparrow,” the “lilies of the field,” the poor of the earth?
3. How can I honor creation as part of God’s dwelling place?

Suggested Practice

- Notice the small creatures around you today (birds, insects, plants).
- Offer a prayer of gratitude for their place in God’s web of life.
- Make one choice that preserves or renews the natural world.



Day 3 – Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis

Laudato Si'

“It would hardly be helpful to describe symptoms without acknowledging the human origins of the ecological crisis. A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry... There needs to be a distinctive way of looking at things, a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm” (LS 101, 111, 115).

Scripture – Genesis 1–3 (select passages)

“God saw everything he had made, and it was very good... The Lord God planted a garden in Eden... Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized they were naked...”

Reflection

From Eden onward, humanity has wrestled with freedom, responsibility, and limits. Our misuse of creation’s gifts mirrors the ancient temptation to “be like gods.” Yet God continues to call us into right relationship—reminding us that creation is gift, not possession.

Transformation begins when we embrace limits with reverence and rediscover our place as creatures, not masters. Living simply is not deprivation but liberation: a way of restoring harmony with God, self, neighbor, and Earth.

Questions to Ponder

- What patterns of “more” do I struggle to release?
- Where is God inviting me to rediscover simplicity?
- How have I been transformed—or resisted transformation—in this call?

Suggested Practice

- Choose one step toward simpler living today (consume less, share more, slow down).
- Breathe a prayer of peace each time you feel hurried or grasping.



*May you content yourself with
little.
May you choose a less complicated
life.*

*Share freely all life's blessings,
and you shall taste well-being.*

*Live simply
so that others may simply live.*

~ Gandhi

Day 4 – Integral Ecology

Laudato Si'

“We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature” (LS 139).

Scripture – Romans 8:22–23

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.”

Reflection

Every heart longs to be made whole, to be freed from suffering, pain, and brokenness. As we wait and hope, we sense—sometimes clearly, sometimes faintly—that change will come. We may not yet see how, but we trust that “hope does not disappoint” (Romans 5:5).

The redemption God is bringing about will not always look like what we imagined. Yet what happens to us is meant for us: essential to our transformation, part of God’s work of restoring creation. We are never alone in this journey. Our groaning is joined to the groaning of all creation, waiting together for the fullness of God’s plan—until, at last, we see our Creator face to face.

Questions to Ponder

1. How can I be a sign of hope to those I encounter in ministry, community, and daily life when I witness despair, suffering, or brokenness?
2. Pope Francis insists, *“Everything is interconnected.”* What happens to creation when we neglect our common home?
3. How does recognizing this interconnectedness change the way I see the world and my place within it?

Suggested Practice

- Today, offer a concrete sign of hope to someone who feels discouraged.
- Pray in solidarity with creation’s groaning—perhaps outdoors, listening to the sounds of earth and sky—entrusting all of creation to God’s healing.

Day 5 – Lines of Approach and Action

Laudato Si’

“Local individuals and groups can make a real difference... Never underestimate the power of one.” (LS 179, 191, 193)

Scripture – Isaiah 58:6a-7

Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose...

Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house;

Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh?

Reflection

Movements begin with a single heart awakened. The *Laudato Si’* Movement itself began with small groups of animators choosing to live differently, speak boldly, and invite others into the journey. Change may feel impossible when governments and corporations resist, but “the power of one” multiplied creates hope and action.

Our call is not only to personal commitment but also to communal witness—to speak for the voiceless and to live in ways that ripple outward.

Questions to Ponder

1. How have I grown in my commitment to protecting our environment?
2. Has this commitment inspired me to act or advocate?

Suggested Practice

- Support legislation or local initiatives that protect the environment and the poor.
- Encourage one other person to take an ecological step with you.

Day 6 – Ecological Education and Spirituality

Laudato Si'

*“The Universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face. **The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul but also to discover God in all things.** St. Bonaventure teaches us that ‘contemplation deepens the more we feel the working of God’s grace within our hearts and the better we learn to encounter God in creatures outside ourselves’” (LS 233).*

Scripture - Genesis 1:31

*“God looked at everything he had made and found it very good.
Evening came, and morning followed...”*

Reflection

Ecology is the study of living things and their environment; literally translated it means the ‘study of our house’ ... my house, Planet Earth!

Educating myself and others ... nourishes and deepens **my** understanding and sensitivity to God’s presence in the life all around me... love and awe intensify. It is **God’s** loving “breath of life” in all things...what a wonder, this gift of Life!

Ecological spirituality, according to Patriarch Barthomew, “is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet” (LS 9).

Coming to the end of six days with God and creation a truth emerges: Becoming aware of the great wonder of God all around me can lead a person to a deep union with God.

“Love is awakened by the Creator of nature and is a power of the soul that leads it, as if by its natural gravity to its proper place and end...the heart of Christ” (William of St. Thierry in Dilexit 105).

Thoughts to ponder:

(LS 219) - Ecological conversion calls for a “personal” change of heart but also a “community change of heart.” How do I feel about sharing my awareness of God in all things, with others with whom I associate?

(LS 221) - “God created the world writing into it an order and dynamism that human beings have no right to ignore.” How do I feel or wonder about new uses of wind, sun, water...?

At the recent 10-year anniversary of Laudato Si, at Castel Gandolfo, Brazilian Environmental Minister Silva said, “It is incoherent: we say we love the creator and we destroy creation.” How does this statement affect me?

Suggested Practice

1. Spend some time outdoors in silence. Notice God’s presence.
2. End the Retreat by offering a prayer of commitment to live more simply and more lovingly in harmony with creation.





THE MYSTERIOUS OCEAN

The Ocean is all Mystery
Pounding, splashing, hissing
Rushing to shore.
Ebbing back to secret depths
Scattered treasures left behind...

Surface...sparkling blue,
Dull grey, green or brown
It seems all flat,
No interest there...

“Brave hearted” souls
Plunge its depths
Discovering new worlds
Teeming with life:
Aquatic kingdoms!

Life, at times, seems “flat” ...
But God calls us again,
“Go deep within,
Find my kingdom...
Meet...virtue, strength, beauty
Be moved by the current
Of My Love!”

Look forward to the day
You ride the wave
Slipping gloriously
To shore...His shore...

*In the spirit of Laudato Si', this booklet
is meant to be shared.*

Please return it when you are finished.

A digital copy is available via the QR code below.

