

Laudato si week: 16th to 24th May 2020

A prayerful reflection through scripture and the document Laudato si prepared by the Pastoral Development Office, Diocese of Cork and Ross.

Day one: 16th May

Over these days we prepare to mark the 5th anniversary of Laudato si – on the care of our common home, a letter from Pope Francis to all the people of the world offering us all an opportunity to reflect on the world around us as to respond to the signs we see around us – the joy of God’s creation and the sadness of the destruction of planet earth. We are called to open our eyes and to see how God is present throughout creation.

Laudato si is written to every person – not just Catholics – as a reminder of our interconnectedness to each other and to all of God’s creation.

Over these days we invite you to reflect with us on the story of Creation as described in Genesis Chapter one and on the six chapters of Laudato si as together we give praise to God for his gifts to us.

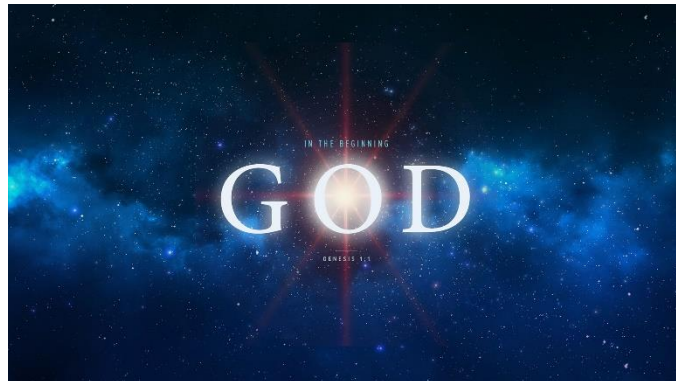


"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day two: 17th May

Genesis 1: 1-2

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Introduction

Opening the document Pope Francis reflects on the words of Saint Francis of Assisi who invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. Our common home, he says, is like a sister with whom we share our life and a mother who opens her arms to embrace us.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day three: 18th May

Genesis 1:3-5

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Chapter one

Pope Francis asks the question: 'What is happening to our common home?' How is our behaviour contributing to the destruction of the gift of God? We are living as if our human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is of greater importance than our care for this gift of God. We are making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly. 'We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and ir retrievable beauty with something which we have created ourselves.' (LS, 34)

"All of us, as
Christians, are
called to watch
over and protect
the fragile world in
which we live, and
all its peoples."

"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day four: 19th May

Genesis 1:6-8

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Chapter two

Pope Francis addresses this document to all people of good will – believers and non-believers – and yet in this chapter he specifically invites us to reflect on the biblical accounts of creation. Acknowledging the differences between science and religion and their distinctive approaches to understanding reality he invites the two, seemingly opposites, to enter into fruitful dialogue. (LS, 62) He reminds us all that we are not God, the earth was here before us and has been gifted to us by God. We must reject the idea that humanity has been given dominion over the earth and therefore domination over other creatures. Biblical texts, he says, must be read in their context.

If we read Genesis 2:15 we see we are called to "till and keep" the earth. 'Tilling' refers to cultivating the earth while 'keeping' refers to caring and protecting, preserving and overseeing the earth. These two words imply a relationship of mutual responsibility between humanity and nature. 'Each community of living creatures can take from earth's bounty all that it needs to survive and thrive but it also has a duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for future generations.' (LS, 67)



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Day five: 20th May

Genesis 1:9-13

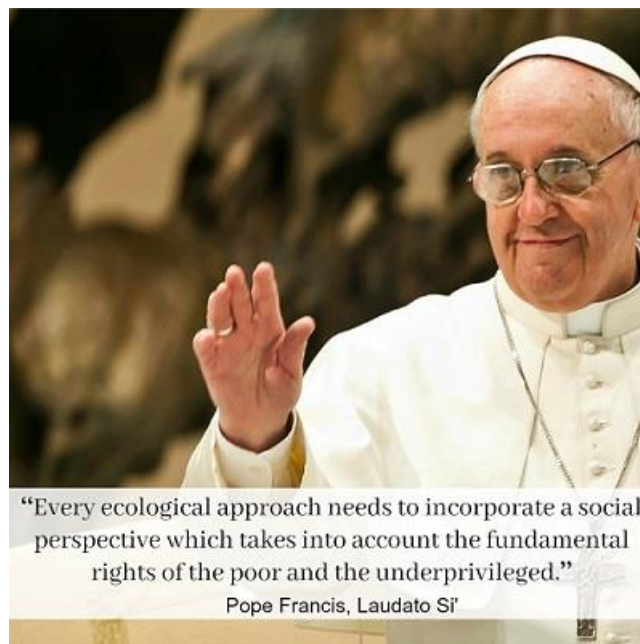
And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forward vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Chapter three

Pope Francis in this chapter speaks of the human origins of the global ecological crisis. Our understanding of how to live gently on the earth has been lost. We have to accept that advances in science and technology that lead as we think to more efficient living often fuelled by powerful groups and corporations are not cost neutral to the earth and on the lives of some of our fellow human beings who suffer the effects of our advancement. (cf. LS, 101) We need to learn once again how to live wisely, to think deeply and to love generously.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day six: 21st May

Genesis 1:14-19

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night: and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night – and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Chapter four

Pope Francis here speaks of the interrelatedness of everything and that because of this a vision for the future calls us to take account of every single aspect of life in this crisis – an integral ecology which respects human and social dimensions. We need to call together the different fields of study – science, economics, business, medicine, sociology, theology and more to have this open conversation leading to a deeper understanding of the problems and the changes needed to create a sustainable future. This requires an analysis of how humanity lives and works in the world today so that every individual sees and understands their connection to the environment around them. He says: 'what Christians need is an ecological conversion, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in the world around them.' (LS, 217)



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Day seven: 22nd May

Genesis 1:20-23

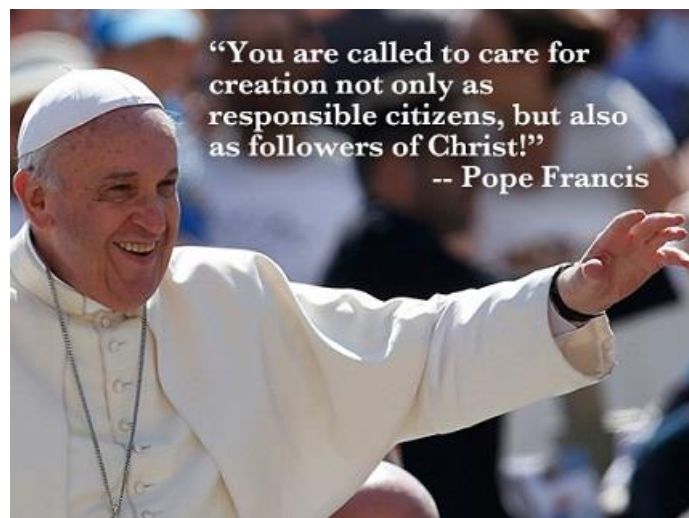
And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Chapter five

Pope Francis begins now to name desired actions for change which will help us to 'escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us.' (LS, 163) We begin this change by strengthening our 'conviction that we are one single human family' (LS, 52) 'brothers and sisters united on a wonderful pilgrimage.' (LS, 92) His call while to every individual is also strongly focussed on the need for a global consensus to confront the deeper problems, which cannot be resolved by unilateral actions on the part of individual countries.' (LS, 164)



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day eight: 23rd May

Genesis 1:24-31

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them.

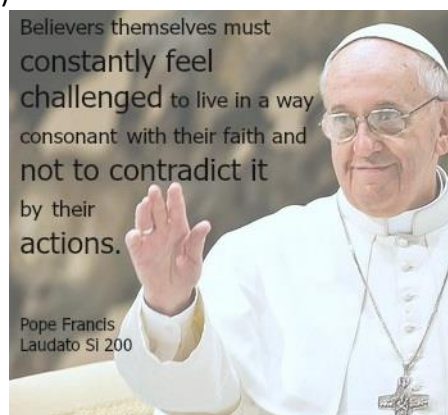
God blessed them, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: chapter six

Pope Francis calls us to conversion of heart and mind so that we cultivate a shared identity, a sense of solidarity with all our brothers and sisters especially the poor who suffer the most from the effects of climate change while contributing the least to the crisis. God has entrusted to our care a common home and we need to develop new convictions, attitudes and forms of life as we set out on a long path of renewal. (cf. LS, 202) He calls us to stop, to give thanks to God for the gift of creation, 'accepting each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full.' (LS, 226)



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Day nine: 24th May

Genesis 2:1-3

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Laudato si: Conclusion

We celebrate all of God's creation as we gather together as the Body of Christ to celebrate Eucharist – Pope Francis reminds us: 'it is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. The Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us all to be stewards of all creation.' (LS, 236)



"LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord".

Pope Francis invites us the people of the world to join him in prayer today at 12noon to mark the 5th anniversary of the publication of Laudato si on the 24th May 2015

A prayer for our earth

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.

A Christian prayer in union with creation

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence and your tender love.
Praise be to you!

Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature
in your risen glory.
Praise be to you!

Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts

and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you!

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.
Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good, advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you!
Amen.