



Day 15

We are half the way through our reflection. What do I better understand? How has Christ opened my eyes and heart?

Reflections

Are you enslaved to technology? How can you reduce your dependence on technology in your home and community?

Economies and business are vital to human life. How can we balance preserving the environment while maintaining a healthy economy?

How much do you purchase and use that is disposable? Can some things be replaced with repurposed or reusable items?

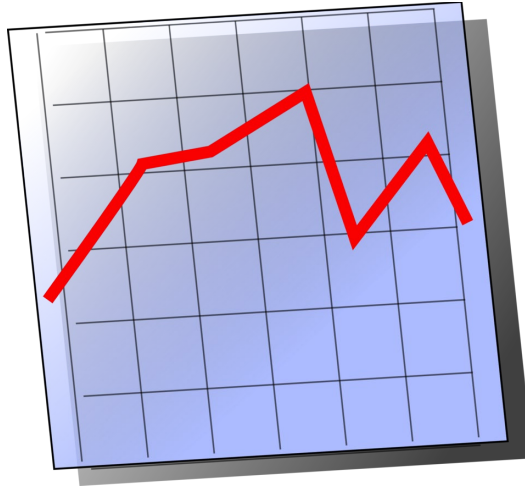
Pope Francis believes that everything is connected. If we do our part in protecting our environment but are unable to respect and value life, what will we have left?

Laudato Si: Chapter Four



Day 16

It may amaze some to know that there are many different types of ecology. Yes, ecology is the “study of the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop,” (138) however, Pope Francis also gives us four subdivisions: environmental ecology, economic ecology, social ecology and cultural ecology, to reflect on. Most of us are well aware of environmental ecology and the large systems that affect our daily lives such as the need for pure water, proper waste disposal, the elimination of carbon dioxide and other things that affect the ecosystems we all belong to, yet what about the other three? In the next few days we will look at these other notions, as well as how they affect our daily life and the lives of everyone and everything around us.



Day 17

“Economic growth, for its part, tends to produce predictable reactions and certain standardizations with the aim of simplifying procedures and reducing costs.” (141) One must not only take into account these economic factors without integrating the environmental impact they will cause. Cost effectiveness and profit cannot be separated from the need for environmental protection, there must be a seamless integration in the development process. In calculating the profit and loss of a method, process, etc. one must take into consideration the cost of human life, health issues and the cost of health care, human values and their interrelationships. This is the simplest definition of economic ecology however, if you would like to delve deeper here is a link to a “*CRASH COURSE*” in *Ecological Economics*.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d05jEprJxtE>



Day 18

As relational beings we thrive on community and interaction with others. We must realize that what we do in our part of the world has direct and indirect consequences on all parts of the world. Pope Francis gives this example, “drug use in affluent societies creates a continual and growing demand for products imported from poor regions, where behavior is corrupted, lives are destroyed, and the environment continues to deteriorate” (142). Social Ecology is an awareness of how institutions (from the family on up through international societies) make decisions and how these decisions affect the entire global community. We tend to want our immediate environment to be clean and pleasing to us, but what about the other side of the world? We should view all life as part of our community, as if the community was just over our backyard fence or across the street.



Day 19

As we look at the word “culture” we often think of the past and how traditions have been passed down from generation to generation. However, when looking at ecology through the lens of culture we have to be conscious of the cultural diversity of the world and not force a one size fits all fix across the board.

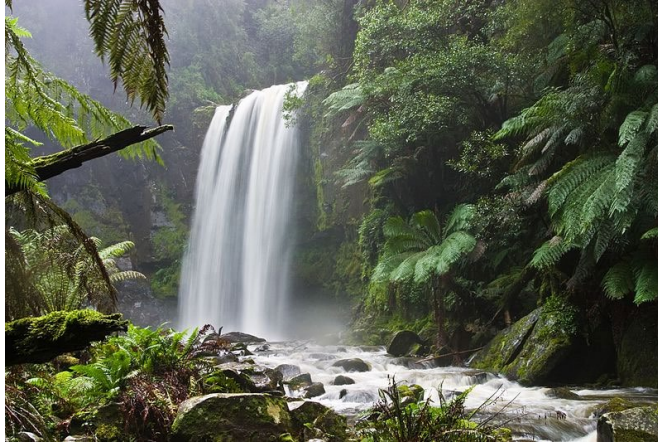
Pope Francis explains that the “disappearance of a culture can be just as serious...as the disappearance of a species of plant or animal” (145). It is vital to preserve the many indigenous lifestyles that exist and not replace them with technology or “uniform regulations” fostering the need for migration and displacement of these communities.



Day 20

When looking at ecology, from whatever lens you choose, one cannot help but see that they all point toward the concept of the “common good.” Pope Francis is calling for universal respect and solidarity with and for all human persons with a preferential option for the poor. He warns that the future and “doomsday predictions” are not fiction rather, at the pace the human race is going, all that will be left for future generations will be filth and despair. He emphasizes that the self-centered culture of instant gratification, impulsive and wasteful consumption, as well as the inability to think seriously about future generations is the roadblock to implementing the concept of an integral ecology (162). “Leaving an inhabitable planet for future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn” (160).

Laudato Si – Chapter Five – Lines of Approach and Action



Day 21

Pope Francis begins this chapter by stating that thus far he has tried to note the “profoundly human causes of environmental degradation.” In this chapter, he wants to outline “the major paths of dialogue which can help us escape the spiral of self-destruction which currently engulfs us.”

Today, let us reflect and list our practices to dispose our hearts, enhance our abilities and improve our skills to dialogue on any issue before we consider this one over the next few days.

Over many years, these three practices have proved helpful:

1. Start the day by reading this prayer: My God, I give you this time. Please give me the grace to conduct myself during it in a manner pleasing to you. Amen.
How do you dispose your heart for a day of dialogues?
2. Practice letting people finish their sentences! I grew up being interrupted and I’ve discovered that I do it to others. It has taken much patience but I try to listen and let people finish their sentences. How about you?
3. Let people have their own thoughts and feelings. Just last night in conversation with two friends, one said she felt x way and the other said, “No, you don’t!”. She just said she did!!! Long ago, I noticed my tendency, especially in difficult conversations, to deny what someone just said. How about you?

To begin this work on action, we need a heart disposed to dialogue.

What practices – what habits do you include so your heart and mind is prepared to dialogue?



Day 22

Pope Francis offers the image that “our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. Later, he references the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and acknowledges the lack of progress of the “enshrined international cooperation to care for the ecosystem of the entire earth...and the duty to assess the environmental impact of given projects and works (167).

Why are we reluctant to do what is good for ourselves and others? I wonder if it is because we think we are independent even though all of life notes that we are interdependent.

What is your practice to appreciate at a heart level that we are connected to each other and that what we do impacts each other? We seem to realize it for fleeting moments in national tragedies such as mass shootings or natural disasters. If you have ever been involved in a car accident, one learns instantly that one person ignoring a traffic rule can have a profound, sometimes, deadly effect on others.

In my daily exam of conscience, I’ve adopted the practice of asking, “How have I treated others today?” but I am going to add, “How might my actions have impacted another?”

What daily practice can you adopt to realize that “our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home” ?

I believe that to impact the larger issue of environmental justice, we need to develop a mindset of interdependence. How will you do so?



Day 23

The next sections of this chapter focus on “big issues” of national leadership and economic impacts so let us use today to reflect on how we respond locally.

The following three questions come to mind for me about local involvement.

1. I vote but how could I encourage others to vote?
2. I practice recycling methods but can I improve my skills to reduce, reuse, recycle?
3. I am involved with my local Council of Catholic Women. Can I propose that we schedule a speaker to educate us on these issues?

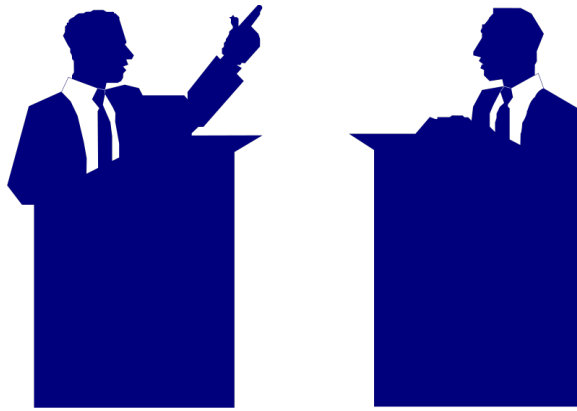
What resonates in your heart? What can you do in your community to help us realize that “our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home?”



Day 24

On this day, let us reflect upon the overarching paradigm as the Pope reminds us of the perspective to be “concerned about what they will eventually leave to their children and grandchildren.” (179).

In the prayers of the faithful, we pray intentionally for our local, state, and national leaders. How else might we consider this paradigm in our effort to adopt practices that instill in our hearts that “our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home. (p.122).



Day 25

Pope Francis concludes this chapter with a rich presentation on “Religions in dialogue with science”. The part that resonates with me is his inclusion of the Catholic Social Teaching of the principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power” (194).

In an effort to understand and practice this point, try to use it in family, volunteer, and work situations by giving people more freedom to design and complete activities and work as long as it works for the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity seems to be a challenge for national leaders. Let us reflect today on how we can integrate it into our daily life as an example of the belief. It may take some time for leaders to adopt it but if we can’t adopt it in small ways, it will be a challenge for others to adopt it in big ways.

How can you practice the principle of subsidiarity?

Laudato Si – Chapter Six – Ecological Education and Spirituality



Day 26

Pope Francis states: Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone. This basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal (202).

How are we to change? Pope Francis has highlighted a number of ways for us to consider this change in the life of human beings. Over the next 5 days we will explore some of these challenges and see what the results will entail in our lives and in those around us. The first thing that we need to do is an evaluation of our concept of the relationship between ecology and spirituality. Do we see a connection? Let's begin with a creating list and matching it with our prayer life. Are we crowded or is there space?



Day 27

As we live these last 4 days within the month's reflection, we will discover a change in lifestyle that could provide us with some newness in our approach to God in prayer. It is not too difficult to see that when we are crowded and filled with material items we have little to no room for God. Pope Francis reminds us that if we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behavior (215). So then, today, how are we going to make one change in our life style that will benefit and contribute to the ecological education of our family members?

We ask this question because the ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion (219). Hence, it is not an isolated individual problem but a global concern needing family members, co-workers, friends, simply everyone, to help make a difference. As Catholic women we are called to begin with our families. As nurturers in life, we plant seeds and we care for the growth of life.



Day 28

Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little (222). Through the years we have inherited a philosophy or mindset that more is better. Yet over the years we are realizing that this statement is not necessarily true. The more we have, it seems the more we want. We find ourselves asking do I need this or do I want this? We need to speak about an attitude of the heart when it comes to our needs and wants. Jesus taught us through the story of the lilies of the field and the birds of the air how we are to answer this question.

Pope Francis remarks about this when he stated: one expression of this attitude is when we stop and give thanks to God before and after meals (227). He encourages us to return to this beautiful and meaningful custom. This act reminds us of our dependence on God for life; it encourages and strengthens us and helps to put in perspective what is most important in life – that of our relationship to God, earth and each other. How often do we pause to give thanks to God?



Day 29

As we come close to the end of these reflection days, we are reminded of the importance of the Eucharist in our lives. Pope Francis stated: The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of life and motivation for our concern for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation (236). Are we aware of the change that takes place when we receive the body and blood of Jesus? When we attend Sunday Mass, it readies us for the week ahead. It helps us to focus on what is most important and how we share the grace of this sacrament with others.

The relationship between the Trinity and creatures is strong. We believe that God created the world, Jesus came to save us and the Spirit is with us always. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity (240).

What is your understanding of the connection between the Trinity and creation? How do you relate with the environment around you, both of earthly nature and divine? In what concrete ways can you live this relation with God and others?



Day 30

Today is our last day of this 30-day reflection on the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Si*. It is fitting that the final section has a focus on the Queen of all Creation – Mary, our Mother. Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world (241). Mary is the intercessor for us with her Son, Jesus. She knows the piercing pain of the sorrow, she knows the joy of the glorified events and she knows what total trust in the providential plan God has set forth for all of creation is needed. She gives witness to God's love for each one of us and for all of creation.

God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give Him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way (245). Mary gives testimony to the Lord of life, who loves us very much and is with us always.

In concluding, God has created all things and each one of us. How do we plan to respond to this challenge, set forth to us by Pope Francis, to care for our environment and of all creation? Within these 30 days, what changes have occurred, what needs attention and where do we go from here? May our actions give witness to the care for all that God created. Let us bless the Lord for all that is good.

As we conclude these 30 days of *Laudato Si*, let us pray that the minds and hearts of all are opened to the needs of our common home and trust in our Lord to inspire within us the desire for change and action.

Prayer for the 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.

Laudato Si
Pope Francis