

GOD
IN
ALL
THINGS



A LENTEN FAST

In [*Laudato Si'*](#), Pope Francis calls us to adopt a paradigm of integral ecology, which recognizes that concern for the vulnerable means concern for the environment and for every being in the cosmos. He writes, “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis. ... 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).

Considering the case of Haiti is helpful in demonstrating this link: According to [USAID](#), “If overall rainfall declines [in Haiti] ... as predicted, and as temperatures continue to rise and storms intensify, the yields of subsistence farmers will likely decrease, adversely affecting nutrition, limiting the ability of families to earn a living, and potentially impacting children’s ability to attend school,” these consequences exacerbate displacement (forced migration) and *restavèk* slavery (a form of child labor to which 1 out of 8 Haitian children is subjected). Pope Francis urges us to respond holistically to crises such as this, emphasizing, “How inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace” (LS 10)!

Unfortunately, ours is a consumeristic culture that prizes individualism and balks at the notion that one’s personal actions could be constrained by what is good for another. We tend to focus on limited facets of truth rather than opening ourselves through engagement and encounter to broader horizons and new ways of seeing the Spirit of God at work. In the words of Pope Francis, the popular cultural paradigm “drives one person to take advantage of another, to treat others as mere objects, imposing forced labour on them or enslaving them to pay their debts.” Indeed,

The same kind of thinking leads to the sexual exploitation of children and abandonment of the elderly who no longer serve our interests. It is also the mindset of those who say: Let us allow the invisible forces of the market to regulate the economy, and consider their impact on society and nature as collateral damage. In the absence of objective truths or sound principles other than the satisfaction of our own desires and immediate needs, what limits can be placed on human trafficking, organized crime, the drug trade, commerce in blood diamonds and the fur of endangered species? Is it not the same relativistic logic which justifies buying the organs of the poor for resale or use in experimentation, or eliminating children because they are not what their parents wanted? This same “use and throw away” logic generates so much waste, because of the disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary (LS 123).

This Lenten Season, the AMSSND Office of Justice, Peace, & Integrity of Creation invites you to participate in a journey of prayer and fasting for a conversion of heart and habits. As we forego some of the staples of our consumeristic framework to make room to suffer with others, may we experience a transformation of consciousness and begin to adopt the integral ecology paradigm, which “is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” (LS 230). Let us bear prophetic witness to “that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent” (SSND Directional Statement)—recognizing, with Pope Francis, that “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 [God’s] creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth” (LS 92).

Week 1

Refrain from making any unnecessary purchases, and try to purchase necessities that you [know are sustainably sourced](#), especially coffee, chocolate, produce, meat, fish, and clothing (products that have very high rates of human trafficking and environmental degradation). Donate money saved to a program that addresses human trafficking or environmental issues. ([AMSSND's Haiti Water Initiative](#) does both!)

“Replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing, an asceticism which ‘entails learning to give, and not simply to give up. It is a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what I want to what God’s world needs. It is liberation from fear, greed and compulsion.’ As Christians, we are also called ‘to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with God and our neighbours on a global scale. It 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)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For the sustenance and stability of those who are materially poor.
3. For those forced to migrate due to land grabs and related violence.
4. For those impoverished and forced to migrate due to others’ environmental irresponsibility, which exacerbates climate-related hazards that make land uninhabitable.
5. For the people of Haiti, for whom poverty and climate change-induced natural disasters make life increasingly unstable.
6. For victims and survivors of human trafficking, and for people who are especially vulnerable to human trafficking, such as those living in poverty, migrants, and refugees.
7. For an end to cultural structures that perpetuate waste, exploitation, and unnecessary consumption.

Week 2

Commit to [one action](#) that will lower your carbon footprint. [Learn](#) how pollution and climate change disproportionately affect people of color, and, relatedly, about the inequalities in [healthcare](#) access and outcomes in the U.S.

“Some forms of pollution are part of people’s daily experience. Exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a broad spectrum of health hazards, especially for the poor, and causes millions of premature deaths. People take sick, for example, from breathing high levels of smoke from fuels used in cooking or heating. ... Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture. Nowadays, for example, we are conscious of the disproportionate and unruly growth of many cities, which have become unhealthy to live in, not only because of pollution caused by toxic emissions but also as a result of urban chaos, poor transportation, and visual pollution and noise. Many cities are huge, inefficient structures, excessively wasteful of energy and water. Neighbourhoods, even those recently built, are congested, chaotic and lacking in sufficient green space. We were not meant to be inundated by

cement, asphalt, glass and metal, and deprived of physical contact with nature. In some places, rural and urban alike, the privatization of certain spaces has restricted people's access to places of particular beauty. In others, 'ecological' neighbourhoods have been created which are closed to outsiders in order to ensure an artificial tranquility. Frequently, we find beautiful and carefully manicured green spaces in so-called 'safer' areas of cities, but not in the more hidden areas where the disposable of society live." (LS 20, 43-45).

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For all affected by Covid-19, especially communities of color who are hardest hit.
3. For those denied access to green spaces and fresh air.
4. For those served by water sources contaminated by harmful chemicals.
5. For those living in food deserts, unable to access good nutrition.
6. For all who live without access to healthcare.
7. For genuine equity and an end to systemic racism.

Week 3

Cut out at least one additional meat-based meal this week ([click here](#) for easy plant-based recipes). [Learn](#) why plant-based foods are better for the environment.

"Each year hundreds of millions of tons of waste are generated, much of it non-biodegradable, highly toxic and radioactive. ... It is hard for us to accept that the way natural ecosystems work is exemplary: plants synthesize nutrients which feed herbivores; these in turn become food for carnivores, which produce significant quantities of organic waste which give rise to new generations of plants. But our industrial system, at the end of its cycle of production and consumption, has not developed the capacity to absorb and reuse waste and by-products. We have not yet managed to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them. (LS 21-22) ... We all know that it is not possible to sustain the present level of consumption in developed countries and wealthier sectors of society, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty." (LS 27)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For the health of our planet and its ecosystems.
3. For indigenous peoples, that their lands will remain a source of vitality and their wisdom will be valued.
4. For the migrant workers subjected to toxic conditions without recourse.
5. For small farmers at risk of being overrun by corporations.
6. For all workers who may be affected by climate regulations, that they will be empowered to find meaningful, sustainable employment.
7. For an increased awareness of how personal habits have global implications.

Week 4

Refrain from drinking bottled water ([here's why](#)), and avoid single-use plastic items such as to-go cups, straws, plastic stirrers, and grocery bags. Learn how [plastic pollution affects unborn babies](#).

“Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet *access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights*. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because *they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity*. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor. But water continues to be wasted, not only in the developed world but also in developing countries which possess it in abundance. This shows that the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue, since there is little awareness of the seriousness of such behaviour within a context of great inequality.” (LS 30)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For those without access to clean water.
3. For women and girls responsible for purifying tap water or walking long distances to get water to keep their families healthy and safe, which inhibits their ability to attend school and increases their risk of trafficking.
4. For people forced to migrate due to drought and other climate-related hazards.
5. For the health of our planet and the ecosystems affected by plastic pollution.
6. For the people of Haiti, and all communities and nations coping with climate-related disasters.
7. For the unborn and their mothers—that neither will experience the exclusion and marginalization to which their status makes them vulnerable.

Week 5

Attend a church service or other public event held in a language that is foreign to you. [Reflect](#) on the Church's complicity in racism; [celebrate](#) black Americans who are on the path to sainthood; [learn](#) about the links between racism and human trafficking; commit to listening to and amplifying the voices of those who have been marginalized.

“We are always capable of going out of ourselves towards the other. Unless we do this, other creatures will not be recognized for their true worth; we are unconcerned about caring for things for the sake of others; we fail to set limits on ourselves in order to avoid the suffering of others or the deterioration of our surroundings. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment. These attitudes also attune us to the moral imperative of assessing the impact of our every action and personal decision on the world around us. If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society.” (LS 208)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For an increased awareness of personal and institutional complicity in racism, and for an increased commitment to be anti-racist.
3. For an increased appreciation of cultural diversity.
4. For migrants trying to make a new home in a foreign place, that they will find stability and peace, and for host communities, that they will welcome newcomers.
5. For those who risk potential danger so that they can escape even greater actual danger, that they will be kept safe on their journey from those who would exploit and harm them, and that they will find everything they need for survival, especially clean drinking water.
6. For justice for victims and survivors of human traffickers, and for the conversion of those who would be exploiters.
7. For humility and wisdom to counter oppression and injustice.

Week 6

Contact your elected officials to advocate for immigration reform and urge them to take legislative action to address climate change, promote justice for immigrants through immigration reform, and improve access to healthcare, education, and housing in an equitable way. **Find your elected officials** – U.S. [click here](#); Canada [click here](#).

All people have “the right to live. [They have] the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, [they have] the right to be looked after in the event of illhealth; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of [their] own [they are] deprived of the means of livelihood. ... [They have the right to] enter a country in which [they hope] to be able to provide more fittingly for [themselves and their] dependents.” (*John XXIII, Pacem in Terris*, 11, 106)

“Changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.” (*LS 25*)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For families separated and in limbo because of current immigration policies of deportation, detention, and racial profiling.

3. For an openness to immigration reform in the United States that will open the door for many more immigrants to pursue legal citizenship, work, and residence.
4. For the people of Haiti, whose homeland is unstable due to climate change and historical racism.
5. For the government to begin to lead on climate change mitigation.
6. For the leaders of our nation, that they will make decisions based not on consumeristic and domineering habits, but on the dictates of justice and compassion for all people and the earth.
7. For a restructuring of economic and social systems that prioritizes justice for all people and the earth.

Week 7

Choose one or more habits that you will continue to practice after Easter to promote integral justice. Daily, reflect on what you've learned during Lent, and pray Pope Francis's "A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation" (*Laudato Si'*):

[Creator God], 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!

[Word 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 [Creator'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 [of us] who
possess power and money
that [we] may avoid the sin of indifference,
that [we] 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.