



School Sisters of Notre Dame
AMSSND JPIC Department



AMSSND Four Commitments 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,” all of which exacerbate displacement (forced migration) and *restavèk* slavery (a form of child labor to which 1 out of 8 Haitian children is subjected).¹ 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; it is a culture of relativism that denies objective, *holistic*, truth in favor of limited facets of truth. In the words of Pope Francis,

The culture of relativism is the ... disorder which 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. 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. We should not think that political efforts or the force of law will be sufficient to prevent actions which affect the environment because, when the culture itself is corrupt and objective truth and universally valid principles are no longer upheld, then laws can only be seen as arbitrary impositions or obstacles to be avoided (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 focus on the four commitments of our province (Sustainability and Access to Water, Justice for Immigrants, Ending Human Trafficking, and the Development of Haiti), may we experience a transformation of consciousness and begin to embody 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). While integral ecology is at odds with contemporary culture, 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

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1



Refrain from making any unnecessary purchases, and only purchase items 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 **AMSSND's Haiti Water Initiative** or another program that addresses human trafficking and/or environmental issues.

“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 untenable.
5. For the people of Haiti, for whom poverty and climate change-induced natural disasters make life increasingly unstable.
6. For those living in poverty, migrants, and refugees, who are especially vulnerable to human trafficking.
7. For victims and survivors of human trafficking.



Week 2

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Purchase only local and/or organic produce (in addition to continuing the fast from week 1).

“It is imperative to promote an economy which favours productive diversity and business creativity. For example, there is a great variety of small-scale food production systems which feed the greater part of the world’s peoples, using a modest amount of land and producing less waste, be it in small agricultural parcels, in orchards and gardens, hunting and wild harvesting or local fishing. Economies of scale, especially in the agricultural sector, end up forcing smallholders to sell their land or to abandon their traditional crops (LS 129). ... [In many places] productive land is concentrated in the hands of a few owners due to ‘the progressive disappearance of small producers, who, as a consequence of the loss of the exploited lands, are obliged to withdraw from direct production.’ The most vulnerable of these become temporary labourers, and many rural workers end up moving to poverty-stricken urban areas. The expansion of these crops has the effect of destroying the complex network of ecosystems, diminishing the diversity of production and affecting regional economies, now and in the future.” (LS 134)

A prayer intention for each day:

1. For a personal change of heart toward embracing an integral ecology.
2. For gratitude and wonder toward earth’s bounty.
3. For the migrant workers subjected to brutal conditions as they harvest our produce.
4. For the migrant workers subjected to human trafficking, lured by the promise of a job.
5. For children forced to work rather than attend school.
6. For indigenous peoples, that what is left of their lands will remain a source of vitality and identity – no longer an object to be taken.
7. For farmers, that their land will receive rain in the proper amounts.



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Cut out an extra meat-based meal this week (in addition to continuing the fasts from weeks 1-2).

“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. ... 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 21-22, 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 those who are forced to breathe polluted air, especially those in urban regions.
4. For those served by water sources affected by harmful chemicals.
5. For the preservation and flourishing of biodiversity.
6. For small farmers at risk of being overrun by corporations.
7. For an increased awareness of how personal habits have global implications.



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Refrain from drinking bottled water and avoid single-use plastic items such as to-go cups, straws, plastic stirrers, and grocery bags (in addition to continuing the fasts from weeks 1-3).

“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 forced to travel long distances to get water, which inhibits their ability to attend school and places them at risk of trafficking and child labor.
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 decimated by climate-related disasters.
7. For an end to cultural structures that perpetuate waste and unnecessary consumption.



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Attend a church service or other public event held in a language that is foreign to you (in addition to continuing the fasts from weeks 1-4). Appreciate the vitality diverse cultures bring to your community.

“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 appreciation of cultural diversity.
3. For migrants trying to make a new home in a foreign place, that they will find stability and peace.
4. For host communities, that they will welcome the newcomers.
5. For those who migrate through hostile terrain, that they will receive everything they need for survival, especially clean drinking water.
6. 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.
7. For those who seek refuge from inhospitable nations, that they will encounter justice.



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Contact your elected officials to advocate for immigration reform and urge them to take legislative action to address climate change (in addition to continuing the fasts from weeks 1-4). See below for suggested language.

“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 sweeping 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 increasingly unstable due to increased extreme weather events caused by climate change.
5. For the government to begin to lead on climate change reduction.
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.



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Find your elected officials – U.S. [click here](#); Canada [click here](#)

Suggested language for contacting elected officials to advocate for immigration reform:

- **United States**

Hi my name is _____, and I'm a constituent from [hometown]. I'm calling today to ask [Representative/Senator _____] to support humane, comprehensive immigration reform, which includes a pathway to citizenship for undocumented persons living in our nation; prioritizes family reunification; provides opportunities and protections for low-skilled workers; maintains due process protections within enforcement policies; addresses the root causes of migration such as global, economic, environmental, and social injustices; and implements effective and humane border security that recognizes the human rights of all people. I'd like to hear back from [Representative/Senator _____] on how he/she plans to pass meaningful immigration reform. My name is _____ and my address is [hometown address]. Thank you.

- **Canada**

Hi, my name is _____, and I'm a constituent from [hometown]. I'm calling today to ask [MP _____] to work for more just immigration policies in Canada, including an increase in the refugee resettlement targets (both Government-Assisted and privately sponsored); an offer to resettle, on an emergency basis, refugees who were approved for resettlement to the US but are now denied entry to the US (over and above Canada's refugee resettlement targets); suspension of the Safe Third Country Agreement with the U.S., so that refugees are not turned back at the US-Canada border. I'd like to hear back from [MP _____] on how he/she plans to pass meaningful immigration reform. My name is _____ and my address is [hometown address]. Thank you.

Suggested language for calling or writing to elected officials to advocate for climate justice:

- **United States**

Hello, I'm _____ from _____. I'm calling to urge [Senator/Representative _____] to support or introduce legislation that uses the scientific facts of climate change as a basis to protect both the planet and our health from pollution, global warming, and severe weather. Please fight to implement greenhouse gas emissions standards, and urge the President to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement. Thank you.

- **Canada**

Hello, I'm _____ from _____. I'm calling to urge you to support increased climate ambition. It is imperative that Canada increase its emissions-reduction target and end subsidies to the fossil fuel industry immediately. As a Christian, I believe that God calls me to care for and advocate on behalf of God's precious creation. That's why I want to see my government increase its level of ambition so that it is consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement – and to take immediate action to end subsidies that support oil and gas exploration, development, and production. I urge you to support an increased emissions-reduction target and accelerated climate action that is consistent with the Paris Agreement. Thank you.

ⁱ Climatelinks, "Climate Change Risk Profile: Haiti," USAID, accessed October 3, 2018, https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/2017_Cadmus_Climate-Risk-Profile_Haiti.pdf

