

From Pope Francis

Dear brothers and sisters, every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving. The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.

From 2021 Lenten Message

FASTING,

that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to “devour” everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts.

PRAYER,

which teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, and to acknowledge our need of the Lord and his mercy.

ALMSGIVING,

whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us. And thus to rediscover the joy of God’s plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness.

From 2019 Lenten Message

ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION IN LENT

At a General Audience in 2001, Pope John Paul II said:

It is immediately evident that humanity has disappointed divine expectations ... humiliating ... the earth, our home. It is necessary, therefore, to stimulate and sustain ecological conversion ..

The Australian Catholic Bishops in their 2002 Social Justice Statement wrote:

The Church hears the cries of the poor and the groans of the earth. It seeks to stand in solidarity with the poor and the marginalised, and to exercise good stewardship of the fragile ecosystems that support life on earth. Every day more Christians are becoming aware of their responsibilities as people of faith towards God’s Creation.

This growing awareness is also reflected in the teachings of the Church. Since the late 1980s the Pope has been raising social and environmental issues with increasing frequency and intensity in an important contribution to the development of Catholic Social Teaching in our times. These teachings can help us, as individual Christians, and as part of a Church community, to accept our responsibility to protect people and the planet.

We should practise simplicity, moderation and discipline. In the face of the consumer culture that surrounds us, this is a big challenge for each one of us. The principles of solidarity and the common good remind us that we are all really responsible for each other and must work for social

conditions which ensure that all people and groups in society are able to meet their needs and realise their potential.

As Christians we are challenged to analyse the social structures that force millions to live in squalor, burdened by crippling debt, while a tiny minority accumulate vast wealth from exploiting earth’s resources. We have a sacred duty to ensure that the world that future generations inherit continues to reflect the glory of God.

Laudato Si' in 2021

People who have not read *Laudato Si'* often think that it is about climate change. While it certainly addresses serious environmental issues, *Laudato Si'* continues what Pope John Paul II and the Australian Bishops have already named as

‘ecological conversion.’ Ecology is about relationships between living organisms and the environment in which they live. For us, it is about knowing our place within all of God’s creation.

In calling to mind the figure of Saint Francis of Assisi, we come to realise that a healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our

errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and de-sire to change. The Australian bishops spoke of the importance of such conversion for achieving reconciliation with creation: “To achieve such reconciliation, we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God’s creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion, or change of heart”

Laudato Si' 218



“The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast”. (*Pope Benedict XVI*) For this reason, the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. ... what they all need is an “ecological conversion”, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ be-come evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.

Laudato Si 217

A Lenten Ecological Fast

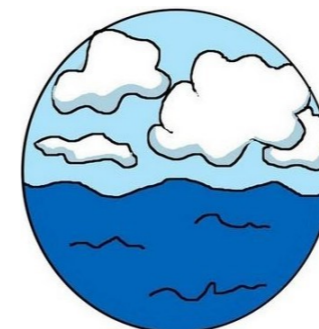
Pope Francis often refers to the ‘throwaway culture’, single use plastics and other quickly disposable items, at times can seem impossible to avoid. Although they are so much a part of daily life the damage they cause is immense. From the mountains of plastic waste sent from wealthy countries to impoverished countries, to the pollution of oceans and the poisoning of sea creatures who become bloated with micro plastics or die because of the ingestion of soft plastics to the burning of fossil fuels to produce single use plastics, the problem is huge. It can take thousands of years for these plastics to decompose, especially when they end up in landfill.

THIS LENT, CONSIDER A FAST FROM SINGLE USE PLASTIC

Because single use plastics are such a large part of our lives, this might be quite a challenging fast. This is not about being so overwhelmed that the fast becomes impossible. Begin by discerning what is possible for you and your family.

PREPARE

1. Take time to simply notice the single use plastics that are part your daily life.
2. Keep a list.
3. Set aside a container for plastic only waste and notice what accumulates.
4. Plan with your family for a plastics fast that is doable.



SOME SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

- Water bottles and caps
- Supermarket fruit & vegetable bags
- Soy sauce ‘fish’ containers - too small for recycling, place in a larger recyclable container
- Plastic straws and cutlery
- Plastic grocery bags
- Take away coffee cup lids
- Take away food containers
- Plastic cling wrap
- Grocery packaging
- Cosmetic ‘scrubs’ and micro products
- Bubble enclosed products
- Single use sauces
- Pre-packed delicatessen items
- Postage foam packing
- Plastic cleaning wipes

.... and many more items. To make the plastic fast ‘doable’ choose to fast from some items. Keep a record of what it was like for you and your family. Is your plastic fast sustainable beyond Lent 2021?

FASTING,
that is, learning to change our attitude towards others and all of creation, turning away from the temptation to “devour” everything to satisfy our voracity and being ready to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of our hearts.

Pope Francis 2019



A CREATION CREED

We believe that God creates all things, renews all things and celebrates all things.

We believe Earth is a sanctuary, a sacred planet filled with God’s presence, a home for us to share with our kin.

We believe that God became flesh and blood, became part of Earth, a human being called Jesus Christ, who lived and breathed and spoke among us, suffered and died on a cross, for all human beings and for all creation.

We believe that the risen Jesus is the Christ at the core of creation reconciling all things to God, renewing all creation and filling the cosmos.

We believe the Spirit renews life in creation groans in empathy with a suffering creation, and waits with us for the rebirth of creation.

We believe that with Christ we will rise and with Christ we will celebrate a new creation.