

40 Days of Pilgrimage  
with Pope Francis  
to Care for Our Common Home

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*with Pope Francis*  
*to Care for Our Common*  
*Home*

40 DAYS OF PILGRIMAGE WITH POPE FRANCIS  
TO CARE FOR OUR COMMON HOME

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## Introduction

Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, comes from a 13th century prayer written by St. Francis of Assisi called "Canticle of the Creatures," often referred to as the "Canticle of the Sun." The Latin title can be translated both as "Be Praised" or "Praised Be," which the canticle repeats several times to praise and thank God for creation.

Addressing his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, "to every person living in this planet," Pope Francis is appealing to us to enter into an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. He is calling us to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path.

How do we begin to walk on this new path? Undoubtedly, there are many ways of beginning the journey. One way, which this little book offers, is to enter into a "forty-day pilgrimage of prayer." Containing forty meditations—each with an illustration, a selected text from the encyclical, a short commentary and a prayer—this book presents us with provisions for the journey to help us reflect, pray, and explore the insights, themes, and challenges put forth by the encyclical, with the

hope of encouraging us to commit ourselves to act with sincerity and determination in caring for our common home.

We suggest that on each day of the "pilgrimage," we begin by begging for the grace to enter into God's gaze, how God looks upon us and our world with love and mercy. In taking each topic for prayerful consideration, we simply make available to the Spirit all of our spiritual faculties of imagination, intuition, feelings, memory, and thinking to help us come to insight, wisdom and understanding of God's ways—in our life, in our world, and in our planet.

Finally, we bring to mind what we have done for God and for the world, what we are doing now, and what we ought to do to respond to God's call for the sake of our common home.

May we experience God's presence and guidance along the path of our forty days of pilgrimage.

— *Judette Gallares, RC*

### Canticle of the Creatures

Praised be you, my Lord,  
with all your creatures,  
especially Sir Brother Sun, who is the day  
and through whom you give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;  
and bears a likeness of you, Most High.  
Praised be you, my Lord,  
through Sister Moon and the stars,  
in heaven you formed them  
clear and precious and beautiful.  
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,  
and through the air, cloudy and serene,  
and every kind of weather  
through whom you give sustenance  
to your creatures.  
Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,  
who is very useful and humble  
and precious and chaste.  
Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,  
through whom you light the night,  
and he is beautiful and playful  
and robust and strong. (87)



*Day 1*



## *Day 1*

“*LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore*” —  
“Praise be to you, my Lord.”

In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. “Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.” (1)



First things first and we'd better keep this always in mind: everything is a gift, everything is a free creation of God. And when we say "all," we mean "everything." Everything around us—things, animals, air, endless space. And we ourselves, everyone of us. We are all the result of the all-embracing love of God. Because love always communicates and creates life. And the love of God, eternal in itself, creates life forever. We could almost say that God does not know and cannot do anything but love.

Once this is understood, which is the most important and the basis of everything, then it follows that the first attitude of the believer is thankfulness. "Praise be to you, my Lord" because you created me, because you created us, because you have created this world. Because I am part of this world, it is my life. Thanks and praise are basic attitudes of the believer. — *Fernando Torres, CMF*

Day 1

3

Father God,  
you utter your eternal Word,  
and everything good comes to be:  
the air we breathe, the water we drink,  
the earth that sustains us—  
life itself in the vastness of space  
is your gift to us,  
surging forth from your love.  
Praise be to you, Lord and Source of all,  
for creating everything;  
praise be to you for your love!  
Thank you, our Lord and God,  
for all that were  
and are and will be;  
thank you for creating us—  
dust of the stars  
and sparks of your love.  
Amen.



4

Day 1



## Day 2



## Day 2

This sister [Mother Earth] now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she “groans in travail” (Rom 8:22). We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. (2)



Just raise your eyes and look around. The Earth is wounded. Scientists have been saying this for some time. Climate change, pollution, the depletion of natural resources and its consequences are not inventions of mad scientists. They are here and are seen. Only the ill will refuse to see it.

We thought that the earth, plants, animals, the atmosphere, everything was some kind of a bottomless well from which endless water can be drawn while we throw old stuff and waste without measure. We do not realize that our life, mine, yours—you on this pilgrimage—is not independent and apart but a living network, influent of the great stream of life. The life I have is our life, it is the life of the universe. Misstreating this world is to mistreat myself. Caring for the future of the earth is caring for our future, our own and of those who come after us. — *Fernando Torres, CMF*

Day 2

7

Our Lord, God of all creation,  
we carry the wound of sin in our being,  
and to alleviate the pain we suffer,  
we set ourselves apart from everything.  
Believing that we are the center of the universe,  
we have lost regard for anything around us but  
to serve our own selfish purpose,  
and satisfy our unquenchable thirst for more.

O Divine Wholeness,  
heal our fragmented self,  
that we may be one—  
one with the whole of creation and of life,  
one with you, the Breath of life.  
May we bring about not destruction  
but the renewal of life,  
not the end of what you have begun  
but to make the future  
you intend for us our present.

Amen.



8

Day 2





## Day 3



## Day 3

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. ... Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. (14)



Sometimes urgency prevents us from seeing what is important. We all know of it, but we keep on falling into the same temptation. When we talk about ecology and respect for life and Mother Earth, it is much more dangerous because we seek out the urgent: to survive from day to day. And we forget what's important: to care for life in the future, which depends on what we do today because changes in nature are not seen immediately, specially if we talk of changes on the global level.

So a deep dialogue between all women and men of all faiths, of all cultures, of all races, of all ideologies is necessary. What is at stake is not the future of a country or a people. What is at stake is the future of humanity. It is in our hands. In the hands of everyone. No one can remain indifferent to such a responsibility. — *Fernando Torres, CMF*

Day 3

11

Loving Father,  
you continuously utter your Word  
to sustain all that you have created  
and that we may have life.  
Let us perceive the whispers  
of your love for us in the rays of the sun,  
the whistling of the wind, the roaring of the waves.  
Open our ears that we may hear  
your footsteps in nature,  
that garden of delight you have given us.  
Teach us to listen to that life-giving Word:  
to hear your voice in our sisters and brothers  
who may speak a language different from ours,  
yet also echoes your eternal Word.  
Open our hearts that we may see  
your truth in others,  
that we may learn and understand.  
Amen.



12

Day 3



## Day 4



## Day 4

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 get sick, for example, from breathing high levels of smoke from fuels used in cooking or heating. ... Technology, which, linked to business interests, is presented as the only way of solving these problems, in fact proves incapable of seeing the mysterious network of relations between things and so sometimes solves one problem only to create others. (20)



One important thing to keep in mind: contamination, pollution affects the poor more. It is a fact, which people of the richest areas of the planet probably do not like to hear and find hard to recognize this truth. The rich cities, or the rich neighborhoods in many cities are cleaner, have more trees and one can breathe better.. There are too many economic interests at play in the most polluting industries. Sometimes it is not cost-effective to care for and prevent polluting the air, water and land. This leads most of those polluting industries to set up their businesses in the poorest countries.

Little do the rich know that such pollution is going to end up hurting everyone, even them. No wall can stop air, water, land pollution. They forget that however much money they have, what is at stake is our future, the future of all. —

*Fernando Torres, CMF*

Just and loving God,  
you breathed unto us your Spirit of life  
and sustain our life with the air we breathe.  
You let the sun shine on everyone,  
rich and poor alike,  
and gave us the earth as our common home. But  
some of us because of their desire for profit have  
deprived many of clean and breathable air, and  
in the name of progress  
have unscrupulously exploited the earth  
and covered our skies with smog and dirt  
that the sun no longer shines.  
Touch the hearts of those who head  
business corporations  
and awaken in them genuine concern  
for the poor and the less fortunate.  
Make us conscious of the fact  
that all of us are interrelated in the web of life  
where everything affects everyone.  
Let us care for our common home  
as it is as much a birthright of future generations.  
Amen.





*Day 5*



## *Day 5*

Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. (25)



It snows in many parts of my country. It would be better to say that “it used to snow” because now the snow has practically disappeared. Not only that. Something has changed that has made weather messier than before. Sometimes when it rains, it pours causing terrible floods. True, there have always been floods and typhoons and hurricanes. But now these phenomena have an intensity and a capacity for destruction, which they did not have before. That’s true. It is. And it cannot be denied.

They are the consequences of climate change. They are the consequences of excessive and disrespectful human activity toward the laws and cycles of nature. It is as if nature itself were stirring us to protest against the abuse we give it. Forgetting—we, not nature—that to mistreat nature is to mistreat ourselves. — *Fernando Torres, CMF*

Day 5

19

O God, Lord of time and space,  
the seasons we used to enjoy every year  
have become different and unpredictable,  
and we see ourselves more and more  
at the mercy of the elements.

Calm the ravaging storms,  
shelter and protect your children  
in areas devastated by natural calamities.

In the face of such grave climate change  
happening in our world,

touch our hearts, O Lord,

that we may learn to respect nature  
and contribute in our own little ways  
to lessen global warming.

Grant us the voice to make known  
to those in authority and leadership

that we are responsible

in caring for and treating the earth  
as our common home.

Amen.



20

Day 5



*Day 6*



## *Day 6*

These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish. ... 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. ... A serious consideration of this issue would be one way of counteracting the throwaway culture which affects the entire planet. (22)



How many mobile phones or computers have you had in recent years? Is it hard to remember? This means that every time you crashed such a device, you discovered with surprise that it was cheaper to buy another than to fix the one you had. It is called a culture of the “disposable.” If it does not work or is outdated, we throw it and buy a new one. We do it with things and, unfortunately, also with people. The problem is what we do with the waste. We are monumental waste creators. And we are gradually turning our planet into a garbage dump, unable to reuse what we waste: food, raw materials, equipment... —  
*Fernando Torres, CMF*

Day 6

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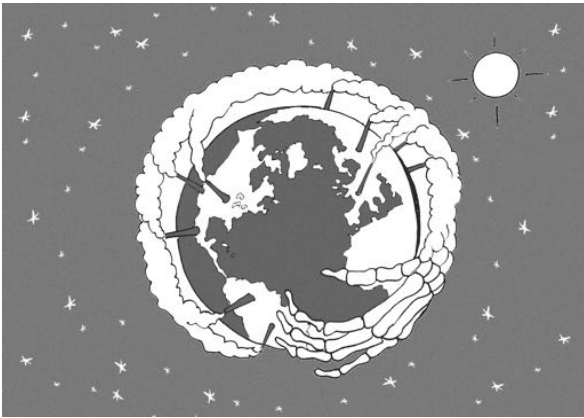
God of mercy,  
you have given us this planet as our heritage,  
yet we are easily losing it  
due to our throwaway lifestyle  
and our economic system  
that cares nothing for our planet.  
Have mercy on us  
for our greed and insensitivity.  
Help us to renew our lives  
so we may have the courage  
to turn against our wasteful ways  
and work creatively and sustainably  
to save our planetary home  
from total destruction.  
May the Word of life  
be the source of our strength and renewal.  
Amen.



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Day 6





## Day 7



## Day 7

The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all. At the global level, it is a complex system linked to many of the essential conditions for human life. A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. ... Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it. ... The problem is aggravated by a model of development based on the intensive use of fossil fuels, which is at the heart of the worldwide energy system. (23)



There are pundits on both sides of the debate on global warming, who are affirming, disputing or questioning its reality. The burden our planet is carrying can no longer be denied with the increasing incidence of catastrophic natural disasters. Climate change is the greatest environmental threat of our time, causing powerful storms, rising sea levels, sweltering heat, harsh drought, and punishing floods. It is threatening our health, communities, economy, and security as well as the existence of peoples and island countries. It is worsened by our misguided lifestyle and consumerist mindset that demand greater production from our factories. It is time to change our ways while there is still an opportunity, beginning with an awareness of our individual and corporate responsibility for life and for all of God's creation and urging us to act rightly for the common good. — *Judette Gallares ,RC*

Day 7

27

Gracious and merciful God,  
forgive us for adding to the suffering of humanity  
and the destruction of our planet  
due to our ignorance, carelessness,  
selfishness, and irresponsible lifestyle.  
Open our eyes not just to the beauty of your creation  
but also to the reality  
that with every gift you have given us  
to enjoy and to enrich our life  
is a great responsibility to care and to protect it.  
Teach us to discover new models of development  
that are not dependent  
on the overuse of fossil fuels  
but on harnessing creatively  
renewable and available means of energy  
that will provide enhancement  
and value to human life  
while at the same time protecting our environment.  
Always fill our hearts with gratitude  
for the goodness of your creation.  
Amen.



28

Day 7



## Day 8



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. (30)

## Day 8



The fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah begins with God's invitation to everyone, "Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come!" This reminds us that God has given us water, which is essential to life, as a natural and free resource. However, with the world's diminishing supply of water and a swelling demand for this commodity, satisfying our thirst now comes with an increasing price tag, with private businesses claiming ownership to and gaining profit from this vital commodity. This is a scandal that is systematically denying the poor of their human rights to have free access to drinking water. Confronted with this unjust situation, how do we as a community of faith promote the values of justice, stewardship, and sharing? What is our prophetic response to this life-threatening situation, especially among the poor? — *Judette Gallares, RC*

Loving and generous God,  
you have given us gifts of nature  
to provide us with essentials to life—  
water, air, the fruits of the earth and the seas.  
Yet we no longer see these as gifts  
but as commodities to be owned  
for profit and for power.  
You invite us to come to the water  
to quench our thirst  
and drink from your generous source.  
Awaken in us our responsibility for one another,  
by keeping our springs, wells  
and water sources clean and pure  
to provide all your creatures with water for life.  
Make us sensitive to the needs of the poor  
that we learn to share what we have,  
and work tirelessly for a more just society.  
Let all our human thirsts lead us  
only to you, the source of living waters.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.  
Amen.





*Day 9*



## *Day 9*

It is not enough to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right. (33)



Human being by eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil brought curse upon the entire land (Gen 3:17).

"Knowledge is power" said Francis Bacon. Technological revolution has given us enormous power of intervening, manipulating, and destroying biodiversity. We emulate the powerful wizard Saruman from Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings." In the name of all biodiversity, the tree-shepherd, Treebeard comments on human being's destruction of the environment: "He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment." We have become Saruman. Technology has replaced Magic, but the outcome is the same. "Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence" (LS 33).  
— *Piotr Krakowczyk, CMF*

Dear Lord,  
angels, sun, moon, stars,  
and highest heavens  
give you praise from the heavens.  
Yet our way of living  
has diminished this praise from the earth.  
Many trees, beasts,  
creeping things and flying birds  
cannot glorify you anymore.  
Because of our greed and blindness,  
they are all gone.  
Have mercy on us, Lord,  
and lead us to conversion  
before it is too late.  
Amen.





## Day 10



There is little in the way of clear awareness of problems which especially affect the excluded. Yet they are the majority of the planet's population, billions of people. These days, they are mentioned in international political and economic discussions, but one often has the impression that their problems are brought up as an afterthought, a question which gets added almost out of duty or in a tangential way, if not treated merely as collateral damage. Indeed, when all is said and done, they frequently remain at the bottom of the pile. This is due partly to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, communications media and centers of power, being located in affluent urban areas, are far removed from the poor, with little direct contact with their problems. (49)

## Day 10



When a friend from Australia landed in Dili, the capital of East Timor, I greeted him with the words, "Welcome to the real world." Ecological degradation and poverty are related, but only those who leave their comfort zones can perceive it. You cannot see a child dying out of hunger from a broadcasting center in New York, London or Hong Kong. It will not do either to pay a short visit to a poverty stricken area and report the story back to the centers of power. Join instead missionaries and religious in living with the urban or rural poor. You will know the world with no electricity, no clean and running water, no access to medical care and basic medicines, and you will be lucky to have two simple meals a day. Then, and only then, you will have something to say about true ecology that listens to "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." — *Piotr Krakowczyk, CMF*

Day 10

39

Dear Lord Jesus,  
you left the comfort of heaven  
to live among us.  
You exchanged your riches for our poverty  
and your divine form for our humanity.  
Your life was gift and giving.  
You emptied yourself  
to the point of dying for us on the cross.  
Give us the grace of following you.  
May we also leave our comfort zones  
and live among those left behind  
and forgotten by the glamour world.  
Give us courage to empty ourselves.  
Fill our hearts with your love  
and use us to proclaim  
the nearness of God's kingdom  
through our words and action.  
Amen.



40

Day 10





## Day 11



## Day 11

Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking of how the world can be different, some can only propose a reduction in the birth rate. ... To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some, is one way of refusing to face the issues. It is an attempt to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption. Besides, we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and "whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor." (49, 50)



Overpopulation is a myth. It began in Rome in 1974 when the Club of Rome published a fraud report, known as the Club of Rome Report. It predicted that if the population continued increasing, we would run out of resources. The aim of the report was to scare the world. It succeeded terribly in scaring but its predictions were all wrong. According to Population Research Institute, half the world's population has below-replacement fertility. The replacement rate is 2.1 per family. Many countries are dying, reporting more deaths than births, and many others are leveling off. For example, the average Latin American family has two children, Japan 1.3, Germany 1.4, and Italy 1.1. All of the developed countries have below-replacement fertility. Reduction in the birth rate will not solve anything; it only creates more evils, such as abortion, mass sterilization, disintegration of family life. — *Piotr Krakowczyk, CMF*

Day 11

43

Our Father, how we have fallen.  
Your first commandment was  
“be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”  
and children were always  
a blessing for your people.  
Fertility was prized and celebrated.  
Today, it is not so.  
We use birth control to destroy  
the potential for new life  
and see children as a burden.  
Fertility is seen as a disease to be avoided.  
You were always the One  
to open and close the womb,  
now we usurp your role.  
We have sinned, Lord.  
Give us again the grace  
to welcome every child as your gift.  
Free us from greed, gluttony, and selfishness,  
to let you be the One to decide  
the size of our families.  
Amen.



44

Day 11



## Day 12



## Day 12

Why should this document, addressed to all people of good will, include a chapter dealing with the convictions of believers?

I am well aware that in the areas of politics and philosophy there are those who firmly reject the idea of a Creator, or consider it irrelevant, and consequently dismiss as irrational the rich contribution which religions can make towards an integral ecology and the full development of humanity. Others view religions simply as a subculture to be tolerated. Nonetheless, science and religion, with their distinctive approaches to understanding reality, can enter into an intense dialogue fruitful for both. (62)



One day a Hindu teacher showed his disciples a sheet of paper with a black dot in the middle. “What do you see?” he asked. “A black spot,” they replied. “None of you were able to see the great white space,” concluded the teacher. This law keeps science and religion separate: to let one’s attention be anchored to one spot unaware of the expanse of light surrounding it. To exclude a part destroys the integrity of the truth. To separate is to distort. Respect of the real encourages science not to distance itself from religion (confusing reality with the empirically verifiable and excluding areas of reality which for science are unattainable) and religion not to confront science (thus sinking into the black hole of fundamentalism). United they can make the complicated simple without complicating what is simple. — *Juan Carlos Martos, CMF*

Day 12

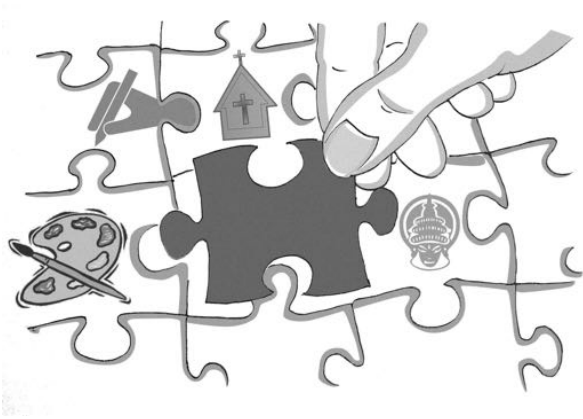
47

You created this world  
for us to live as sisters and brothers  
and we destroy it  
with our indifference and waste.  
You gave us trees and forests  
and we have slashed and burned them.  
You have given us time and beauty  
and we pollute and degrade them  
with our haste, waste and garbage.  
Time passes, Lord.  
It’s time to rebuild this house!  
Teach us to rebuild from the rubble  
with our work and our faith.  
Give us your present  
to start and not despair.  
Give us your future  
for us and for our children.  
Amen.



48

Day 12



## Day 13



Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality. If we are truly concerned to develop an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it. (63)

## Day 13



K. Popper, the Viennese philosopher, said that “our knowledge can only be finite, while our ignorance necessarily will always be infinite.” True ignorance is that which ignores this principle. The arrogant ignorant chooses to simplify what is complex. He or she is the real ignorant. They do not understand that to rebuild our degraded “common home,” a clean interdisciplinary dialogue is irreplaceable. It is worth emphasizing since some people make self-sufficiency a badge they proudly display. They forget that the wisdom of life is based on two certainties: that truth is one, but the ways to achieve it are many, and that truth is relational, not only rational. It cannot be reached by a loner’s musings, but by those who patiently search for it with others. The biggest obstacles to achieve it do not come from non-believers, but from those who refuse to dialogue. — *Juan Carlos Martos, CMF*

Lord, bless our hands  
that we may use them without possessing,  
give without reckoning,  
caress without offending.

Lord, bless our eyes  
that they may look and understand,  
admire and recognize,  
constructively see and with compassion.

Lord, bless our ears  
that they may listen to your voice  
in the cry of the suffering,  
and remain deaf to useless noise and empty talk.

Lord, bless our lips  
to give witness to you  
and not to hurt and destroy,  
to soothe and betray not.

Lord, bless our heart  
to give warmth and refuge,  
to forgive and understand  
to share pains and joys  
with all the love you give us.

Amen.





## Day 14



## Day 14

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word “creation” has a broader meaning than “nature,” for it has to do with God’s loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion. (76)



Our “common house” has been given to us as a home and not only as habitat. We people are made in the image and likeness of a God who loved us and, because of that, created us. Every person on this earth is his image—*sélem* in Hebrew, meaning “statue” It resembles God but it is not identified with him. It is not God. Although, like him, they create life, love it and care for it. By doing so, they recover the wonder of the child who awakens to life for the first time. That is not possible for the botanist who classifies, catalogues, preserves, examines... without wondering in front of so much beauty. Much less for the consumerist or software technologist. “To see things” and “to have the vision,” it is imperative to stop, observe silently and be aware of the one who is “pouring out a thousand graces, he passed these groves in haste; and having looked at them, with his image alone, clothed them in beauty” (St. John of the Cross). — *Juan Carlos*

*Martos, CMF*  
Day 14

55

Lord,  
may we hold your black hand  
for the earth to grow fruits of hope.  
May we hold your yellow hand  
that everybody may earn food with dignity.  
May we hold your white hand  
that buds of justice  
may bloom in all its branches.  
May we hold your red hand  
that all peoples  
of Africa, Oceania, Asia,  
Europe and the Americas  
grow under all the skies and across time  
fields of shared love  
and gardens of peace.  
Amen.



56

Day 14





## Day 15



## Day 15

Human beings, even if we postulate a process of evolution, also possess a uniqueness which cannot be fully explained by the evolution of other open systems. Each of us has his or her own personal identity and is capable of entering into dialogue with others and with God himself. Our capacity to reason, to develop arguments, to be inventive, to interpret reality and to create art, along with other not yet discovered capacities, are signs of a uniqueness which transcends the spheres of physics and biology. The sheer novelty involved in the emergence of a personal being within a material universe presupposes a direct action of God and a particular call to life and to relationship on the part of a "Thou" who addresses himself to another "thou."  
(81)



In Genesis we are told that God's first words are "Let there be light!" It is a wish and a command. The Jewish tradition teaches that (since light from the sun, moon and stars are created on the fourth day) this light is singular, unique and it is believed to be the creation of every single human being's soul. In that moment God called forth every person who would ever be, gifting them with a particular grace, an essence and soul. God is Light and we, the only creatures of creation who are made in God's image—we are made of light! We are to reflect God in our creativity, imagination, relationships and care for all the rest of God's expressions. And since Incarnation, God-dwelling-with-us, we are each summoned to be a word of God in the world. — *Megan McKenna*

Day 15

59

O God,  
Maker and Keeper of all creation,  
who abides with us,  
grace us with your creative power  
so that we will become  
all that you have dreamed  
each of us to be.  
May we remember  
that each of us speaks a word  
that describes you  
and invites others to be amazed  
at your goodness, beauty and power.  
May your Word  
that became flesh in Jesus  
who lived by the grace of your Spirit  
make us holy words,  
so that we can praise you, not only in words,  
but with our very presence upon the earth.  
May you be praised,  
Father, Child and Spirit, in us, now and always.  
Amen.



60

Day 15



## Day 16



Our insistence that each human being is an image of God should not make us overlook the fact that each creature has its own purpose. None is superfluous. The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning; we all remember places, and revisiting those memories does us much good. Anyone who has grown up in the hills or used to sit by the spring to drink, or played outdoors in the neighborhood square; going back to these places is a chance to recover something of their true selves. (84)

## Day 16



Our Jewish brothers and sisters have always believed that the first book that God ever wrote was the Book of Creation. When our God became human in the person of Jesus, he lived in what we now refer to as a biosphere—a segment of geography that encloses about 90 (ninety) square miles. The roads from Nazareth to Jerusalem are just about 90 miles! And we know that Jesus had places where his body and soul loved to rest and dwell. He chose Capernaum as a home away from home. He spent time in gardens and walking along the shore in Galilee. And it seems he loved being out on the water too! And at night he sought out of the way places alone with God under the moon and stars. Right here where we live there are places that reflect in some way how our bodies and souls are seeking wholeness now and we can go there and learn wisdom that we need. God is speaking to us in all ways here and now. — *Megan McKenna*

Day 16

63

O God,  
you made the earth  
resplendent with land masses and oceans,  
and then walked this earth with us  
seeing in every place and space  
the hand of your beloved,  
the Creator of the Universe.

You walk with us still.

With your Spirit—your Eye of God—  
teach us to see the earth we walk on,  
the water we drink and bathe and play in,  
the air we breathe in and out  
and the fires that are banked deep  
within our planet as where you abide too.

Help us with grace  
to dwell here with freedom  
and tender regard upon Earth  
as you dwell in the Trinity.

We ask this in your name.

Amen.



64

Day 16



## Day 17



## Day 17

People no longer seem to believe in a happy future; they no longer have blind trust in a better tomorrow based on the present state of the world and our technical abilities. There is a growing awareness that scientific and technological progress cannot be equated with the progress of humanity and history, a growing sense that the way to a better future lies elsewhere. ... It becomes difficult to pause and recover depth in life. ... Let us refuse to resign ourselves to this, and continue to wonder about the purpose and meaning of everything. Otherwise we would simply legitimate the present situation and need new forms of escapism to help us endure the emptiness. (113)



This segment sounds like we are living in a time of disaster. The word “disaster” perhaps tells us not only of our predicament but of the hope that beckons to us as well. It means, at its root—separated (dis) from the stars (asters)! We have lost our bearings, where we stand on the earth—and where we might be going. But all we have to do is turn our faces, our eyes and our souls upward to recover the depth and breadth of life, the vastness of the universe and our place. With our God and others; we have been entrusted with the purpose of making this planet a home for everyone and for our God, where all are welcome to life, lived ever more abundantly. Technology can seem to dwarf us but it can also invite us to knowledge and mystery beyond what we have “settled for”—let us look to the stars and once again steer by your Starlight that is reflected all around us/above/over and within all that has been created. — *Megan McKenna*

Day 17

67

O Holy Ones, the Trinity we dwell within,  
open our eyes and stir our souls to see you around us.

May we learn to seize hold  
of your presence and power  
that you share with us to remake our home.

We are told by [Meister Eckhart]  
that “the eye which we see you with  
is the Eye that you see us with”!

May we contemplate—  
the state of our universe and small planet—  
with a long loving look of gratitude  
and with a glance that imagines how you see  
all you have brought forth.

Open our eyes and our hearts  
so that we can use all our gifts of technology and skill,  
our understanding of science and human life  
to help all creation evolve with grace,  
with life and with hope for all.

All the way home to your fullness of life is home!

We pray always with Jesus,  
in the power of the Spirit to your Glory,  
as your children and beloved friends. Amen.



68

Day 17



*Day 18*



## *Day 18*

Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. How can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo, even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties? “If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of the new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away.” (120)



“What is man that you are mindful of him... that you should care for him? Yet you made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps 8:5-6). The human person, from conception to natural death, is the crown of creation connected with God and creation. Unfortunately, western mind which loves to dissect and compartmentalize reality, allegedly for clarity, objectifies everything, including the human person. The result is that subjects (human persons) are wittingly or unwittingly reduced to objects. This is often done for scientific research, but with little or no moral/ethical consideration. With such a mindset the fetus becomes a mere “thing” that can be readily aborted. With this philosophy, physically-impaired Beethoven would never have been born. Once we eliminate the mystery of life and begin to play God, we embark on the slippery slope of man’s inhumanity to man.  
— *Donald Reece D.D.*

Day 18

71

Lord of life  
and Master of the universe,  
we thank you for the gift of life.  
We recognize that in you  
we “live, and move, and have our being.”  
Give us, your creatures,  
a keen sense of this mystery of life  
that we are called to live fully,  
even without being able to understand it totally.  
May we always remember  
that you are the Potter  
and we, your sons and daughters,  
are the clay being molded daily  
into the likeness of your Son, Jesus,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
God, forever and ever.  
Amen.



72

Day 18





*Day 19*



## *Day 19*

It is troubling that, when some ecological movements defend the integrity of the environment, rightly demanding that certain limits be imposed on scientific research, they sometimes fail to apply those same principles to human life. There is a tendency to justify transgressing all boundaries when experimentation is carried out on living human embryos. We forget that the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development. In the same way, when technology disregards the great ethical principles, it ends up considering any practice whatsoever as licit. A technology severed from ethics will not easily be able to limit its own power. (136)



The ecological fabric must be inclusive of all that exists, so as to ensure the total well-being and balance of creation. Those who depart from this inclusive approach are actually shortsighted, for they espouse an ethics that safeguards the proper use of creation, without recognizing humans whose very inviolate position must be integrated in the total well-being of creation (cf. Gen 1:26ff). Caught up in their myopic view of nature and creation, they cannot “see the forest for the trees,” and so, they discredit themselves and undermine their own task as guardians of the environment. Life is an unbroken tunic of creation and is inclusive of every genus and species, each having its own particular worth and values, including humans in all stages of their development. Albert Einstein once said, “I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots.” — *Donald Reece D.D.*

Day 19

75

Loving God,  
you have entrusted men and women  
to care for the earth  
and to keep in mind the integrity  
of the environment for the good of all.

Help us, dear Lord,  
never to lose sight of your over-all design  
which has human beings  
as the pivotal point of care.

May your guidance and grace  
allow us always to see the bigger picture  
with the human at the center  
at all stages of our development.

Grant this through Jesus, the God-Man,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
God, forever and ever.

Amen.



76

Day 19



## Day 20



## Day 20

Human ecology also implies another profound reality: the relationship between human life and the moral law, which is inscribed in our nature and is necessary for the creation of a more dignified environment. ... Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology. Also, valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment. It is not a healthy attitude which would seek "to cancel out sexual difference because it no longer knows how to confront it." (155)



Creation is a given, a mystery in itself. The human mind can indeed attempt to understand the mystery, as it has already done in so many different ways for maximizing the full benefits of God's creation. However, it would seem that in certain aspects nothing can be changed, as for instance, the chromosomal determination of a person: either male (chromosomes XY) or female (chromosomes XX). With all the surgical alteration possible, scientists can never alter those "X" and "Y" chromosomes. The superficial alterations to transform perceived "irregularities" according to one's personal desires in terms of gender preference, skew the complementary roles that God intended: "male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Yes, there are instances of abnormalities, but scientific and technological advances should embellish rather than obfuscate God's beautiful mystery of life. — *Donald Reece D.D.*

Day 20

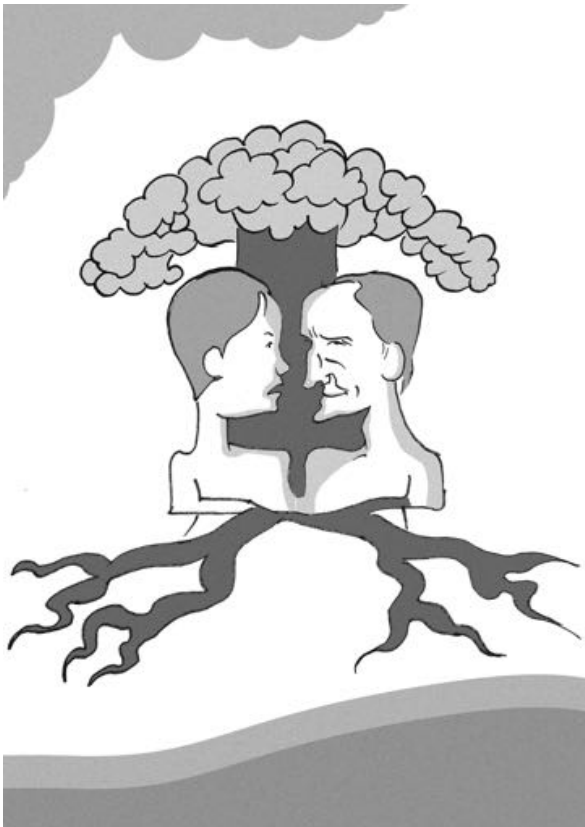
79

Almighty God,  
whose wisdom it was  
that created all things  
and by whose power  
all things continue to exist,  
guide your people according to your design  
for the furtherance of the human race.  
May we recognize that you are the source  
of our limited human capability.  
As we utilize science and technology  
to embellish your creation,  
we ask for the grace to recognize humbly  
our own limitation  
in being collaborators with you  
in the furtherance of all things  
true, just and good.  
Through Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.



80

Day 20



## Day 21



## Day 21

The notion of the common good also extends to future generations. The global economic crises have made painfully obvious the detrimental effects of disregarding our common destiny, which cannot exclude those who come after us. We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity. Once we start to think about the kind of world we are leaving to future generations, we look at things differently; we realize that the world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others. ... Intergenerational solidarity is not optional, but rather a basic question of justice, since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us. (159)



Chinese philosophy tells us that nature offers us joys and ideas. Chinese artists and writers always use the beauty of water and mountain as the theme and their source of inspiration. Similarly, Yahweh gave Moses the Ten Commandments on a high mountain. God also made his covenant with his people through a rainbow.

Environmental theology teaches us that God the Father created the world and we human beings are his stewards. We are tasked to take care of the world which must be shared with others and future generations. Jesus Christ, who accomplished his work of redemption through his death and resurrection inspired us not to be egoistic, but to respect the right of existence and development of others and nature. The Holy Spirit helps us to cooperate with each other in order to reconstruct and to perfect the world as good stewards.— *John Cardinal Tong, D.D.*

Day 21

83

Loving God,  
when you created the world  
with the skies, the seas, the mountains, the plants,  
and all creatures including us,  
your human children,  
you revealed yourself to us  
not just as Creator, but most of all,  
as a loving Father  
who cares for us and desires  
that we become one family of faith.  
Remind us of our call  
to be stewards of your creation,  
so we may protect and preserve our heritage  
for the sake of future generations.  
Through this legacy which we bequeath to them,  
may they ever recognize you as the source of life,  
and continue to care for the one home  
you have given us to share.  
We pray this in Jesus' name.  
Amen.



84

Day 21



## Day 22



Some strategies for lowering pollutant gas emissions call for the internationalization of environmental costs, which would risk imposing on countries with fewer resources burdensome commitments to reducing emissions comparable to those of the more industrialized countries. Imposing such measures penalizes those countries most in need of development. A further injustice is perpetrated under the guise of protecting the environment. Here also, the poor end up paying the price. (170)

Day 22



Global carbon emissions from fossil fuels have increased by over 16 times between 1900 and 2008 and by about 1.5 times between 1990 and 2008. Placing the same obligations on poor and rich countries regarding the care of the environment is not fair. Multinational corporations have “no face,” but generally they are from the more industrialized countries; while creating their products they pollute the environment of the poor countries, take their huge profits and go away, leaving their residues behind.

Common sense tells us that if we see a strong man fighting with a child, we cannot just treat both in the same way: we need to protect the weakest. The index of consumption could be a fair scale to impose measures to lower pollutant gas emissions.

— *Alberto Rossa CMF*

Day 22

87

God of mercy and justice, come to our aid.  
We are hurting with our planetary home.

Poor people and nations  
are suffering and over-burdened  
by the rich nations’ mindless overuse  
of one of your gifts—fossil fuel!

Awaken the consciousness  
of the rich and powerful of their responsibility  
to those who carry the burden of their greed,  
so that together with your faithful people,  
we may all learn to treat one another  
with justice, fairness, and compassion,  
to enact laws and policies  
that are fair and just for the entire humanity  
and sensitive to the burdens of the poor.  
Remind us that we are but stewards of your creation  
as we plead for the wise counsel of your Holy Spirit  
before we use your gifts communally  
with many others  
to repair the harm of human insensitivity  
with faith in your goodness and wisdom.

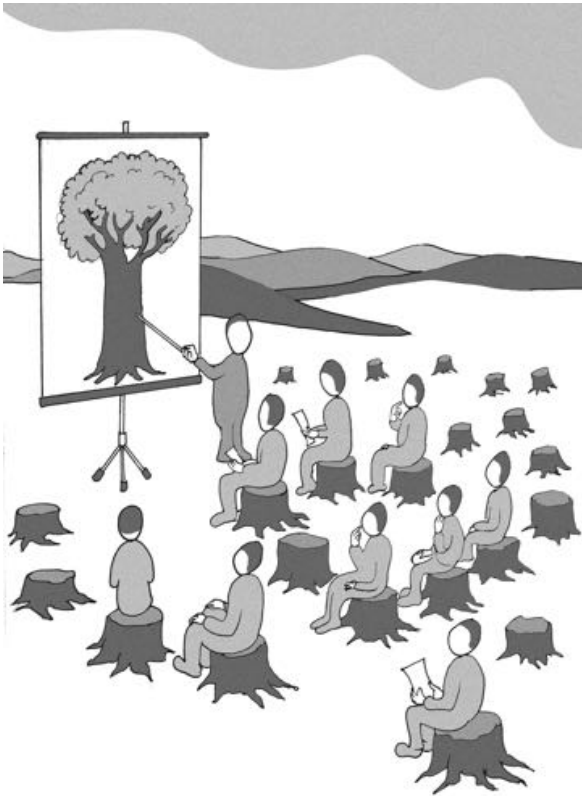
Amen.



88

Day 22





## Day 23



## Day 23

The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment; as long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. In a word, businesses profit by calculating and paying only a fraction of the costs involved. (195)



During his visit to Ecuador Pope Francis pressed his case for a new economic and environmental world order saying the goods of the Earth are meant for everyone and must not be exploited by the wealthy few for short-term profit at the expense of the poor. Profit is the lifeblood of a business. But according to the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 6:13), there is a bad kind of profit: “unjust gain,” driven by greed.

Biblical justice involves making individuals, communities, and the cosmos whole, by upholding both goodness and impartiality. It stands at the center of true religion, according to James (1:27), who says that the kind of “religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” — *Alberto Rossa CMF*

Day 23

91

God of wisdom, create us anew  
with a clearer vision of our purpose in life.  
Blinded by the allure of material wealth  
and the excitement of gaining greater profits,  
we have become unjust in our ways  
without regard for the poor.

Make us realize that our every word and deed  
affect the whole,  
and that we have the power to seed the world  
with good or evil by our every action.

The gifts of the earth are meant  
to benefit all of your creatures,  
but human greed and blindness have often led us  
to use and distribute your gifts unjustly.  
We ask you to soften the hearts of those  
who place personal or national gain  
above the good of the whole.

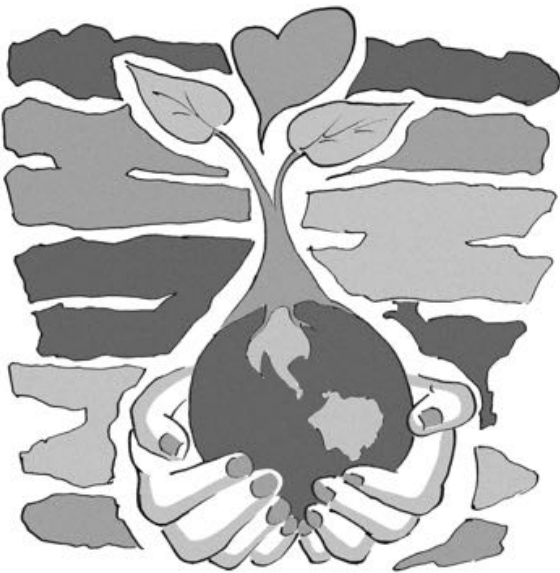
Help us find ways of preserving our common home  
to prevent the destruction of forests, habitats and soil,  
to provide clean air and environment,  
and to save species from extinction.

Amen.



92

Day 23



## Day 24



## Day 24

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)



In spite of the impressive progress humanity has made on many fronts over the decades, there still remains a long way to go as we all need to undergo a path of renewal based on our common origin and, as Christians, as children of God. Statistics about inequality are devastating: the richest one percent of world adults own forty percent of the world's household wealth, a total greater than the wealth of the world's poorest ninety-five percent.

St. John XXIII used to say: "Look at what unites us, rather than what separates us." Look to what we have in common. Unfortunately, there are people in our world today passionate to kill and to be killed: why can we not be passionate to love and to serve and bring equality among us? —  
*Alberto Rossa CMF*

Day 24

95

Generous and loving God,  
you call us to be stewards of your creation,  
and to be united as one human family.  
Yet in the midst of our fast-changing world,  
we have lost awareness of our common origin,  
our mutual belonging, and our shared home and future.  
You constantly invite us to change our sinful ways  
and to follow the path of renewal you set before us—  
a path that leads to peace, justice,  
harmony with all of your creation,  
and ultimately to you,  
the source of everything that is good.  
Instill in our hearts a passion for life  
that we may work zealously  
to restore respect when there is disregard for life,  
unity when there are divisions,  
and care when there is insensitivity.  
Renew us through the power of your Spirit  
to nurture a stewardship way of life  
marked by faith-filled prayer  
and service to the poor and the needy.  
Amen.



96

Day 24



## Day 25



Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending. Compulsive consumerism is one example of how the techno-economic paradigm affects individuals. ... This paradigm leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume. But those really free are the minority who wield economic and financial power. Amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction, and this lack of identity is a source of anxiety. We have too many means and only a few insubstantial ends. (203)

## Day 25



Harboring an illusion that we have unlimited choices is at the root of consumerism. It is a byproduct of the market economy. By successfully alienating the effects of our choices from the act of choice itself, market economy blindfolds us in duress to make forced errors to buy and sell things that would destroy the environment we live in. Does the environment factor at all in my little choice? Environmentally, humanity has few choices. Every choice in consumption, when it becomes responsible, limits its own scope to what is beneficial for the universe at large. It is time that we place an environmental care filter on our choices, not as some fleeting fad, but a lasting, permanent perspective of life. — *Jijo Kandamkulathy, CMF*

Day 25

99

Lord,  
Wisdom Incarnate,  
we are thankful for all that you have made.  
We know that you found them all good.  
We have misappropriated your goods  
and used them for our purposes.

Little did we know  
the ill effects of our thoughtless choices:  
the many who get deprived  
because of our thoughtless buying,  
the many who go starving  
because of our waste.

Teach us ways  
of running our affairs without depriving the needy,  
of choosing our buying and selling  
with a sense of responsibility to the world,  
of exercising our freedom with responsibility  
towards our environment.

Amen.



100

Day 25



*Day 26*



*Day 26*

When people become self-centered and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. It becomes almost impossible to accept the limits imposed by reality. In this horizon, a genuine sense of the common good also disappears. As these attitudes become more widespread, social norms are respected only to the extent that they do not clash with personal needs. ... Obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction. (204)



The transition of humankind from a well-knit social unity to highly individualized and loosely connected atoms has forced us to unknowingly adopt a self-destructive mode in our consumption patterns. Now that we are aware of it, am I willing to bear my share of the responsibility to shift to a safe mode of living? Somehow, the problem of environmental degradation is closely linked to the downslide of the communitarian living of humanity. The degraded environment mirrors the shadows of the collective human psyche. The key to the survival of humanity lies in developing a collective environmental intelligence.

— *Jijo Kandamkulathy CMF*

Day 26

103

Jesus Christ,  
you taught us  
genuine brotherliness and neighborliness.

Lord, we realize  
that our emptiness  
is caused by our distancing  
from the community and environment.

Teach us to value  
the common over the personal,  
the public over the private  
the communitarian over the individualistic needs.  
Lord, break down the boundaries between nations,  
prejudices between peoples,  
barriers between races,  
intolerance between religions,  
and help us to share our goods with everyone  
irrespective of one's nationality, race or religion  
so that we will cherish the environment  
as a common heritage of all.

Amen.



104

Day 26





*Day 27*



## *Day 27*

A change in lifestyle could bring healthy pressure to bear on those who wield political, economic and social power. This is what consumer movements accomplish by boycotting certain products. ... When social pressure affects their earnings, businesses clearly have to find ways to produce differently. This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act." Today, in a word, "the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle." (206)



The Holy Spirit is the great caretaker of the earth. And he cares for it in union with us. In view of environmental deterioration, God instills in our hearts an extraordinary resilience (LS, 205).

And so, we witness movements of people struggling against those companies and products that pollute. They do it by betting on another lifestyle. They are aware that buying is not only an economic, but also a moral act. These people's movements are able to block earnings of such companies and press them to produce alternatively. A new lifestyle influences in the great change that humanity needs today. And even if it doesn't appear visibly, it is the Spirit of God who through us is fixing the deterioration of the earth.

— *Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes CMF*

Day 27

107

Holy Spirit of God,  
you take care of the earth  
and enrich it without measure;  
but we—humans—especially those  
who only seek profit,  
neglect and strip away their wealth.  
Mobilize us,  
mobilize the Church of Jesus our Lord,  
for the coming of that ecological conversion  
that humanity needs,  
and in a special way  
in those individuals and groups  
responsible to protect the environment  
and not destroy it.  
Amen.



108

Day 27



## Day 28



## Day 28

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. ... If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. (208)

The Holy  
each of us with  
complementary  
internal and



Spirit works in  
a double and  
movement:  
external.

The Spirit makes us go into ourselves to discover our identity as creatures, sons and daughters of God. It makes us see that we are interconnected with the All. The Spirit expands our conscience and identity.

In a second move, the Spirit launches us outside ourselves, gives us the ability to “get out,” to self-transcend. If we are docile to his action, we begin to recognize the right value of every living thing; we put our best energies in the care and respect for all ecosystem, of all biocenosis, of all living beings. We avoid the suffering and deterioration of what surrounds us. We do not care, then, about limiting our desires, mortifying our greed. We discover who we are in the whole of the created world and try to share that experience with others who are striving to do so. We become agents of great political, social and economic alternative. — *Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes CMF*

Day 28

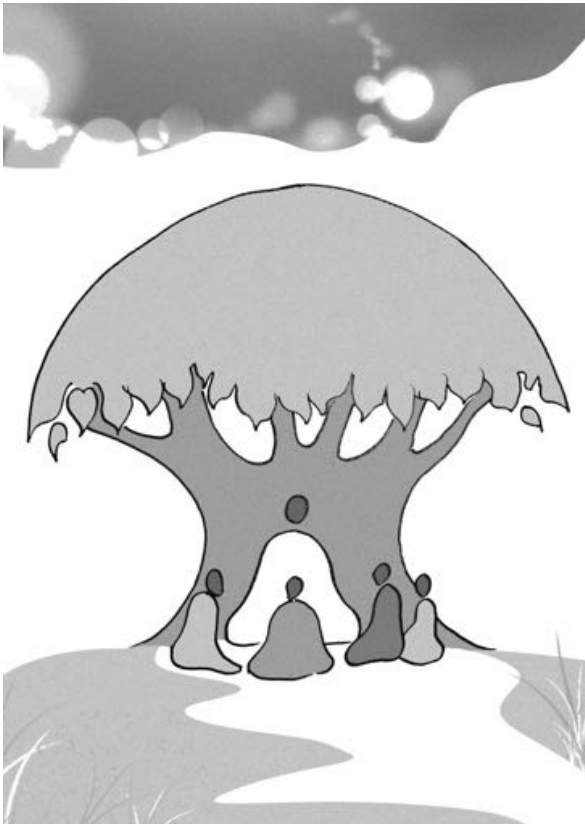
111

Creator Father,  
you so loved our world  
that you sent us your Beloved Son,  
pour out on us your Spirit  
to create in us that ecological conversion,  
which is so necessary to prevent  
the progressive destruction of the earth;  
expand our narrow minds  
and grant us to discover the new global identity  
that makes us all brothers and sisters,  
and makes us care for our planet  
as “our common home”.  
We ask this in your name.  
Amen



112

Day 28



## *Day 29*



## *Day 29*

Environmental education has broadened its goals. Whereas in the beginning it was mainly centered on scientific information, consciousness-raising and the prevention of environmental risks, it tends now to include a critique of the “myths” of a modernity grounded in a utilitarian mindset (individualism, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, the unregulated market). It seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God. Environmental education should facilitate making the leap towards the transcendent which gives ecological ethics its deepest meaning. It needs educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care. (210)



We are witnessing a major change in environmental education from information and awareness that aims to prevent environmental risks to the criticism of that mindset generating such a situation. It is a way of thinking that promotes individualism, competitiveness, greed, compulsive consumerism, a market without rules, the “myth” of indefinite progress. That criticism gives way to a new educational paradigm that leads to a new ecological balance: with oneself (internal), with others (solidarity), with all living beings (natural) and with God (mystical).

This new educational-ecological paradigm implies an ethics and spirituality, because it is open to transcendence, to Mystery. The educators that this new model require are mystagogues feeding on pedagogical and spiritual journeys, allowing access to such compassion for all reality that generate an effective solidarity, responsibility and care. — *Jose Cristo Rey Garcia Paredes CMF*

Day 29

115

Oh Holy Spirit,  
generator of social movements,  
of personal processes and transformation,  
come and empty yourself  
in our minds and hearts.  
We need to unlearn everything  
that has made us complicit  
in the destruction and deterioration  
of the environment.  
It is urgent that we learn a new lifestyle  
to become true citizens of this planet,  
builders of a new home for all,  
your accomplices for ever.  
Amen.



116

Day 29



## Day 30



Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity. (211)

## Day 30



There is no moment we stop learning. When we do not choose what to learn, unconscious random choices will guide our learning. If we fail to teach ourselves to live environment-friendly, we might as well unconsciously learn to destroy the environment. We have been for sometime focusing on environment-friendly education. Now, we need a transition from environment-friendly education paradigm to environment-caring education.

The best practice in environmental care education I found was in one of the schools in Taiwan. It shed light into my own sense of looking at the environment. In the morning, as the three-year-olds came from home, they would rush to see their unusual pets grown in their personal glass jars: cockroaches, crickets or frogs and feed them with the food that they brought from home. I saw them take care of these with unusual love and fearlessness. — *Jijo Kandamkulathy CMF*

Day 30

119

Father, source of all wisdom,  
we recognize when it comes  
to taking care of your creation  
we are uneducated savages.  
Teach us daily our lessons  
to care for the environment that we live in,  
to care for nature  
and everything that belongs to it.  
Teach us commitment to be careful  
in our little activities  
that could save the environment,  
teach us responsibility  
to be stewards of the universe.  
Teach us tenderness  
to care for all your creatures  
with motherly love and care.  
Amen.



120

Day 30





## Day 31



## Day 31

Ecological education can take place in a variety of settings: at school, in families, in the media, in catechesis and elsewhere.

Good education plants seeds when we are young, and these continue to bear fruit throughout life. Here, though, I would stress the great importance of the family. ... In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say “thank you” as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. (213)



Home Lesson 1:

The Earth is not a gift from our parents;  
it is a loan from our children.

—*Kenyan Proverb*

Does it not remind us that the glitter and shine that we have today are made on the borrowed wealth of our own children? No creature in its right senses will hurt its baby or snatch from its offspring what they have. The sense of living on borrowed riches from the future should encourage us to make responsible choices in our daily living. We must learn to moderate our comforts from what is possible to what is feasible, from our luxuries to what is needed so that we will save enough to return what we owe to the future. — *Jijo Kandamkulathy CMF*

Day 31

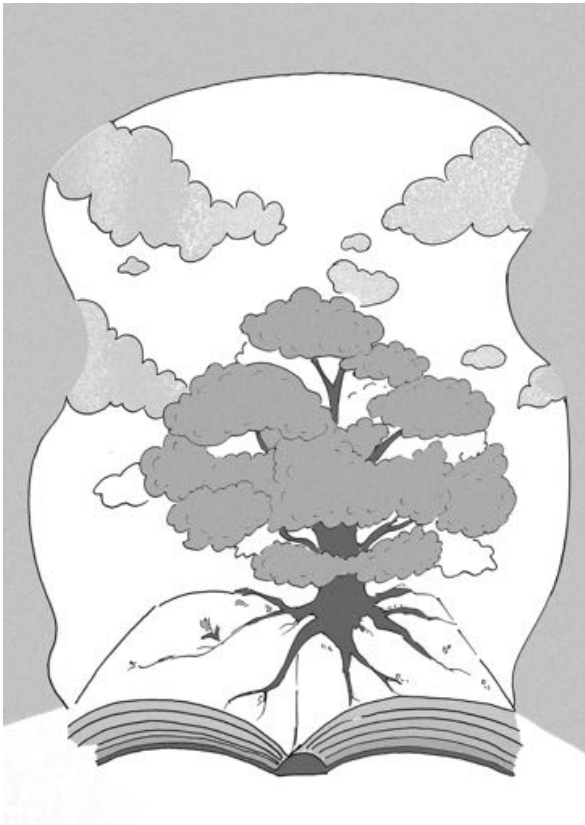
123

Master,  
our supreme Teacher,  
we are ready to learn  
the new alphabets of environmental care,  
we are ready to teach our next generation  
the lessons of frugality.  
Give us the wisdom  
to learn the environmental alphabets  
in our home, in our schools, in our churches,  
in our art, in our music,  
in our waking, in our sleeping,  
in our structures, in our agriculture,  
in our leisure, in our work,  
and, above all, in our developmental activities.  
Amen.



124

Day 31



## Day 32



## Day 32

By learning to see and appreciate beauty, we learn to reject self-interested pragmatism. If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behavior. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market. (215)



Over a hundred years ago, Folliott Pierpoint was so awed by the beauty of the countryside surrounding him, that he was so inspired to write a hymn of praise, "For the Beauty of the Earth." Seeing beauty in creation can evoke joy, praise and thanksgiving to God, our creator. Today, however, we rarely take the time to stop, to look around us and be mesmerized by the beauty around us. Our daily life is inundated with so many needs and concerns, both real and imagined, that what grabs more our attention are things we really do not need, but want. Our consumerist world presents a challenge to our paradigm of education. Are we learning to take time to notice and to be aware of the beauty of God's creation? Are we learning to treat one another, nature and the world around us with reverence and respect? — *Judette Gallares RC*

Day 32

127

God of all creation,  
You surrounded us with beauty  
to remind us of your sublime goodness and love.  
Yet, we fail to notice  
as we race to fill our day with things and activities  
that only leave us exhausted, empty  
and alienated from You at day's end.  
Awaken our senses, O loving God  
that we may learn to gaze at nature  
with deep gratitude and reverence,  
noticing your Divine Presence  
in the magnificence of everything you have created.  
Be our morning and night,  
our earth and sky,  
and in our depths, our true home.  
Amen.



128

Day 32



## Day 33



## Day 33

The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent. So what they all need is an “ecological conversion,” whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become 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. (217)



The basic definition of conversion according to Bernard Lonergan is “a shift in one’s orientation towards life.” Almost all experiences of deep conversions seem to be preceded by some kind of difficulty, crisis and questioning. In the midst of disparate reactions to the ecological crisis confronting the earth, this is in fact an opportune time for us to search our hearts for an authentic Christian response. The ecological crisis challenging our planet is urging us to make a shift in our orientation towards life and the way we relate with God’s creation. “Ecological conversion” begins to happen when we believe that God has placed us, human beings, on the earth to look after everything on it. Thus we are called to foster participation and harmony among all of God’s creatures, reverence for the earth, and integration of spirituality and technology on behalf of the Gospel. — *Judette Gallares RC*

Day 33

131

Each moment, O God—  
you call us to come to you  
that you may form our hearts  
according to the Spirit of your Son, Jesus.  
Give us the grace to hear your call  
and to allow you to instill in us  
a deep sense of responsibility  
for all your creation  
and to protect life in all its forms.  
Permeate in us your faithfulness and mercy  
that we may learn to care  
for our troubled and fragile planet  
with clarity of purpose  
and constancy of heart.  
We ask this in Jesus’ name.  
Amen.



132

Day 33



## Day 34



Christian spirituality proposes an alternative understanding of the quality of life, and encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions and also in the Bible. It is the conviction that “less is more.” A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. (222)

Day 34



Often, ordinary Christians think that the prophetic and contemplative lifestyle is only for consecrated persons. Actually, this lifestyle is for all Christians, without any distinction. If we recognize that our fragile earth is indeed sacred, created for life to flourish, and a place of encounter with God, then what it offers us is enough for our enjoyment and contentment. This is indeed prophetic and counter-cultural as it is a lifestyle that goes against what media and society tend to present to us as sources of fulfillment and enjoyment—that the more we have, the happier we can become. Christian spirituality invites us to learn and appreciate moments of silence, to discover that in stillness there is a state of high energy that enables us to be wholehearted about life itself. — *Judette Gallares RC*

Day 34

135

Gracious God,  
we are awed at the many ways  
you remain constant among us  
even in the midst of our many distractions and wants.

Our hearts are easily lured  
by false promises and worldly attractions  
in our pursuit of true happiness  
and meaning in life.

Give us the grace to realize  
that only you can offer  
what we deeply desire in life.

Teach us to appreciate  
moments of silence and solitude  
so we can hear you  
speaking gently in our stillness.  
When we are pulled away from you  
by the outer noises of the world,  
bid us back into your embrace  
to receive your love and mercy.  
Amen.



136

Day 34





## Day 35



Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures. (222)

## Day 35



“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:3). They are blessed because they have overcome the temptation of “dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures.” They have defeated the devils of compulsion and obsession that maim our capacity of wonder and curtail our freedom.

This inner growth of the blessed ones is “marked by moderation”: the ability to enjoy things without being enslaved by them (cf. 1 Cor 6:12).

Contrary to what many think, we Christians are called to live life to the fullest, enjoying and savoring the simple and little and things of everyday life, like a young couple in awe before their baby or children playing under the rain.... Mary teaches us to treasure all these things in our heart (cf. Lk 2:19). — *Eduardo Agüero SCJ*

Day 35

139

O gracious and loving God,  
we praise and thank you  
for inviting us to live in your world,  
and to enjoy the richness of your creation.  
You have shared with us the power of creativity  
to fashion many things to make our lives better.  
But we have also created more things than we need,  
which distract us from becoming the persons  
we are meant to be.

Our lives then become more complicated,  
empty, and dominated by needless wants.

As we come before your presence,  
you invite us once again  
to appreciate the simple things in life,  
to realize that in simplicity  
we can find true happiness and freedom.

Give us the grace to live  
the first beatitude Jesus taught us,  
so that we may be blessed  
in our simplicity and poverty of spirit,  
and find our true home in you.

Amen.



140

Day 35



## Day 36



Nature is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances? Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them. This too affects how they treat the environment. An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us, whose presence “must not be contrived but found, uncovered.” (225)

## Day 36



“The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace” (Ps 37:11). Peace and harmony within allow us to contemplate and to find God in all things. We can recognize His voice in the gentle breeze that caresses our face, discover God’s imprint in the beauty of creation... (cf. 1 Kgs 19:12-13).

We just need the courage to stop, to abandon a workaholic lifestyle that distracts us from what is essential. Instead of bumping into the world, instead of being fascinated with neon lights, with mere appearances, we are invited to “recover a serene harmony with creation” and to listen to the “the words of love” of which nature is filled with. —

*Eduardo Agüero SCJ*

Day 36

143

Ever living and loving God,  
you invite us to pause  
and enjoy moments of solitude  
amidst the endless noise and frenetic pursuits  
that surround us.  
We get used to the constant busyness of our day  
without realizing that at times  
our constant strivings and activities  
only leave us breathless and unbalanced.  
Teach us to love silence and solitude,  
to take time to gaze with awe and wonder  
at the vastness of your creation,  
and to realize that you desire us to live in harmony  
with all your creatures.  
Remind us, O God, of how abundant is your love  
and how insignificant yet special we are to you.  
In all that we observe,  
open our eyes  
so that we may really see  
and grow in wonder and appreciation.  
Amen.



144

Day 36



## Day 37



## Day 37

We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full. Jesus taught us this attitude when he invited us to contemplate the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, or when seeing the rich young man and knowing his restlessness, “he looked at him with love” (Mk 10:21). He was completely present to everyone and to everything, and in this way he showed us the way to overcome that unhealthy anxiety which makes us superficial, aggressive and compulsive consumers. (226)



A signboard at a restaurant door reads: “We don’t have Wi-Fi: you better talk to each other.” We might find it funny; instead, it expresses a kind of schizophrenia many of us suffer. We are so much “connected” to gadgets that we lose the real contact with persons and with reality. To be present means to allow “the other”—it might be a person, a flower, a beautiful scenery—“to speak to us,” to affect and enrich our inner being with its “uniqueness.” To be present means to make use of all our senses to capture the mystery of “the other” in “serene attentiveness.” Jesus in Mark 10:21 calls us to grow in our capacity of contemplation, that is: to look at things with and through His eyes. —  
*Eduardo Agüero SCJ*

Day 37

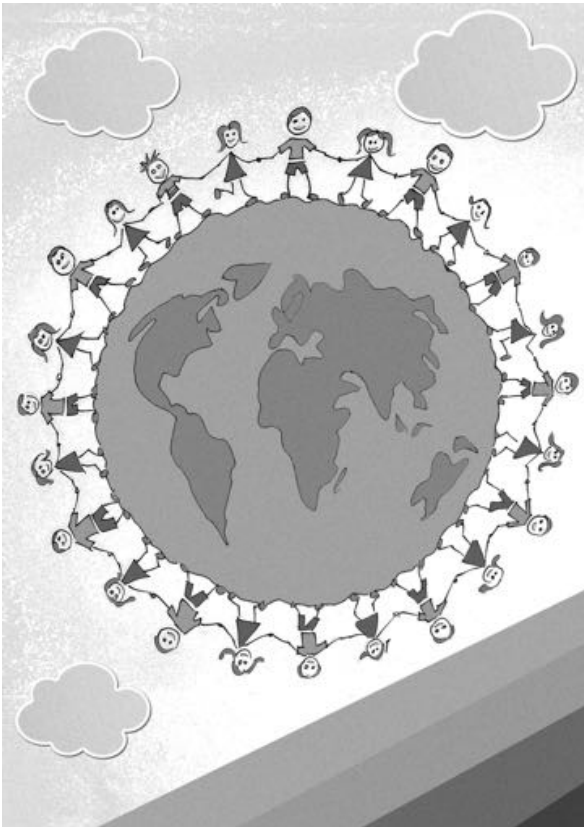
147

O loving God,  
we thank you for the gift of creation:  
for the beauty that we see,  
for the joy that we hear,  
for the expanse of space  
that draws us beyond our own existence.  
Teach us to be present to your creation,  
to be attentive to the most sublime of your creatures—  
the human person!  
Do not allow needless things to distract us  
from what is true and meaningful,  
making us superficial and compulsive in our lifestyle.  
Teach us to appreciate the simple gift of time  
spent in the presence of another  
or before the beauty of your creation.  
You have taught us in Jesus  
how to be present to one another  
and to be attentive to those in need.  
Make our hearts sensitive always  
to your presence in our life  
and in our world.  
Amen.



148

Day 37



## Day 38



## Day 38

Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a “universal fraternity.” (228)



“Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (=the world as one family) is a concept enshrined in the Upanishadic thought of India. The African concept of “Ubuntu” captures the similar idea of a universal bond that connects all humanity. That the entire creation is in communion and therefore, we live in a web of inter-connectedness that nourishes us has so infused human psyche that we have forgotten it! Loving our enemies, so fundamental to Christian faith, becomes easier and doable when we look into the eyes of the enemy and see in him or her our common humanity with its shared brokenness. Then our sense of justice will not be rooted in reciprocal violence, but in forgiveness offered gratuitously. Then setting right and healing the wounded and abused universe would become a priority for us, for our welfare depends on the collective welfare of human beings, animals, “the wind, the sun and the clouds.” — *Paulson Veliyanoor CMF*

Day 38

151

God, our Father and Mother,  
We come to you in communion  
as sisters and brothers  
of different hues and shades  
of varied histories,  
some of them not to my taste.  
Often I find it tempting to disown them  
straighten them out, or punish them  
for their differences scare me.  
I would rather have them made after  
my own image and likeness.  
But then when I look at them,  
I see myself gazing back at me.  
And I look at them with your eyes  
and I see you gazing back at me from  
them. They are mine for they are yours.  
Teach us to live as one, as you do,  
Triune God.  
Amen.



152

Day 38





*Day 39*



*Day 39*

We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment. (229)



I need you. You need me. This is not a disabling reciprocal neediness that leaves us permanently infantile, incapable of living our lives with freedom and autonomy. On the contrary, it is an acknowledgement of our shared responsibility as mature adults for nurturing one another and enhancing quality of life for ourselves and others who share the earthly space with us. We choose to do good and be decent as it does good for the welfare of others; and such welfare has its tangible returns as well. Capacity for violence is predicated on the inability to see such connectedness and to realize that when you injure another, you diminish your own self. As Emmanuel Levinas put it, “the face of the other is an ethical imperative” that demands our caring response, failing which, we fail them, ourselves, and God. — *Paulson Veliyanmoor*  
*CMF*

Day 39

155

Loving God,  
You have placed before us two paths:  
one that leads to life and the other,  
to destruction and death.  
Give us the grace and courage to choose the former,  
though the path looks narrow  
and strewn with stones and thistles.  
I shall not be afraid:  
for your Son had walked that path before.  
And you do not send us alone;  
you place us in the midst of a crowd  
so that we may walk together,  
leaning on one another as your staff and rod.  
Caring God,  
beat our swords into ploughshares  
our spears into pruning hooks  
that we may labor as one  
for realizing a culture of care and,  
a civilization of love.  
Amen.



156

Day 39



## Day 40



## Day 40

At the end, we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God (cf. 1 Cor 13:12), and be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which with us will share in unending plenitude. Even now we are journeying towards the sabbath of eternity, the new Jerusalem, towards our common home in heaven. Jesus says: "I make all things new" (Rev 21:5). Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women who will have been liberated once and for all. (243)



Spiritual literature is rich with the experiences of people who, in a moment of providential grace, glimpsed an alternate view of reality wherein everything around them was no more ordinary, but was infused with divine splendor in which everything was one with everything and shone with a beauty beyond words. Thomas Merton's experience at the corner of Fourth and Walnut streets in downtown Louisville (United States) was one such, which made him write: "Then it was as if I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts, where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes" (Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander). And if we can have such perspective, care for our common home down here on earth would be as reflexive as our act of breathing, and the beatific vision in eternity can begin now. —

*Paulson Veliyannoor CMF*

Day 40

159

Beautiful God,  
in Christ Crucifi ed,  
you made your Beauty incarnate.  
"Behold my Son," You said.  
In his body, tortured and famished,  
we saw the beauty of your love dripping. We  
look around now,  
in search of the beauty that we once beheld  
and that pierced our hearts and found love. In  
the bodies ravaged by hunger, poverty,  
disease, and violence,  
we glimpse again your son, Christ Crucified.  
Give us this beatific vision always  
And move us in our entrails to touch and heal  
to care for our common home  
here on earth as in heaven.



160

Day 40

### 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,

*A Christian prayer in union with creation*

163

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.

*A Christian prayer in union with creation*

164

**A Holy Hour with Jesus  
to Care for Our Common Home**  
*Pope Francis' Encyclical "Laudato Si'"*

**1. Invitation**

**Leader.** "LAUDATO SI, mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord." In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. As we spend an hour with Jesus, we unite ourselves with Pope Francis to marvel at the wonders of God's creation that we may truly care for our common home.

**All.** Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs.

**2. Opening Song**

**3. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament**

**4. Opening Prayer**

**Priest.** Father, our Sister Mother Earth now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which you have endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and

maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail." Remind us that we ourselves are dust of the earth; our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**All.** Amen.

**5. Meditation Song**

**6. Meditation on the Present Situation of our Home**

**Leader.** Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming in turn a victim of this degradation with the potential for an ecological catastrophe under the effective explosion of industrial civilization.

**All.** Grant us, Lord, to see the urgent need for a radical change in our conduct as humankind in our most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, that they be accompanied by authentic social and moral progress.

**Leader.** We, human beings, frequently seem to see no other meaning in our natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption. This resulted to the destruction of the human environment that is extremely serious.

**All.** God, you have entrusted the world to us, men and women, and gifted us human life which must be defended from various forms of debasement.

**Right Side.** Help us to make every effort to protect and

improve our world by profound changes in our lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies.

**Left Side.** With full respect for the human person, let us also be concerned for the world around us and take into account the nature of each being and of its mutual connection in an ordered system.

**Leader.** The world cannot be analyzed by isolating only one of its aspects, since the book of nature is one and indivisible, and includes the environment, life, sexuality, the family, social relations, and so forth. It follows that the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human co-existence.

**Left Side.** God, may we recognize that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behavior. The social environment has also suffered damage.

**Right Side.** Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless. May we realize that creation is harmed where we ourselves have the final word, where everything is simply our property and we use it for ourselves alone.

**All.** The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves.

**Leader.** Each of us needs to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, for inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage, we are called to acknowledge our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation.

**All.** God, forgive us for our sins in destroying the biological diversity of your creation, degrading the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands, contaminating the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life.

**Left Side.** We have committed a crime against the natural world. Forgive us for we have sinned against ourselves and against you.

**Right Side.** Teach us, O Lord, to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing.

**Left Side.** Instruct us in an asceticism which entails learning to give, and not simply to give up, a way of loving, of moving gradually away from what we want to what God's world needs.

**All.** Liberate us from fear, greed and compulsion, to accept the world as a sacrament of communion, as a way of sharing with you and our neighbors on a global scale, and to be convinced that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of your creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet.

*Silent Reflection*



**Reader 1.** A reading from the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*.

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.... Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity.

*Silent Reflection*

**Leader.** Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a universal fraternity.

**7. Adoration with gentle music  
and contemplative silence**

**8. A Prayer for Our Earth**

**Leader.** All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

**All.** 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.

**Reader 2.** O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

**Reader 3.** 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.

**Reader 4.** Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

**Reader 5.** 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.

**All.** We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace..

**9. Song and Closing Prayer**

**Priest.** Almighty ever-living God, you call us to generous commitment and to give you our all, you offer us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, as the Lord of life, you love us so much and are always present. You do not

abandon us, you do not leave us alone, for you have united yourself definitively to our earth, and your love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.

**All.** Praise be to you! Amen.

### 10. Benediction

#### 11. Divine Praises

**Priest.** Praised be you, my Lord,

**All.** With all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun,

who is the day

and through whom you give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant

with great splendor;

and bears a likeness of you, Most High.

Praised be you, my Lord,

through Sister Moon and the stars,

in heaven you formed them clear

and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord,

through Brother Wind,

and through the air, cloudy and serene,

and every kind of weather

through whom you give sustenance

to your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,

who is very useful and humble

and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,

through whom you light the night,

and he is beautiful and playful  
and robust and strong”

### 12. Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament

### 13. Song to Mary

**Fr. Alberto— You still want a POSTSCRIPT after this?**





