



First Friday Reflection

Dec 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

This year we have made 12 First Friday steps towards the *Laudato Si'* Goals.

PRAYER

We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life.

Amen.

ACTION

Evaluate individually or in your group what you have done this year to move towards the *Laudato Si'* Goals and discuss what steps you can take next year.

DECEMBER

image generated by AI

Australian Reflection

In this year's journey through the *Laudato Si'* Goals, we have reflected on ecological economics and living simply, caring for Creation, ecological virtues and spirituality, climate change and carbon literacy, *Laudate Deum*, poverty, and 'the poor'. We have learned from science and faith, explored the reality of life in Australia, and contemplated what 'being the heart of God on Earth' is calling us to in response.

As we finish the year, let's look back on the First Friday Reflections and consider the following:

- Was there a topic that touched you and why?
- What did you struggle with and why?
- What changes have you made or are you considering making?
- What conversations have you had or actions have you taken?
- Where have you seen the heart of God? Where have you been the heart of God?



First Friday Reflection

Nov 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

The World Day of the Poor is a Roman Catholic observance, celebrated on the 33rd Sunday of Ordinary Time, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need.

PRAYER

Triune God, help us as Chevalier Family and all groups that work for the common good, to develop a spirituality of global solidarity which flows from the mystery of who You are, an interconnected community of love.

Amen.

ACTION

Choose how you want to participate in this observance to show your concern for the poor.

NOVEMBER

Image from <https://pixabay.com/photos/children-feet-shoes-poverty-africa-5980533/>

Australian Reflection

"The poor" - It's a pithy term we use without thinking. It evokes specific images - inability to pay for living expenses, malnutrition, homelessness, limited access to essential services/education, social discrimination/exclusion, lack of sanitation/clean drinking water... the list goes on ([UN](#)).

Poverty is horrific, whatever the scale it is experienced, because it undermines the most fundamental gift and right people have: human dignity. It undermines that we are all "created in God's image" (Gen 1:27) to share equitably the gift of God's Creation and "love one another as God Has loved us" (John 13:34). Perhaps the expression 'people experiencing poverty' better lends itself towards recognising inherent human dignity whilst acknowledging the reality of poverty. It states that "poor" does not define the person but is something happening to them - an unfortunate circumstance that must be changed and eliminated.

The political correctness of using "the poor" ([Oxfam](#)) is thought-provoking. Is this a moment where a 'paradigm shift' in Catholic theology ([Catholic News Agency](#)) towards lived experience and evolved understanding can start? This month, we invite you to reflect on your image of "the poor" and what response "being on Earth the heart of God" calls you to.



First Friday Reflection

Oct 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

“Love for society and commitment to the common good move us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a ‘culture of care’ which permeates all of society.” (Pope Francis)

PRAYER

God of love,
foster in us the spirit of
being interconnected
with all what is living
and fill us with gratitude
for every gift
of your goodness.

Amen.

ACTION

Learn to know the organizations in the neighborhood, participate in their campaigns and initiatives for the environment, keep in touch and report to others in the Chevalier Family.

OCTOBER

Image from <https://www.thethirdpole.net/content/uploads/2021/05/mangrove-reforestation-Satun-Thailand-1-scaled.jpg>

Australian Reflection

Laudate Deum, Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation released on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, is a ‘call to arms’ on *Laudato Si*’s actions. It clearly outlines the reality of the climate change crisis, and it calls for individual and community response as “*everything is connected and nothing is saved alone*” (LD19). As people living *Spirituality of the Heart*, our hearts are moved by the idea that “*Jesus was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because he himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attraction full of fondness and wonder...*” (LD64). “*...We know that authentic faith [connection with the Sacred Heart] not only gives strength to the human heart, but also transforms life, transfigures our goals, and sheds light on our relationship to others and with Creation as a whole*” (LD 61). Our hearts echo the thought “*the world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to care for it?*” (LD65).

This month, you are invited to read *Laudate Deum* and consider what actions we, as the Laity of the Chevalier Family (LCF), can take to respond. Let the Australian LCF Council know your ideas at aus.lcf@gmail.com.



First Friday Reflection

Sept 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

"An integral ecology is felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us." (Pope Francis)

PRAYER

In this Season of Creation, we pray that the breath of your creative Word would move our hearts, as in the waters of our birth and baptism. Give us faith to follow Christ to our just place in the beloved community. Enlighten us with the grace to respond to your covenant and call to care for our common home.

ACTION

Am I connected to an action group that cares for the earth or for the poor?

SEPTEMBER

Image from jpicroma.org/season-of-creation-2023/

Australian Reflection

The University of Queensland has developed a [Carbon Literacy Program](#) aimed at getting people to care for the Earth through education on climate change. Below is a selection of the resources from the program available for self study. Let's understand, reflect, and act to build a better world!

- The Risks to Australia of a 3°C Warmer World (Australian Academy of Science) ([Video](#)) ([Report](#))
- Comparing Climate Impacts at 1.5°C, 2°C, 3°C and 4° (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)) ([ClimateNexus](#))
- [Ecological Footprint Calculator](#) (WWF) / [How Rich Am I? Calculator](#) (Giving What We Can)
- [Extreme Carbon Inequality](#) (Oxfam) (Figure 1)
- Lifestyle Change and System Change are Two Sides of the Same Coin (Climate Outreach) ([Video](#)) ([Report](#))
- [The Secret of Talking about Climate Change](#) (Action For The Climate Emergency)
- [Five Characteristics of Science Denial](#) (UQx)
- Discourses of Climate Delay ([Illustration](#) - Leonard Chemineau) ([Article](#) - Cambridge)



First Friday Reflection

Aug 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

"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. **What is required is an "ecological conversion,"** whereby the effects of Christians' encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them," wrote Pope Francis."

PRAYER

God of love,
show us our place
in our world
as instruments
of your affection for
all beings because
no one is forgotten
by you.
Amen.

ACTION

Encourage a greater contact with nature in a spirit of wonder and gratitude and celebrations for the healing of our environment and asking forgiveness for harmful activities.

AUGUST 2023

Image by Sasin Tipchai from Pixabay

Australian Reflection

"Ecological spirituality begins in the acknowledgment, grateful and joyful, that all creatures owe their existence to God. Humans are not somehow separate from the rest of creation. We share it intimately with other creatures. We acknowledge God as Creator of us all." ([USCCB](#))

- Spend time in Creation with the Creator. Immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, and sensations. Dwell on the thought that Creation is sacred and deserves our respect through loving thought and action. Discover God in the Creation - the natural world, its creatures, and its ecosystems.
- Read the Australian Catholic Bishop's Conference (ACBC) 2021-2022 Social Justice Statement '[Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor](#)'.
- Read something by an eco-spiritual writer. (Recommendations: 'An Astonishing Secret' by Daniel O'Leary; 'Care for Creation [A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth]' by Delio, Warner, and Wood).
- Find out about [Earthcare](#) Schools, Parishes, and Families.



First Friday Reflection

Jul 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

Pope Francis said: "Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change." **The path to change comes through education and spirituality.** "We lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone."

PRAYER

God of all life,
help educators to
"promote a new way of
thinking about human
beings, life, society and
our relationship with nature
so that we may discover
anew that all are important
and necessary to build
a better and safer world."
Amen.

ACTION

Ensure that members of
the community are familiar
with the local ecosystem,
the social dimensions of
the ecological crisis
and ecological virtues.

JULY 2023

image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/grandmother-kids-laptop-myanmar-1822560/>

Australian Reflection

The paper, [Ecological Virtues in Laudato Si](#), highlights "praise, gratitude, care, justice, work, sobriety, and humility" as the key ecological virtues. It states: "We will save our common home only when we learn to see it with a deep sense of wonder that wells up in spontaneous praise of the Creator for all the marvels of creation". It reminds us to imitate First Nations people's gratitude using Pope Francis' words: "For them, the land is not a commodity but rather a gift from God and from their ancestors who rest there, a sacred space with which they need to interact if they are to maintain their identity and values". When we care, we have a "view of the world as a network of relationships", and can "set before the world the ideal of a 'civilisation of love'". If "the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, who fruits are meant to benefit everyone", then we must act justly, not only "between communities of the same human generation (intra-generational)" but also "between current and future generations (inter-generational)". As we celebrate NAIDOC Week "For Our Elders", we are reminded to draw on the wisdom of those who lived harmoniously with Country for over 60,000 years.



First Friday Reflection

Jun 2023

ADOPTION OF
SIMPLE
LIFESTYLES



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

A simple lifestyle, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full." (LS. 223). We can take delight in the things that truly matter and learn to let go of what may be holding us down.

PRAYER

God,
help us to understand
and value how simple
gestures and simple
lifestyles simply make it
possible for others to
simply live.

Amen.

ACTION

Action: Watch: How can we live simply (5', 3") on <https://eco-catholic.com/how-can-we-live-simply/>

JUNIO 2023

image: https://cdn.pixabay.com/photo/2019/12/20/17/33/cows-4708901_1280.jpg

Australian Reflection

As we officially begin winter, it's time to think about how we can live simply and support the less fortunate during these colder months.

Did you know "heating and/or cooling can account for 20%–50% of energy used in Australian homes" (energy.gov.au) and "food waste accounts for approximately 3% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions" (DCCEEW)?

It's time to reflect on needs versus wants. Explore ways to reduce your environmental impact. Consider eliminating unnecessary heating, closing the blinds to trap heat, and stopping draughts. Consider reducing food waste by eating simply, using leftover vegetables as soup, or using bones and leftover meat products to make stock. These small steps will reduce our carbon footprint and help preserve the environment.



First Friday Reflection

May 2023

ADOPTION OF
SIMPLE
LIFESTYLES



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS
TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

A simple lifestyle is good for us, helping us to better share with those in need.

-Pope Francis

PRAYER

O Lord, help us turn from the selfish consumption of resources meant for all and to see the impacts of our choices on the poor and vulnerable. Amen.

ACTION

Avoid wasteful, consumeristic and self-centered lifestyle which continues to exhaust the natural resources and to push the poor to the margins of society.

MAY 2023

Australian Reflection

What is a simple lifestyle, and how do you simplify yours? “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19,21). A good place to start is to reflect on what you value and what is essential for life (physical, spiritual, emotional, social). Where are you investing your time, talent, and treasure?

There are many competing demands and ‘must haves’ that can make us hyperconnected (e.g., 20.5 internet-connected devices per Australian household in 2021) ([Statista](#)), stressed (e.g., 59% of Australians experienced at least one personal stressor in 2020) ([AIHW](#)), and consumerist (e.g., Australians dispose of 23 kg of clothing per person per year) ([SmartCompany](#)). But is this where God calls our hearts? Are our decisions leading us to ‘be on Earth the heart of God’?

For ideas on simplifying life, revisit the [Carbon Fast Lenten Calendar](#) and [Follow the Star Advent Calendar](#).



First Friday Reflection

Apr 2023



TWELVE FIRST FRIDAY STEPS TOWARDS THE LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

Pope Francis in his encyclical talks on environmental, economic and social ecology, that clearly respects any human and social dimension, making it synonymous with Ecological economics. He asks us to take into account the environmental impact of any economic concrete undertaking (LS 140)

PRAYER

Lord, Father, enlighten by your Spirit the decision makers and influencers of this world, all those who deal with money and power that they will promote the common good.

Amen.

ACTION

Don't support any economic activity harmful to the planet and the people, invest in renewable energy and promote circular economy. Combat food-waste.

APRIL 2023

image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/demonstration-fridays-for-future-4891275>

Australian Reflection

Australia is one of the world's largest economies and consumer markets. In 2021, it was ranked 12th with a Nominal Gross Domestic Product of A\$2.2 trillion and has 1.7% of the global economy for 0.3% of the world's population (austrade.gov.au).

Quoting Benedict XVI's Caritas in Veritate, Pope Francis reminds us that "every purchase is a moral act" (CV66). It's important to be informed, so learn more about the circular economy and case studies in the Australian Government [Sustainable Procurement Guide](#) and CSIRO [research projects](#).

[Reflect](#) on your purchasing habits and consider what you could change to be more sustainable and ethical. Buy local. Buy items with a long life span and made from sustainable materials - recyclable or biodegradable. Consider whether you need to purchase something. Repair items. Buy second-hand.



First Friday Reflection

Mar 2023



12 FIRST FRIDAY STEPS towards the LAUDATO SI GOALS



AWARENESS

The cry of the earth is also the cry of the **poor** since the poor themselves are the most vulnerable from the effects of the environmental crisis.

PRAYER

Lord, Father, when I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? (Ps 8:3-4). May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, give us a merciful heart towards the poor. Amen.

ACTION

Assure access to clean water for everybody; address issues of digital poverty ("the inability to interact with the online world fully, when where and how an individual needs to"); join movements or networks to address the root causes of poverty.

MARCH 2023

image: <https://pixabay.com/photos/sichuan-liangshan-yi-yi-butuo-1908312>

Australian Reflection

Australia is not exempt from the Cry of the Poor, and it's considered a wealthy nation. We experience digital poverty (mobile-only users, those over 75 years, people who didn't complete secondary school, public housing authority renters, or the lowest income quintile are being left behind; 14% of Australians would need to pay more than 10% of their household income to gain quality, reliable connectivity - [Digital Inclusion Index](#)). We experience water poverty and limited access to clean water in some areas of Australia (at least 627,736 people in 408 locations [40% remote Indigenous communities] didn't have adequate water - [Nature \(2022\)](#)). We experience homelessness (on census night 2016, 110,000 people were estimated to be homeless - [AIHW](#)). We experience poverty ([Vinnies](#) helps around 1.8 million Australians annually). Imagine what poorer countries and peoples experience!

Consider supporting charities that assist the poor, provide clean water initiatives, and improve digital literacy/reduce digital poverty in Australia and internationally. The support could be in many forms, including prayer, learning more about the issues and initiatives, raising awareness, or donating time or money. Some examples are listed here: [MSC Mission Office Australia](#) (Clean Water), [MSC Hope Academy](#) (PNG Digital Poverty), [Be Connected](#) (Senior Australian Digital Literacy), or [Vinnies](#) (poverty).



First Friday Reflection

Feb 2023



FEBRUARY 2023



The Earth “now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her.” So begins Pope Francis in his encyclical on ecology. “The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor.”

AWARENESS

Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Mother Earth, who sustains us and governs us and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

- *Canticle of St. Francis*

PRAYER

Pay attention to healthy soil and avoid the use of chemical herbicides and insecticides while producing our own food. Promote bio-diversity.

ACTION

Twelve First Friday Steps towards the Laudato Si Goals

image: https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/styles/open_graph/public/2022-04/R262675.jpg

Australian Reflection

Why not check for contaminants in your home and garden? “Through global citizen science collaborations, 360 Dust Analysis informs the community about the potentially harmful metals and other contaminants in and around their home. We hope to help the community better understand their environment through a hands-on approach to science. Through this program, participants are exposed to real-world scientific questions and contribute to ground-breaking research while taking away useful information to live in healthier environments.” Visit the [360 Dust Analysis](#) website for details.

Have you considered a veggie garden or potted herbs? Fresh produce tastes better, saves money, helps improve the environment, and boosts air quality (and maybe even your mood)!

Can you provide homes for bees, lizards, birds, and other native fauna? Insect hotels, bird baths, rocks and logs are all simple ways to promote biodiversity.



First Friday Reflection

Jan 2023

JANUARY 2023



YouTube Originals

THE LETTER

A MESSAGE FOR OUR EARTH

On October 4th 2022, a new documentary film about **Laudato Si'** called, "The Letter" was presented in the Vatican City.

The Letter offers a compelling new message for our planet and a timely and authentic way to engage people. If you want "to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together".

Lord,
Father of our human family. You created all human beings equal in dignity: pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace."

Amen.

Watch the film on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rps9bs85BII>

Promote this film by sharing it on your Facebook or website and discussing it in your community.

AWARENESS

PRAYER

ACTION

12 First Friday Steps Towards The Laudato Si Goals

Australian Reflection

The increasing frequency and severity of climate change events in Australia (e.g., bushfires, floods, drought, cyclones, rising sea temperatures) and the loss of habitat, creatures, and biodiversity are a call to reflect on how our daily lives can adversely affect the environment (Creation).

- How has climate change affected us personally?
- What can we do to reduce our impact on Creation?
- Where can we invest our time, talent, and treasure to benefit Creation?
- How can we be better advocates for Laudato Si in our communities?

Each choice we take to protect Creation and each bit of awareness we raise about it makes a difference. The Australian Council would love to share your climate change story and what you or your communities are doing to benefit Creation or advocate for Laudato Si. Contact us at aus.lcf@gmail.com.