

# Mercy MOMENTS



## NOW is exactly the time for conversion!

Starting 2020 anew with a new relationship that connects us more deeply and spiritually to our living, diverse, sustaining, nurturing, planet – our common home.

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM (2020) commenting on recent events in Australia said, “The bushfire crisis is a wake-up call to Australia and all Australians. Lament, repentance, the effort to repair damage done, and the transformation of behaviour – these are elements of a process of conversion. Pope Francis sees this moment in human history as calling for an ecological conversion which ‘must be understood in an integral way, as a transformation of how we relate to our sisters and brothers, to other living beings, to creation in all its rich variety and to the Creator who is the origin and source of all life’ (World Day of Peace Message, 2020).

Fr Joshtrom Isaac Kureethadam is one of the church’s top experts on Laudato Si and has published a spiritual and theological commentary, *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si’*. Fr Joshtrom has arranged the book according to the See-Judge-Act methodology

and in doing so provides the tools to create a better now and a vision to move forward with hope and courage.

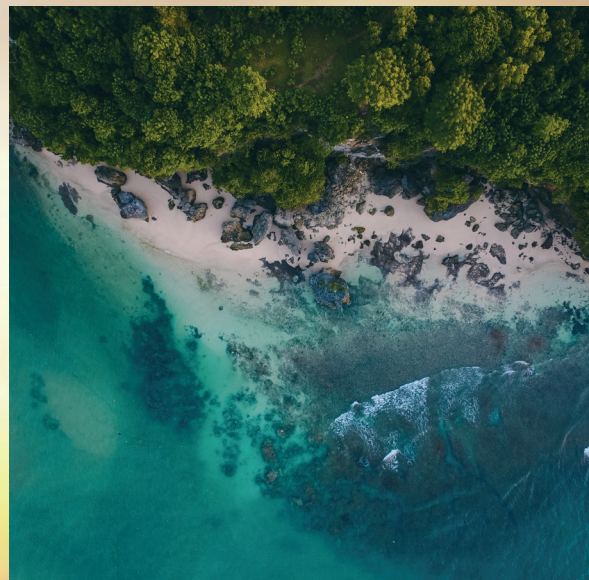
Each month we will focus a Mercy Moment on each **Green Commandments**:

1. Take Care of Our Common Home in Peril
2. Listen to the Cry of the Poor
3. Rediscover a Theological Vision of the Natural World
4. Recognise that the Abuse of Creation is Ecological Sin
5. Acknowledge the Human Roots of the Crisis of Our Common Home
6. Develop an Integral Ecology
7. Learn a New Way of Dwelling in Our Common Home
8. Educate toward Ecological Citizenship
9. Embrace an Ecological Spirituality
10. Cultivate Ecological Virtues

Let’s work together as we celebrate the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si’, to care for our common home and all who live with us.

### Prayer of Blessing

May the deep blessings of earth  
be with us.  
May the fathomless soundings of seas  
surge in our soul.  
May boundless stretches of the universe  
echo in our depths  
to open us to wonder  
to strengthen us for love  
to humble us with gratitude  
that we may find ourselves  
in one another  
that we may lose ourselves  
in gladness  
that we give ourselves  
to peace.  
(Newell, 2011, p. 20)



### REFLECTION

- > How might you improve your relationship with our common home?
- > What changes could you make in your ministry to ensure a more sustainable future?

References: 1. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si’*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.  
2. Long Va n Nguyen OFM, V. (2020). *Fiery Signs of the Times*. Retrieved January 17, 2020, from [catholicoutlook.org/fiery-signs-of-the-times/](http://catholicoutlook.org/fiery-signs-of-the-times/)  
3. Newell, JP. (2011). *Praying with the Earth: A prayer book for Peace*. London, England: The Canterbury Press

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE



# Mercy MOMENTS



## Truly, much can be done!

### Ten Green Commandments #1 – Take Care of Our Common Home in Peril

We are living at a time in history when we are not only seeing the widespread destruction of the Earth but also experiencing the effects of this tragedy. We know that our climate is heating, storms are more ferocious, fires and floods frequent. We all know that our common home is in peril.

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis calls for action for our world in peril:

“Our home is falling into serious disrepair... We can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation” (61).

He begins by posing the question “what is happening to our common home?” He follows this with another more serious one, what is “troubling us today and which we can no longer sweep under the carpet” (19).

Pope Francis explains that the human impact on the environment persists because we choose to be complacent, remain indifferent and to simply carry on as we always have. Indeed, this environmental crisis is not new to us. The “awareness of the precarious state of our home planet began more than 50 years ago, precisely with the problem of pollution ... Human activities, modern industrial

and agricultural activities in particular, appear to have polluted almost all areas of our common home: the air, the land and the waters” (Kureethadam, 2019, pp. 27,28).

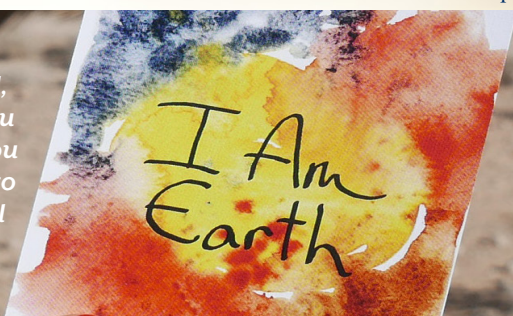
It is clear as Pope Francis asserts that, “if present trends continue, this century may well witness extraordinary climate change and an unprecedented destruction of ecosystems, with serious consequences for us all” (24).

We have “devastated wooded plains and valleys, polluted the waters, deformed the Earth’s habitat, made the air unbreathable, upset the hydrogeological and atmospheric systems, blighted green spaces, implemented uncontrolled forms of industrialization, humiliating the Earth, that flowerbed that is our dwelling” (Pope John Paul II, 1 January 1990).

The first green commandment insists that we wake up. This is not something of the future. The time for action is now. We are called not just to acknowledge but to ‘care’, to act, to speak out against the forces that are destroying our planet.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day (22 April 2020) let’s re-establish right relationships and utilise the creativity and responsibility given to us to “seize the enormous opportunities of a zero-carbon future.”  
<https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2020/>

...you return  
to the ground,  
for out of it you  
were taken; you  
are dust, and to  
dust you shall  
return.  
Genesis 3:19



... May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
may the clarity of light be yours,  
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
may the protection of the ancestors be yours. ...

An excerpt from Beannacht (O'Donohue, 1997, p. 12)

#### REFLECTION

- > Do you have an environmental advocate in your ministry? Could you form a “green team” at your office to find cost-effective ways to conserve resources and promote sustainability?
- > Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we are finding new ways to meet and share with colleagues as well as our friends and family. When we choose to videoconference instead of traveling we are lessening our personal carbon footprint. Does meeting this way work in your ministry? Could you choose to use it more often in the future?

#### REFERENCES

1. Kureethadam, J. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
2. O'Donohue, J. (1997). *Anam Cara: Spiritual Wisdom from the Celtic World*. London: Transworld Publishers Ltd.
3. [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)



## The poor and the earth are crying out!

Ten Green Commandments #2  
– Listen to the cry of the poor

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis (2015) describes the earth as “burdened and laid waste” and “the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she ‘groans in travail’ (Rom 8:22) (section 2). Fr Joshtrom (2019) sees *Laudato Si'* as “a loud clarion call” to “create a more equitable and just world” and “to care for our common home and for the most vulnerable members of our common household” (Kureethadam pp 49-50).

The poor are the worst victims of the destruction of the environment. The poor benefit least and suffer the most, even though their carbon footprint is virtually non-existent (Kureethadam, 2019, pp 38-40). The poor are going hungry as the oceans are depleted by over-fishing, they are going thirsty as there is no clean water to drink, they are becoming sick due to “today’s chemical-dependent and waste-producing economies” continuing to pollute (McDonagh, 2003, 21).

Developed countries owe a climate debt to the poor “for over-using and substantially diminishing the Earth’s capacity to absorb greenhouse gases... for the adverse effects of these excessive emissions... Ultimately, the responsibility for the ecological crisis comes down to communities, households

and individuals who constitute the human society” (Christian Aid cited in Kureethadam, 2019, pp 43-45).

As Pope Francis (2015) notes in the encyclical, “this calls into serious question the unjust habits of a part of humanity” (section 93). And he laments the loss of our most basic human relationships, “if the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships” (section 119).

As we approach *Laudato Si'* Week (16-24 May) Pope Francis has asked the global Catholic community to “undertake ambitious actions to address the mounting environmental perils facing the planet and its people.” In *Laudato Si'* he invites us “to pray for the grace to become responsible stewards of the Earth and the poor” (Kureethadam, 2019, p50).

The cry of the poor and our earth is a call for eco-justice and a call to action. This is a cry that should make you squirm in your seat. It is the cry you hear that makes you imagine the worse. You cannot cover your ears. You must not turn away!

**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.**

(*Laudato Si'*, 2015, section 246)



REFLECTION > How do we soften our hardened hearts and to truly live Matt 25:35-40?

> How can we change our personal habits to help care for the poor of the Earth?

REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

3. McDonagh, S. (2003). *Dying for Water*. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications

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## Leading us back to the Creator

### Ten Green Commandments #3

#### Rediscover a Theological Vision of the Natural World

The love of God is at the centre of everything. We are made in the image of God and by bearing the image of God we have been given a great responsibility. Earth, our common home, is a gift. We owe our very existence to the infinite love of the Creator.

Humans are called to “live in communion with the natural world ... and universal communion of the entire creation is the basis of our common fraternity ‘that excludes nothing and no one’” (Kureethadam, 2019, 67). We must take a place within creation and not rule over it. We, as *Imago Dei*, must remember each created animal or plant also reflects the face of God.

Nellie McLaughlin speaks of universal communion:

*all living beings are jewels in the great net of the universe so when we look reverently at one jewel we see all the others are reflected therein, and it in all the others. What a wonderful image of the body of Christ ... This image is very resonant for me as I read Laudato Si' which stresses again and again our dignity, interconnectedness and interdependence*

*as the entire community of creation. Everything is interconnected, and that invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity' (2015, 29).*

Throughout *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis (2015) reiterates the community of creation as “each creature possesses its own particular goodness and perfection ... Each of the various creatures, willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God’s infinite wisdom and goodness (section 69).

God is in everything as observed by the bishops of Japan. To “sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God’s love and hope”. This contemplation of creation allows us to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us. We are all connected, and we need to be in creation to hear the message (Pope Francis, 2015, section 221).

A theology of the created world exists in the Christian tradition and calls out to be embraced and lived. This is not a fleeting whim of green activists but a deep-seated spiritual and ecological imperative of our faith – one we need to share, teach and proclaim.



**A theological reflection...**

**In this time of climate change  
To everything there is just one season;  
The time is past when atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels do not rise;  
For there is no time when our activities do not  
contribute to a rise in global temperatures.  
It is a time to plant trees, not to cut down forests;  
A time to walk lightly on the earth, not to drive;  
A time to cherish species, not to kill them;  
A time to build up life support systems,  
and not needlessly to consume or waste them.  
Theologian Anne Primavesi (in McLaughlin, 2015, 44)**

### REFLECTION

**How do you understand your connectedness with the natural world?**

### REFERENCES

1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
3. McLaughlin, N. (2015). *Life's Delicate Balance – Our Common Home and Laudato Si'*. Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publication

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## It's a sin

### Ten Green Commandments #4 Recognise that the Abuse of Creation is Ecological Sin

Pope Francis described human destruction of the environment as a sin and accused humankind of *leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations* (§160) full of *debris, desolation and filth* (§161). By associating sin with the ecological crisis Pope Francis has unsettled many who have never thought of 'sin' in this way.

In fact, Pope Francis has named human exploitation and harm of the Earth as the "sin of our time":

*This is one of the greatest challenges of our time: to convert ourselves to a type of development that knows how to respect creation. ... This is our sin, exploiting the Earth and not allowing her to give us what she has made within her"*  
(cited in Shore-Goss, p30).

Consequently, Pope Francis has sought to add *ecological sin against the common home* to the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

At Pope Francis' audience with participants in the 20th World Congress of the International Association of Penal Law, he said:

*The Synod Fathers for the Pan-Amazon Region proposed to define ecological sin as action or omission against God, against one's neighbour, the community and the environment. It is a sin against future generations and is manifested in acts and habits of pollution and destruction of the harmony of the environment, in transgressions against the principles of interdependence and in the breaking of networks of solidarity between creatures.*

Fr Joshtum in *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'* explains further:

*...it is only within a relational view of reality, where everything is interrelated and interdependent, that the concept of ecological sin makes sense. Nothing in creation exists in isolation. There exists a physical and spiritual connectedness between all of creation. Sin is precisely the distortion of this underlying and all-embracing relational unity (p74).*

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites each of us to see the truth of our responsibility for the state of the planet, challenging us to acknowledge our actions towards creation as 'sin'.

**Creator God,  
We pray for the humility to recognise...  
our personal sins against the environment  
our failures to act  
our short sightedness and  
our disregard for the calls to change our ways  
May we stop and reassess our personal impacts and  
work to redress the damage to our Mother Earth  
Amen**



## REFLECTION

**How does the concept of ecological sin as outlined by Pope Francis impact on how you live and work?**

- REFERENCES: 1. [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.  
3. <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/11/15/191115j.html>  
4. Shore-Goss, R.E. (2016). *God is Green: An Eco-Spirituality of Incarnate Compassion*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books.



## We are all in this together

### Ten Green Commandments #5 - The Human Roots of the Ecological Crisis

The debates which surround climate change, global warming, species extinction and other ecological crises often focus on the extent and impact of human driven causes. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si*, does not hesitate to situate human activity firmly at the centre of the ecological crisis:

*... scientific studies indicate that most global warming in recent decades is due to the great concentrations of greenhouse gases ... released mainly as a result of human activity (#23).*

The question of why human activity, including land clearance, mining, over-fishing, pollution and plastic use is allowed to continue, further harming the global environment, steers us into more complex territory. Pope Francis uses his landmark encyclical to look at the deeper issues involved:

1. There is a dominant worldview that the natural world exists to serve humanity. The understanding of the natural world as sacred and complementary to human existence has largely been lost as human progress imposes more and more 'development' across the planet. *... we have come to see ourselves as her (Earth's) lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will... (#2).*

2. Technology has given human beings *...an impressive dominance over the whole of humanity and the entire world (#104).* Unfortunately, technological advances and improvements to human life have not always been matched by development of human moral responsibility. Weaponry is one example: *...we need but think of the nuclear bombs... or the array of technology ... employed to kill millions of people... (#104).*

3. The economic paradigm which dominates our global systems preferences profit over people: *... the economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings (#104).*

4. There has been a loss of connection with the common good. In a culture of consumerism and instant gratification the impact of our actions on others is often ignored. The greatest human rights violations in the world today are all linked to profit or lack of respect for the humanity of others: slavery, forced labour, sexual exploitation of women and children, organ farming, the drug trade, genocide, war, to name but a few. *... when the culture itself is corrupt and objective truth and universally valid principles are no longer upheld, then laws can only be seen as arbitrary impositions ... (#123).*

*Laudato Si* is a radical call for reform to the *natural and moral structure (#115)* of our communities and nations. A call to open our eyes to the injustices which are inherent in a world focused on profit, power and wealth. For Pope Francis there can be *... no renewal of our relationship with nature without a renewal of humanity itself... (#118).* We need a global revolution, not just to save the planet from environmental destruction, but also to save millions of people from the impact of rampant and insatiable greed. It is indeed human behaviour which is at the root of the environmental crisis, but more widely, human denial, indifference, resignation and selfishness which also sustains a looming humanitarian crisis.



### REFLECTION

What part can you play in the global revolution called for in *Laudato Si*?

REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

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## The big picture

### Ten Green Commandments #6 - Develop an Integral Ecology

In this Green Commandment, Pope Francis reminds us that action to save the natural world from ecological devastation must be integrated. There is no one cure, one way or single approach for success. If we accept the central tenet of *Laudato Si*, 'we are all connected', then solutions must be multi-faceted and targeted at all levels of the problem.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) reminds us of the reality of our interdependence: The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creatures are self-sufficient (#86).*

The Butterfly Effect, the notion that a butterfly flapping its wings in New Mexico can create a hurricane in China, dramatically highlights the reality of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all life. Plants, animals, birds, insects, the land, the seas, the atmosphere, human beings – what impacts on one part of the created world affects all of the others.

*Laudato Si* calls for an approach which:

- honours the expertise of all branches of Science
- respects indigenous cultures as dialogue partners and critical knowledge sources of integral ecology

- accepts the wisdom of all religious traditions
- transcends national and economic interests
- preserves all created species
- looks at the interplay between the physical, social, communal, moral and economic aspects of life

St Francis of Assisi is recognised as an exemplar of integral ecology – he embodied the connectedness between the natural world, society, the poor and the attainment of peace. St Francis lived a simple life. You could argue that he didn't face the serious issues of today's world – pollution, weapons of mass destruction, global warming, overpopulation, genetic engineering to name but a few. Yet his example reminds us of the importance of a worldview or way of seeing. St Francis saw the big picture – the dignity of all creation. He was not deaf to the cry of the poor. He spent time in nature listening to its heartbeat. He trod softly on the Earth and his life is a testament to the power of one person to make a difference – no matter the opposition or obstacles.

Developing an integrated ecology demands a St Francis approach, a St Francis mindset, a St Francis heart for the world. Pope Francis urges us all to see and understand that the complexity of our ecological crisis demands a cooperative and integrated solution. We are indeed all in this together.



### REFLECTION

We are called to act! Can we see a need in our own ministry and home where we can begin to make a difference?

- REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

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## For the Earth and future generations

### Ten Green Commandments #7 - Learning a new way of dwelling in our common home

It was the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who said, 'Change is the only constant in life' and we certainly live in a time of enormous change.

While COVID-19 has highlighted many things... the best and worst of politicians, the fear of missing out, the anxiety of lockdown, the health of a nation resting in the hands of individuals collectively taking action, wearing masks, singing from windowsills, sharing excess and the knowledge that we are all in this together, it has also created beneficial change. It has slowed us down and given the Earth pause to breathe and renew. This is a wonderful gift to the natural world and one we need to continue.

Laudato Si' highlights the impact of human driven detrimental change on the natural world: we have cleared forests, degraded soil, diverted rivers, hastened extinction, diminished biodiversity and changed the climate.

Pope Francis calls for renewed efforts for beneficial change:

*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 (202).*

The agents of beneficial environmental change are ordinary women and men, making significant changes in lifestyle, habits and priorities.

What Pope Francis has been asking for is a future in which "all people can prosper personally and economically in harmony with the gifts God has given us in nature."

*The future of humanity does not lie solely in the*

*hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize. It is in their hands, which can guide with humility and conviction this process of change* (Pope Francis at the World Meeting of Popular Movements, Bolivia).

This beneficial change is not just necessary – it is urgent and global. Pope Francis addresses Laudato Si' not just to Catholics but 'to every person on the planet' because everyone must stand up and address the dire health of the planet.

Pope John Paul II says:

*being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realise that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith* (World Day of Peace message - January 1, 1990).

Today there is a demand for a worldwide response to help safeguard the Earth for future generations.



*If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society. An awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits.*  
(Laudato Si' #208-209).

### REFLECTION

What will you keep from this time of pandemic and what will you leave behind?

REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). Laudato Si' [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

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## Restoring ecological equilibrium

### Ten Green Commandments #8 - Educate toward ecological citizenship

In the eighth green commandment Joshtrom makes the case for ecological conversion for the restoration of earth and the restoring of right relationships with God (p151). Joshtrom cites Pope Francis who proposes that ecological education,

*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. (#210)*

**How can we educate toward ecological citizenship?** In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis offers us some guidelines:.

We need..

- *to educate all people on what radically new lifestyles are needed if we are to save our common planetary home for ourselves and future generations (p144)*
- *to embrace a holistic education that counters the current economic rationalist paradigm and emphasises the reestablishment of harmony with nature, our fellow human beings, and the transcendent (p143)*
- *to develop a new way of educating which tackles the false arguments of recent centuries that puts results, job readiness, subject hierarchies and performance indicators before education for the common good #121 (p150)*
- *to move away from subject specific knowledge toward a new humanism capable of bringing together the mind, heart, soul and spirit. #141 (p150)*
- *to foster educators capable of developing an ethics of ecology, and helping people, through effective pedagogy, to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care #210 (p152)*
- *to contribute to the creation of a civilization of love and kindness, performing those small daily acts of solidarity, in a world where power and wealth tend to dominate and monopolize (p152).*

Joshtrom reiterates that the current state of our common home, though dire, has promising signs of hope in the area of ecological education citing *The Statement of Leaders in Catholic Higher Education Globally* signed by university presidents across the world in response to the call of *Laudato Si'*.

The statement promises:

*to provide influential leadership in discovering new and life giving paths to address the pressing emergencies of climate change, social exclusion, and extreme poverty and in uncovering new paths to achieving peace, justice and environmental sustainability for the whole human family and the entire family of creation. ...*  
(p157 cited in Joshtrom - Mulkey 2012 p356)

Now is the time to be courageous in our educational institutions and to seek to integrate care for our common home and all of creation in all we say and do.



### REFLECTION

What can you do in your ministry to reestablish harmony with nature, fellow humans and God?

**REFERENCES:** 1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.



## Discover God In All Things

### Ten Green Commandments #9 - Embrace an Ecological Spirituality

Joshtrom establishes creation spirituality as “deeply incarnational as it finds expression in concrete attitudes and gestures of care and concern for our common home and the members of our common household. It also offers a sacramental vision of the natural world, leading us to perceive God in all things.” (2019, p 162)

This is not a new spirituality. Meister Eckhart, a 13th Century mystic once said, “Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God.” ([www.catholicstoreroom.com/2017/02/25/god-is-in-all-things/](http://www.catholicstoreroom.com/2017/02/25/god-is-in-all-things/))

David Bookless asserts that, “if the ecological crisis is ultimately a spiritual crisis, then the cure is also a spiritual one.” (in Kureethadam, 2019, p 165)

So, what does ecological spirituality look like?

Laudato Si encourages us to:

- *learn to live responsibly and joyfully in our common home* (2019, p 108)
- *be aware of our profound communion with the rest of creation and our co-responsibility for our fellow creatures.* (2019, p 168)
- *understand that we are not disconnected from the rest of the creatures, but joined in a splendid*

*universal communion* #220 (2019, p 168)

- *approach 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’* #226 (2019, p 168)
- *encourage ‘a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption’* #222 (2019, p 169)
- *incorporate the value of relaxation and festivity* #237 (2019, p 171)
- *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’* #222 (2019, p 169)
- *cultivate a deeper inner peace* #225 (2019, p 169)
- *discover ‘God in all things’* (2019, p 172)

Pope Francis calls us to live consciously aware of the needs of the Earth. As a community we must commit to lifestyles of greater simplicity to attain that ‘generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings’ #211.

**We must embrace an ecological spirituality!**



### REFLECTION

In your own life and ministry how can you foster a spirituality that sees God in all things?

REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). *Laudato Si'* [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). *The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'*. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

COMPASSION JUSTICE RESPECT HOPE



# Mercy MOMENTS



## Seven Ecological Virtues

### Ten Green Commandments #10 - Cultivate Ecological Virtues

In this final Mercy Moment reflection on Laudato Si, we take a look at Fr Joshtrum's Seven Ecological Virtues. They are a challenge for us all.

1. **Praise:** *the title of the encyclical Laudato Si translates as Praise Be to You and invites us to see creation as an animate temple where the praise of God resounds. Pope Francis frequently reminds us that the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise (12).*
2. **Gratitude:** *when we accept each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full (226) then gratitude should be our first response. As Fr Joshtrum writes, "...we stand in need of living our lives gratefully on Earth, in the eucharistic way, giving thanks to God for the gift of creation and sharing it generously with others.*
3. **Care:** *Laudato Si takes our relationship with creation from stewardship to care. Joshtrum calls on us all to ...cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents (14).*
4. **Justice:** *the ecological crisis is ultimately about justice. We face the reality that the lifestyles of affluent societies are threatening the very livelihoods of the more vulnerable populations of our world. Eco-justice demands that the question of poverty alleviation be placed at the heart of a truly moral response to the climate crisis.*
5. **Work:** *Pope Francis challenges us to see work as collaborating with God's handiwork of creation. He asserts that ...work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfilment (128).*
6. **Sobriety:** *Sobriety is a virtue totally eclipsed in our consumerist culture. The invitation to tread gently on Earth through adoption of a sober and simple lifestyle is at the core of Christian spirituality. Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer (223).*
7. **Humility:** *Pope Benedict XVI writes, "The first step toward a correct relationship with the world around us is the recognition by humans of their status as created beings." An awareness of this earthly origin should enable us to regain an authentic sense of humility before the Creator and the rest of the created world. Ecological humility is indeed vital for the salvation of Earth and of humanity today.*

These virtues are the starting point for climate consciousness and the embrace of a spirituality which is inclusive of all creation. The good news is that there are millions of people already working for our common home, in small ways and large, across the globe. Fr Joshtrum said, "From where I am at the Vatican, we see and hear about thousands and thousands of initiatives around the world, people coming together to care for our common home," he said. "We need a people's movement. It's too important to leave to politicians. We need everyone on board."



### REFLECTION

How is your ecological footprint assisted by the seven ecological virtues proposed by Fr Joshtrum?

REFERENCES: 1. Pope Francis. (2015). Laudato Si' [Encyclical Letter]. Retrieved from [www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)  
2. Kureethadam, JI. (2019). The Ten Green Commandments of Laudato Si'. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press.

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