



Contemplative Reflection for the Month of March

Sixth Goal on the Action Platform: Ecological Spirituality

Ecological Spirituality springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things,” both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities. Actions could include promoting creation-based liturgical celebrations, developing ecological catechesis, retreats, and formation programs, etc.

Acts 2: 42-43: “They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done.”

Call to Contemplation

Leader: O God, who calls us into living, into thriving, into the joy and pain of creation, struggling toward wholeness and peace, we contemplate the amazing richness, interconnectedness, and diversity of life. Your caress inspires us to reverently embrace each element of creation. Make us humble in your sight and holy in your service.

Response: We praise you, God, not only for bringing us into being but for raising the dignity of all creation through the incarnation of Jesus and His lasting gift of the Eucharist.

Music video: [As We Gather at Your Table](#) ~ Michael Joncas

Reflection: Excerpt from *Laudato Si'*

(When done in a group setting, give sufficient time for reading and considering responses that will be shared.)

The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within; he comes that we might find him in this world of ours. In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living center of the universe, the overflowing core of love and inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed, the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: “Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world.” The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God’s hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of Eucharist, “creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself.” Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation. (LS 236)

Considerations:

- How are the sacraments, and the Eucharist in particular, concrete signs for us of God’s love and care for his creation? Why does Pope Francis call the Eucharist “a sign of cosmic love”?
- Jesus often used the things of this world to tell us about heaven. What does nature teach you about our interconnectedness and dependence on one another and all creation?
- Which of this month’s LS Sharings piqued your interest or challenged you? In what ways?

MARCH'S LAUDATO SÍ SHARING

Eucharist and Ecology ~ Msgr. Paul McPartlan

The ecological crisis prompts us to see links between the Mass and all that God has made. Deep down, the ecological crisis is a spiritual crisis, and the Mass is the key to our response as Catholics. As Pope Francis says, “the Eucharist is a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation.” (LS 236)

<http://www.simplycatholic.com/eucharist-and-ecology/>



How can we physically foster an eco-spirituality?

*One way might be to take a **slow contemplative walk** in the neighborhood, in the city, in a garden, in the countryside, on a beach or in a cemetery.*

- **Gaze** reflectively on the sunrise or the sunset, see the moon rise, smell the flowers and the grass, hug a tree, plant some seeds, look for new growth, gather the weeds, listen for birds or animal sounds, follow the clouds, feel the sunshine, the wind, the rain, or snow, drink it all in.
- **Draw** or watercolor what you see, take some pictures with your cellphone to visit later.
- **Praise** the Creator along the way and give thanks for the gifts you have visited.

View and reflect on one (or both) of these short clips:

[Eco-spirituality: Clues for Living - YouTube](#)
Sisters of Mercy

[At the Still Point...The Heart of Eco-Spirituality, Inspired by Laudato Si' - Bing video](#)
The Tau Center of the Wheaton Franciscans

How can we spiritually foster an eco-spirituality?

Ponder some scriptures. For example, consider conversion or faith that persuades.

- We read the stories of creation in the first chapter of Genesis that the earth is God's – we are only humble stewards, and we need the gifts of our known and unknown friends to address the ecological concerns that threaten God's creation. God saw what was created and called it “good,” but climate change and a variety of catastrophes have damaged the good and call for ecological conversion.
- In Mark 7:24-30, we see a healing story about the Syrophenician woman, who changed Jesus' mind. The persistence of this woman and Jesus' ability to change his mind in favor of mercy is a wonderful model of dialogue and mutual respect.
- Choose a psalm that praises God for creation, such as Psalm 8. Ponder it slowly.

Look for related spiritual reading such as this:

[EUCCHARISTIC ECOLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY](#) By Beatrice Bruteau
(crosscurrents.org)

Live the LAUDATO SÍ ACTION PLATFORM during Lent

Join the Ignatian Solidarity Network's

Laudato Sí Lent campaign

and receive a weekly email with a brief explanation of one LSAP goal, including suggestions for ways to implement the goal individually or collectively.

