

During [Laudato Si' Week](#) all are invited to commemorate the Anniversary of Pope Francis' first encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. The encyclical, on ecology and climate change, is an open appeal for dialogue and conversation about the future of our common home — a home we all share, regardless of faith or ideology. These *Laudato Si'* reflection sessions are an invitation for you to see and experience God in new ways while being attentive to your own context and lived experiences. As we gain new perspective to how our work and lifestyles fit within a much larger ecology, let us then consider what actions we can take to care for our common home.

A JOYFUL MYSTERY

Leader note: If possible, have a an image of Saint Francis of Assisi

For the past 200 years, Pope Francis has said that we have become well-practiced at seeing the world, its creatures and even each other, as raw materials to be used for our own chosen purposes — without regard for the world's own flourishing. This is how the world got in such a mess in the first place: we stopped taking care of creation, and instead, began exploiting it.

We need a new vision, and to find it, Pope Francis suggests we go to an old source: Francis of Assisi. Saint Francis saw the world and everything in it a little bit differently than others. To him, the sun, moon, all the creatures and elements of the earth, were one family, humans included.

St. Francis, the pope says, is a poignant example of how we all ought to practice seeing the world. In Saint Francis' vision, creation appears as a “magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness” (par. 12). Pope Francis then comments: “Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise” (par. 11).

Can we practice seeing the world this way, as a book of beauty and goodness, a joyful mystery? Can we practice today? What beautiful things have you noted this spring that you had not before?

Pope Francis writes that, through the eyes of faith, “the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise” (para. 100). No doubt this applies as much to those receiving our healing and help as it does to the rest of creation. Let us pray that we might see all things and people under a different light today.

**Creator, you give us life.
Help us to honor you
as we care for your precious creation.
Redeemer, you give us hope.
Help us see new ways of living
as we turn from the path of destruction.
Holy Spirit, you give us unity.
Help us find strength in the love between us
as we seek healing for the Earth. Amen.**