

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.

CULTIVATING THE COMMON GOOD

What does progress mean? How do you measure it? If it's more than just the accumulation of wealth and technologies, what does true progress look like?

One of the phrases Pope Francis uses to discuss his vision of true progress is “integral ecology.” The idea goes deeper than a recognition of the interconnectedness of all things. “Integral ecology” refers, instead, to the way that, *because* we are interconnected—with each other, with all other creatures, and with the rest of creation itself—we are tasked with helping develop a harmonious whole. This task is best understood as an invitation. Each of us are invited to play. We get to use our gifts and our talents to build up a living ecosystem, an integral ecology. In this vision of the “environment,” no one falls through the cracks, and each part is integrated to the good of the whole.

Francis's description of integral ecology is inseparable from the idea of the common good, which refers to all those social conditions necessary to realize fulfillment and human thriving. This, then, is true progress: that regardless of the disparities of birth, geography and access to the means of self-fulfillment, each one of us works for the benefit of the other, in a world we share together. Access to food and water, education, housing, the freedom to pursue work—and of course, health care. These are things people rely on in order to flourish.

Right now, before we return to the busyness of our individualized tasks, pause to acknowledge and realize the gift that *you* bring in service to this integral ecology. Pray for help to see the common good flourish.

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.**