

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.

AGAINST CONSUMPTION

Leader note: If not too disruptive, be near a waste can or pull one from a nearby desk.

A lot of you have probably heard there is a pile of garbage floating in the Pacific Ocean that's roughly twice the size of Texas. In fact, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch — yes, it has that name — is too large for scientists to measure accurately. It's made up of two distinct swirling collections of plastic and debris, one nearer to Japan and the other between Hawaii and California, with a stream of plastic connecting them. Estimates suggest that all this waste weighs roughly 80,000 tons, the equivalent of 500 jumbo jets.

Consider the work of human hands; the things that we have made. [pause]

In response to our consumption and our waste, Pope Francis writes: "Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth" (para. 161). He continues by reminding us that it's never too late to take decisive action and to make a change. No matter how insignificant your daily choices may seem to you, every choice we make in favor of sustainability changes us in the course of our decision-making. With grace and effort, these choices can shape a new culture opposed to overconsumption and waste.

No doubt all of us could benefit from taking a careful look at the way we approach our buying habits. How far did our food or other goods travel to get to us? How much packaging is involved? How long will an item be useful, fashionable, or played with? How do we distinguish or reflect on the difference between wants and needs, something for now and something we could get later. Take a moment now and reckon with those questions. What can you do to be a more mindful consumer? [pause]

**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.**