

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.

TOWARDS A NEW LIFESTYLE

Let us ponder how we might contribute to a more sustainable culture. Pope Francis has sharp words with which to motivate us. In effect, he accuses much of contemporary society as having adopted what he calls a “techno-economic paradigm” that brings about “compulsive consumerism,” a “whirlwind of needless buying and spending.” “This paradigm,” Francis writes, “leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume” (para. 203).

He goes on to say that, most of us probably don't possess the self-awareness it will take to shape a new lifestyle in the world today. It is as if we have been so programmed to connect our sense of freedom, in general, with our freedom to consume, in particular, that many of us don't know what else to do with our freedom than binge at will.

Do you think this holds? Is Francis too sharp, or is he right: is our sense of freedom so bound up with the freedom to consume that they are difficult to separate? [pause]

It may help to consider these questions in light of the coronavirus pandemic. As markets halted and our patterns of consumption shifted, did we prove to be the kind of people who respond in new ways? How did new ways of sustaining an integral ecology open up to us? Were we anxious to get back to business as usual or did we allow a different way of thinking and living to penetrate to our core? Pause to think this through in terms of your own experience. [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.**

