

ADVENT SESSIONS BASED ON 'LAUDATO SI' 2015

Mercy and Justice Have Embraced (Ps 85:10)

First Sunday of Advent: "Strange things will happen to the sun, moon and stars. The nations on earth will be afraid of the roaring sea and tides, and they won't know what to do.." Lk 21:25

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (LS) Pope Francis calls people of faith and people of goodwill to dialogue about our 'common home'. As we enter the Advent season, it's a time of preparation and hope for an earth and spirit renewed. Can I go beyond the personal to include our suffering planet?

So as our world awaits the birth of the Infant Jesus anew, let us think especially of:

1. World leaders meeting in Paris to discuss climate change Nov 30-Dec 11th ...
2. The global Year of Mercy starting on December 8th ...
3. The western world struggling with the fallout from the Paris massacre...



In response to the above, Pope Francis is urging courage, compassion, justice and reconciliation. For Francis this includes both personal and collective responsibility: "*We have to adapt due to climate change. The world's poorest people are bearing the brunt*" LS', 29

MORGAN FREEMAN Film Clip – A Beautiful World

<https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=692703904155304>

Quiet time to reflect on what we have seen.... Decide on one concrete action!?

The UN COP21 meeting, also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, will, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, aim to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate, with the aim of keeping global warming below 2°C. This is critical and urgent!

<http://www.cop21paris.org>

In *Laudato Si'* strategically prepared in anticipation of COP21, Pope Francis reminds us that ALL creation is a gift from God and *each person and creature has a right to this common home!* Francis believes that through the mystery of the Incarnation, Christ is intimately present in the world around us. When we see the gifts of the earth in the light of the Lord, we have a deeper understanding of how to care for our common home.

"If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realise that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market." (LS 215)

Q. Do I agree with this statement? Does it demand that I make any changes in how I am living?

Reflection: Creator God, we can choose to live differently! Inspire us as we make choices so that we will recognize the impact our lives have on our environment and our human family around the globe. We pray to the Lord: Lord, help us to reclaim the future!

Loving God, we can reclaim the future! Encourage us to be people of hope as we look forwards in faith, knowing that we can build a world of justice and peace.
We pray to the Lord: **R/Lord**, help us to reclaim the future!

Brilliant God, we can choose to live in a way that creates a better world for everyone. Help us to know that our individual actions are made in solidarity with our sisters and brothers.
We pray to the Lord: **R/Lord**, help us to reclaim the future!

Wonderful God, you invite us to live simply, to live sustainably, and to live in solidarity with the poor. So help us to respond to that invitation with conviction and generosity.
We pray to the Lord: **R/Lord**, help us to reclaim the future!

Adapted from *Prayer for the Sustainability of Our Earth* <http://greeneconomy.ph/download/mrm2014/day2/Prayer>

Pope Francis in 'Laudato Si' calls us to:

A conversion, a change of heart,
so as to see Christ present
in the world around us.

Francis believes

"This conversion calls for a number of attitudes –
which together foster a spirit of generous care,
full of tenderness.

But first, 'it entails gratitude and gratuitousness,
a recognition that the world is God's loving gift and
that we are called to quietly imitate his generosity
in self-sacrifice and good works" LS 220.

Mercy and Justice have embraced: A response to the Islamic State reality...

"Nation will not lift sword against nation; there will be no more training for war." Isaiah 2:4
Isaiah the Advent prophet offers hope that a time of peace IS coming! Whatever we hear in the media, this is not an impossible dream. Peace-building starts with each one of us and by the way that we treat the people around us including other creatures and planet earth.

Question: What can I do, to promote a spirit of peace around me today?



Image: Courtesy of scottchan at
FreeDigitalPhotos.net

What is my response to this photo ?

During this first week of Advent – prayers are urgently needed:

1. 150+ World Leaders will courageously sign a just, legally binding, universal Climate Treaty..
2. For a peace-full solution to the ISIS crisis through justice, mercy and negotiation...
3. That each of us be active peace-makers through knowing God's peace in our hearts...

An Advent Hope: Can I retreat from the daily bustle & create some silence & stillness

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ADVENT SESSION 2, BASED ON 'LAUDATO SI'

Second Week: 'Mercy and Saving Justice that comes from God.' Baruch 5:9

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.... The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth." Luke 3:4-5

Pope Francis: Extracts from his address to the UN, Nairobi, Kenya, 26th Nov 2015.

'... An important meeting on climate change **UN 'COP21'** will be held in Paris, where the international community as such will once again confront these issues. It would be sad, and I dare say even catastrophic, were particular interests to prevail over the common good and lead to manipulating information in order to protect their own plans and projects.

In this international context, we are confronted with a choice which cannot be ignored: either to improve or to destroy the environment. Every step we take, whether large or small, individual or collective, in caring for creation opens a sure path for that "*generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings*" Laudato Si. (LS) 21'



Francis believes that the climate is a common good, which belongs to all and is meant for all. In this context; "*climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic and political*" (LS 23). It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity today. Our response '*needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged*' (LS. 93). Francis goes on to say: 'that the destruction of the environment is also accompanied by a relentless process of **exclusion**'.

Q. What is your response to the above, especially around the term 'exclusion'?

YouTube clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAju0353w9I>

Time to reflect on what we have seen and heard.... Share with your neighbour.

The UN 'COP21' meeting represents an important stage in the process of developing a new energy system. This will have to depend on a minimal use of fossil fuels, aim at energy efficiency and makes use of energy sources with little or no carbon content. We are faced with a great political and economic obligation, to rethink and correct the dysfunctions and distortions of the current model of development....

'Is Pope Francis a Voice Calling in the Wilderness'?

"I express my hope that COP21 will achieve a global and "transformational" agreement based on the principles of: 1) **solidarity**, 2) **justice**, 3) **equality** and 4) **participation**; a climate agreement that targets three complex and interdependent goals:

Lessening the impact of climate change,

Fighting poverty and

Ensuring respect for human dignity...

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POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR THE EARTH....



www.flickr.com/photos/trocaire/

All Powerful God you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

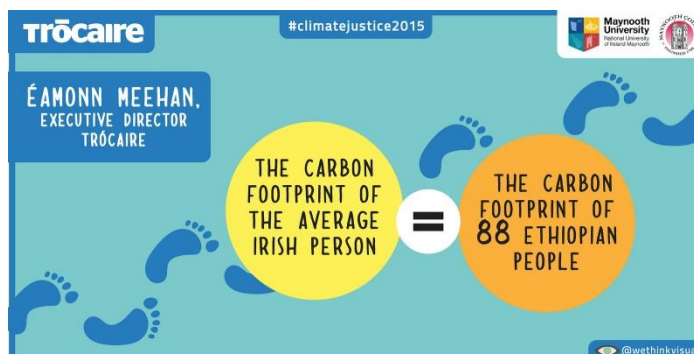
Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature, as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

AMEN



www.flickr.com/photos/trocaire/

Personal challenge: In this coming week could I do anything to lessen my 'carbon footprint'?

<http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/> OR <http://www.foe.ie/justonearth/carboncalculator/>

NB: 'Mercy and Justice have Embraced', this beautiful Advent theme will be enriched with special significance as we embark on the 'Year of Mercy' with the universal church on December 8th. We'll explore this more next week.

Homework! See: www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters and www.mercyworld.org.

'Sacred space' has a short Advent reflection each day: <http://www.pray-as-you-go.org/home>

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