

7 QUESTIONS TO ASK

7 Questions to Ask Measuring Integral Ecology in Our Lives Looking through the Lens of Laudato Si'

On 24th May 2020, the 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis declared an *Anniversary Year of Laudato Si'*. He outlined a multi-year roll-out plan for action, which encompasses seven sectors in the community: families, dioceses, schools, universities, hospitals/health care centres, business/agricultural farms and religious orders. He outlined seven Laudato Si' goals or ways of measuring ecology in the spirit of Laudato Si'. These questions provide one way of framing and guiding thoughts and actions to engage with the world today.

There are two sets of questions, one for individuals and the other for groups. There are then three examples of further questions you might ask based on three different events: one relating to an event that invites ecological conversion, another for footprint reduction and a third for raising a prophetic voice. No list of questions are exhaustive, they are designed to stimulate thinking

There is a set of Reflection Cards at the end which can be used either together or independently of this resource.

7 QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

- 1. Am I responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?** *Am I considering how my choices will impact the earth and its precious resources? E.g. Is the power I am using coming from a renewable energy source? What impact is the waste I am producing having on the earth?*
- 2. Am I responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?** *Am I considering how my choices will affect all forms of life, especially those who are most vulnerable? E.g. In purchasing this product am I attentive to the knowledge, customs and rights of Indigenous Peoples?*
- 3. Am I responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?** *Are my economic transactions supporting sustainable, ethical and fair production, consumption and investment? Are they supporting integral ecology? E.g. Are the producers of this product paid a fair and just wage? Are they using the earth's resources in a sustainable manner? Am I aware of where my products come from and where they will end up?*
- 4. Am I responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?** *Am I considering ways in which I can use less resources and energy systems as I go about my daily life? E.g. Could I use my car less by combining outings? Could I walk or use public transport?*
- 5. Am I responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?** *Am I considering that my actions will educate others? Am I mindfully educating others to promote ecological awareness and action? E.g. Could I share some meatless meals with my friends and tell them why?*
- 6. Am I responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?** *Am I encouraging greater contact with the natural world, bringing others into an awareness of creation and the marvels of it? Am I promoting a spirit of wonder, awe, praise, thanksgiving and joy? E.g. When I walk with others could I marvel at God's creation and share my thoughts with them? Do I encourage my heart to praise and sing?*
- 7. Am I responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?** *Am I considering ways in which local, national and international communities can be involved and participate in action for care of creation? E.g. Could I invite my friends and family to speak out about climate change? Could I support those who take a public stand on climate action?*

Questions adapted from the Laudato Si' Anniversary Year document from the [Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#).

7 QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS

- 1. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?** *Are we considering how our choices will impact the earth and its precious resources? E.g. Does our purchase of building materials come from a renewable and sustainable source? How do we dispose of waste?*
- 2. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?** *Are we considering how our choices will affect all forms of life, especially those who are most vulnerable? E.g. In building here, are we attentive to the knowledge and customs of Indigenous Peoples?*
- 3. Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?** *Are our economic transactions supporting sustainable, ethical and fair production, consumption and investment? Are they supporting ecology? E.g. Are the producers of this product paid a fair and just wage? Are they using the earth's resources in a sustainable manner?*
- 4. Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?** *Are we considering ways in which we can use less resources and energy systems as we go about our daily life? E.g. When planning events, could we host them in a location where participants could walk, take public transport or car pool?*
- 5. Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?** *Are we considering that our actions will educate others? Are we mindfully educating others to promote ecological awareness and action? E.g. Do the sponsors of our event uphold our beliefs and promote the values of Laudato Si'?*
- 6. Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?** *Are we encouraging greater contact with the natural world, bringing others into an awareness of creation and the marvels of it? Are we promoting a spirit of wonder, awe, praise, thanksgiving and joy? E.g. Do we ever host our regular meetings outside and use nature as a call to prayer?*
- 7. Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?** *Are we considering ways in which local, national and international communities can be involved and participate in action for care of creation? E.g. Are we promoting our activities to show others how they can be involved in caring for creation?*

Questions adapted from the Laudato Si' Anniversary Year document from the [Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development](#).

EXAMPLE ONE

Hold an outdoor prayer service



- 1. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?** *Where are we holding the service? What is the intended purpose? Is this particular location fragile? Can the area withstand the intended size of the gathering?*
- 2. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?** *Is the site sacred to a particular group? If so, is it the best location for the event? Have we sought permission to use the space? How are we listening to the cry of the poor by holding this gathering?*
- 3. Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?** *Are there any economic transactions we need to think about? If so, are they supporting fair trade? Are they sustainable and ethical? What is the history of the venue? Has sustainable and ethical practices been followed in order to have this space?*
- 4. Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?** *Is the venue easily accessible to a majority of the intended audience? Would participants be able to walk to the event? Is public transport available? Do we need to provide participants with water? If so, how would this be transported? Are we avoiding single use plastics for water or anything we need on site?*
- 5. Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?** *In organising the event are we explaining why we are hosting it? Does the prayer service hold to the values of Laudato Si'? Does it prayerfully invite participants to reflect on why we have gathered and where we have gathered?*
- 6. Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?** *Are we sharing the wonder and awe of nature, praising God in our prayer service? Are we allowing time for participants to spend time in reflective silence with God? What are we asking participants to do? What could we encourage they take away (in their hearts) from the time together?*
- 7. Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?** *How will we promote our prayer service to show others that they can be involved in caring for creation? What are we asking of participants and have we communicated this? What is the call to action during or after the service?*

EXAMPLE TWO

A tree planting day



- 1. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?** *What kinds of trees are we planting? Are they native to the area? Will they be beneficial in this area? Where are we sourcing the trees from? Are the seedlings wrapped in sustainable packaging? How will we dispose of packaging?*
- 2. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?** *Is a tree planting day aligned with the needs of the poor? What impact will planting trees have on those who are vulnerable in our local, national and international community? Does our choice of tree align with the existing habitat? Will the trees enhance the local setting?*
- 3. Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?** *Where are we sourcing the trees from? Are they local suppliers or multi-nationals? What practices does this supplier use? Are they ethical and sustainable? Are we spending funds for the sake of it, or is this tree planting activity necessary?*
- 4. Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?** *Is there a water source nearby that we can use wisely? Are we relying on costly technology to keep the trees alive?*
- 5. Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?** *What is the purpose for planting trees on this site? In the promotion of our tree planting day, are we inviting people to learn alongside us? Are we inviting people to an ecological conversion?*
- 6. Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?** *Will we begin with a prayer? Could we invite those who join us to spend some quiet time listening and praying with nature? Could we invite participants to pray as they plant individual trees?*
- 7. Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?** *Have we sought advice and input from local Indigenous Communities? Are we promoting the event beyond our community? Could we move beyond our circles of control and influence into our circle of concern?*

EXAMPLE THREE

Organise or participate in a climate strike



- 1. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?** *What is the particular focus of the strike? What is our motivation for striking? How will we ensure participants clean up after themselves? Can our chosen venue withstand the expected number of attendees?*
- 2. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?** *Have we truly listened to the needs of people who are affected by climate change? Do these people want us to act in this manner? Are our actions appropriate? Are we considering vulnerable people in our action?*
- 3. Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?** *What are we using to raise awareness? If we are using placards, cardboard etc, how have they been sourced? Are we using plastic signage which goes against caring for our common home?*
- 4. Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?** *How will people get to the strike? Is it easily accessible? What energy systems will we need to use to host the event? Are these sustainable?*
- 5. Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?** *Are we explaining why we are striking, both prior to the event and at the event? Are we promoting ecological awareness or are we laying blame? Do we have a course of action that can follow the strike?*
- 6. Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?** *Are we inviting participants to be silent and listen to creation? How will we use prayer appropriately in the setting? How can we be respectful of all faith traditions?*
- 7. Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?** *How have we invited people to participate? Is this the best course of action for what we are trying to raise awareness of? What continued action could we call for? Have we excluded any particular group within the community at the event? Or is there potential to exclude or marginalise others if there is future action?*

TEMPLATE

1. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth?

2. Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor?

3. Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics?

4. Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle?

TEMPLATE CONTINUED

5. Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?

6. Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation?

7. Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action?

Other comments:

REFLECTION 1

Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the earth? Are we considering how our choices will impact the earth and its precious resources?



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**Creator God,
You fill the earth with life,
Lead us to live in harmony with the
earth you have created.
May we respect all life from the
smallest of plants to the tallest
of trees, the vastness of the oceans
to the majesty of mountains and the
tiniest insects to the wildest beasts.
We ask this in your name.
Amen**

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #92



Photo credit: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia

REFLECTION 2

Are we responding in a way that is listening to the cry of the poor? Are we considering how our choices will affect all forms of life, especially those who are most vulnerable?



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**God of All,
You made us in your image
and likeness,
Open our eyes to see you in others,
Open our ears to your cry,
And open our hearts to love like you,
So that we may live as one
human family.
We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen**

The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor, in conflicts sparked by the shortage of resources, and in any number of other problems which are insufficiently represented on global agendas.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #48

REFLECTION 3

Are we responding in a way that is considering ecological economics? Are our economic transactions supporting sustainable, ethical and fair production, consumption and investment?
Are they supporting ecology?



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God of wisdom and compassion
You gifted us with right judgement
and courage
Help us to share the earth's resources
fairly and to use them wisely.
Stand with us as we speak out
against inequality and injustice.
Guide our thoughts and actions as
we care for our common home.
We ask this in your name.
Amen

This shows us the great need for a sense of social responsibility on the part of consumers. "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act".

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #206

Photo credit: Drew Morrison/Caritas Australia

REFLECTION 4

Are we responding in a way that leads to a simpler lifestyle? Are we considering ways in which we can use less resources and energy systems as we go about our daily life?



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**Tender, loving God.
You walk beside us, guiding
our path,
Teach us to simplify our lives,
to pause, to slow our steps and to
be mindful of all of creation,
So that we may truly enjoy the
richness of your love.
We ask this in your name.
Amen**

**We all know that it is not possible
to sustain the present level of
consumption in developed
countries and wealthier sectors of
society, where the habit of wasting
and discarding has reached
unprecedented levels.**

Pope Francis, Laudato Si', #18



Photo credit: Christopher Riechert/Catholic Relief Services

REFLECTION 5

Are we responding in a way that respectfully educates others towards integral ecology?
Are we considering that our actions will educate others? Are we mindfully educating others to promote ecological awareness and action?



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**God of all,
You teach us how to live
so that others
may simply live.
Through our words and
actions may we inspire others
to do the same.
We ask this in Jesus' name,
Amen**

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions, and it is wonderful how education can bring about real changes in lifestyle.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, #211

REFLECTION 6

Are we responding in a way that joyfully praises God and God's creation? Are we encouraging greater contact with the natural world, bringing others into an awareness of creation and the marvels of it? Are we promoting a spirit of wonder, awe, praise, thanksgiving and joy?



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**God, source of all life,
You bless us with the gift of
creation.
Inspire us to gaze in wonder
and awe at the beauty that
surrounds us.
We ask this in your name.
Amen.**

**Rather than a problem to be solved,
the world is a joyful mystery to be
contemplated with gladness and
praise.**

Pope Francis, Laudato Si', #12

REFLECTION 7

Are we responding in a way that promotes community involvement and action? Are we considering ways in which local, national and international communities can be involved and participate in action for care of creation?



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**God of justice and love
You lead us on life's journey
through creation.
Guide us to act justly, love
tenderly and walk humbly in
your ways.
We ask this in your name.
Amen**

**If we can overcome individualism,
we will truly be able to develop a
different lifestyle and bring about
significant changes in society.**

Pope Francis, Laudato Si', #208