



WEEK 1: CALLED TO CARE FOR CREATION

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(A FOUR-WEEK ADVENT REFLECTION SERIES)

For so many of us the spiritual practice of Advent is precious! Our Church offers many meaningful religious customs, prayers, symbols and reflections reminding us to prepare a way in the wilderness, to make straight in the desert a highway for our God. However, though we enter the season with high hopes for a spiritual experience, this treasured time is often marked by consumerism, drawing us away from the heart of the season.

This Advent we might use Pope Francis' letter *Laudato Si* as a spiritual guide as it has much to say about our throwaway culture which runs riot during Advent and contributes heavily to the destruction of our planet. Care for Creation and the rejection of consumerism go hand-in-hand as we prepare a way in the wilderness of our cultural activities.

In place of joining the throwaway culture this Advent, let's embrace Pope Francis' encouragement to be "free of the obsession with consumption". In his letter he gives us many practical and inspiring suggestions. I suggest that we choose one or more from the list below for each week of Advent so we can arrive on Christmas day filled with the spirit the Incarnate One who appreciated the small things like the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.

PRACTICES RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO CARE (TAKEN FROM LAUDATO SI')

- *Cherish each thing and each moment.
- *Stop and appreciate the small things.
- *Be grateful for the opportunities which life affords you.
- *Be spiritually detached from what you possess.
- *Don't succumb to sadness for what you lack.
- *Avoid the mere accumulation of pleasures.
- *Don't get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending.
- *Avoid the use of paper and plastic.
- *Cook only what can reasonably be consumed.
- *Show care for other living beings.
- *Plant trees.
- *Turn off unnecessary lights.



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