

Lent 2024

Daily Reflections for the Sacred Season of Lent Feb/March

During this year's Lent and Holy Week we will reflect on ways to respond to the cry of those who are poor. The Sisters of St. Francis have chosen Goal Two: Response to the Cry of the Poor as our congregational focus for Year Three of the Laudato Si' Action Platform. "The Response to the Cry of the Poor is a call to promote eco-justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to death, and all forms of life on Earth. Actions could include projects to promote solidarity, with special attention given to vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities, refugees, migrants, and children at risk." <https://laudatosiactionplatform.org/>. Using various resources and daily themes--Migrant Mondays (immigrants/migrants), Truth Tuesday (racism), Water Wednesday (water insecurity), Tranquil Thursday (non-violence), Food Friday (food insecurity), Shelter Saturday (homelessness), and Sacred Sunday (spiritual)--we will invite you to consider a suggested intention, action, or learning opportunity. As we journey together this Lenten season, may we make conscious choices to respond to the cry of those who are poor.

"It is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc."

Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*



SUNDAY

18 1st Week

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. (Psalm 46:1) A: How do you receive the life-breath of God when you are anxious? Spend some time focusing on breathing in God's goodness and breathing out anxiety.

25 2nd Week

"Contemplation is a very dangerous activity. It not only brings us face to face with God. It brings us, as well, face to face with the world, face to face with the self. And then, of course, something must be done." (Sr. Joan Chittister) A: Take some time today to sit quietly with God.

3 3rd Week

"Freeing ourselves of values—even momentarily—is to free ourselves from humanity." (Daniel Taylor) A: Around the dinner table tonight, discuss your values with your family and talk about why they are important.

MONDAY

19

"It is the obligation of every person born in a safer room to open the door when someone in danger knocks." (Dina Nayeri) A: Welcome new refugees who are arriving in your community by offering support, shelter, or other assistance.

26

Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels. (Hebrews 13:2) A: Contact your members of Congress today and urge them not to turn their backs on people fleeing harm.

4

You shall treat the foreigner who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the foreigner as yourself; for you too were once foreigners. (Leviticus 19:33-34) A: Consider donating to Catholic Charities <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>.

TUESDAY

20

But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them. (John 2:11) A: Read a book about anti-racism. <https://www.esquire.com/entertainment/books/g32733124/best-books-on-anti-racism/>

27

"A democracy cannot thrive where power remains unchecked and justice is reserved for a select few. Ignoring these cries and failing to respond to this movement is simply not an option—for peace cannot exist where justice is not served." (John Lewis) A: Learn about criminal justice reform. <https://ejj.org/criminal-justice-reform/>

5

"Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself. And it's the only way forward." (Ijeoma Oluo) A: Read about seven strategies for your antiracism journey. <https://www.verywell-mind.com/anti-racism-strategies-5069386>

WEDNESDAY

14 Ash Wednesday

"We forget that the water cycle and the life cycle are one." (Jacques Cousteau) A: This Lenten season, whenever you take a sip of clean water, thank God for the gift of water and say a prayer for those who lack access to clean water.

21

"One particularly serious problem is the quality of water available to the poor. Every day, unsafe water results in many deaths and the spread of water-related diseases. . ." (Laudato Si' # 29) A: Learn about and consider donating to Living Waters for the World <https://www.livingwaters-fortheworld.org/>.

28

"By means of water, we give life to everything." (Koran) A: Monitor your water bill for unusually high use. Your bill and water meter are tools that can help you discover leaks as well as provide tips to save water and money on future bills.

6

Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity." (Laudato Si' # 30) A: Learn about and consider donating to Water Aid <https://www.wateraid.org/us/> or The Water Project <https://thewaterproject.org/>.

THURSDAY

15

"Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it." (Martin Luther King, Jr.) A: Pray for peace in our neighborhoods, our country, and our world.

22

"War does not resolve any problem. It only sows death and destruction, increases hate, multiplies vengeance. War erases the future. I exhort believers to take only one side in this conflict: the side of peace..." (Pope Francis) A: Listen to 'The Soul of Nonviolence' Podcast: <https://paceebene.org/soul-of-nonviolence-podcast>

29

"We may never be strong enough to be entirely non-violent in thought, word, and deed. But we must keep non-violence as our goal and make steady progress towards it." (Mahatma Gandhi) A: Do something for peace each day. Brainstorm ideas with others on how you can help to create a more peace-filled world.

7

"Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him." (Martin Luther King, Jr.) A: Spend some time today praying for someone you feel anger towards. Ask God to help you forgive.

FRIDAY

16

"The climate crisis is one of the leading causes of the steep rise in global hunger. Hunger will spiral out of control if the world fails to take immediate climate action." (WFP) A: Read more about world hunger and how you can help at World Food Programme <https://www.wfp.org/>.

23

Since you are God's children, you must try to live like him. (Ephesians 5:1) A: What can you do today to purge the pollution and toxic matter in your lifestyle? What sustainable alternative can you reflect on as you think about your food choices?

1

"Many things made me become a vegetarian, among them the higher food yield as a solution to world hunger." (John Denver) A: Avoid eating animal-based food sources, especially processed and red meats. Instead choose plant-based proteins such as beans, nuts, seeds, and legumes.

8

"There's enough on this planet for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed." (Mahatma Gandhi) A: Visit <https://www.feedingamerica.org/programs-services> to find ways you can help fight hunger.

SATURDAY

17

"We can find no social or moral justification whatsoever, for the lack of housing. The Son of God came into this world a homeless person. The Son of God knew what it was like to start life without a roof over his head." (Pope Francis) A: Learn more about organizations working to end homelessness such as DePaul USA <https://depaulusa.org/>.

24

"To save a life is a real and beautiful thing. To make a home for the homeless, yes, it is a thing that must be good; whatever the world may say, it cannot be wrong." (Vincent Van Gogh) A: Donate everyday essentials to an organization helping those who are homeless.

2

"None of us are home until all of us are home." (Project HOME) A: Support organizations who are helping to combat homelessness—volunteer, donate money, spread the word.

9

"Our prime purpose in this life is to help others; and if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them." (Dalai Lama) A: Let people know they are seen. Even if it just saying hello, it is a small but important thing for someone who may feel invisible.

Lent 2024

Daily Reflections for the Sacred Season of Lent

March

"If the universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely... there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face.' The world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to care for it?"

Pope Francis, Laudate Deum



THE SISTERS
OF ST. FRANCIS
OF PHILADELPHIA

www.osfphila.org

SUNDAY

10 4th Week

"The #WordOfGod pierces our lives, enabling us to discern the feelings and thoughts of the heart. It helps us see where to give space to the light of goodness, and also where the darkness of vice and sin needs to be resisted." (Pope Francis) A: Take a moment in silent meditation to give space to the light of goodness in your life.

17 5th Week

"Let us love the Lord God with all our heart and all our soul, with all our mind and all our strength, and with fortitude and with total understanding..." (St. Francis' Rule of 1221) A: Keep a journal of blessings and answered prayers. Recognize the gifts you have received from God.

24 Holy Week

"The perfect image of the Father is a way of perceiving and being seized and saturated by the gift of God's love amidst the mundane, the ordinary, the routine." (Michael Downey) A: Look for signs that God is with you throughout your day—a smile from a stranger, a song from a bird, a memory that pops in your head.

MONDAY

11

"Refugees are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, with the same hopes and ambitions as us—except that a twist of fate has bound their lives to a global refugee crisis on an unprecedented scale." (Khaled Hosseini) A: Read about the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the USCCB: <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/>.

18

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark." (Warsan Shire) A: Watch this video of Warsan Shire's poem "Home" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR6tqLwlnZQ>

25

"Refugees don't make our country less safe. But xenophobia, fear, and hate do." (Ted Lieu) A: Learn about how the Hope Border Institute is ministering at the US-Mexico border <https://www.hopeborder.org/>.

TUESDAY

12

"Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. (John 4:20) A: Listen to NPR's Code Switch Podcast: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>.

19

"People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." (Nelson Mandela) A: Share the gift of diversity with children by purchasing a book for a child in your family or your local school. <https://www.themarysue.com/move-over-dr-seuss-29-diverse-childrens-books/>

26

"Tolerance, inter-cultural dialogue, and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected." (Kofi Annan) A: Get out of your comfort zone and explore another culture through food, music, film, or literature.

WEDNESDAY

13

"All the water that will ever be is, right now." (National Geographic) A: Reuse wastewater where possible; use it to water your plants or garden. Just be sure to use eco-friendly soaps and detergents.

20

"The earth, the air, the land, and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So, we have to handover to them at least as it was handed over to us." Gandhi A: Take our Eco Water Audit, here: <https://osfphila.org/justice-and-peace/environmental-audit/eco-audit-water/>

27

"Because no matter who we are or where we come from, we're all entitled to the basic human rights of clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, and healthy land to call home. (Martin Luther King III) A: Watch Water Saving Tips and Tricks – The Environment for Kids with your children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTcFXJT0Fsc>.

THURSDAY

14

"While we may not consider the way we talk to be 'violent,' our words often lead to hurt and pain, whether for others or for ourselves." (Marshall B. Rosenberg) A: Respect yourself and others by choosing not to use any profanity or put downs. Choose not to judge yourself or others.

21

"It is time to say enough to the indiscriminate trafficking of arms." (Pope Francis) A: Write down at least one way you can show, through action, that you stand for your beliefs. Take this action today.

28 Holy Thursday

"There is no path to peace, but peace itself is the path." (Richard Rohr) A: This Holy Thursday, focus on what you appreciate most about the person you like the least. Find the peace in your heart and direct it outward.

FRIDAY

15

"Let us march on poverty until no American parent has to skip a meal so that their children may eat." (Martin Luther King Jr.) A: Write to a lawmaker and ask them to pass policies that support people who are food insecure.

22

"The war against hunger is truly mankind's war of liberation." (John F. Kennedy) A: Consider volunteering for a food delivery service helping homebound seniors maintain a well-balanced diet and offering a bit of companionship.

29 Good Friday

"Hunger is not a problem. It is an obscenity. How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." (Anne Frank) A: Fast today in honor of Good Friday but hold in your heart and prayer those who are forced to fast every day.

SATURDAY

16

"These things become the norm: that some homeless people die of cold on the streets is not news. In contrast, a ten-point drop in the stock markets of some cities is a tragedy." (Pope Francis) A: Consider driving around offering old blankets, coats, gloves, and hats to those who are homeless.

23

"Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love." Mother Teresa A: Make blessing bags with snacks, water, and an encouraging note and hand them out to those in need.

30 Holy Saturday

"When it comes to homelessness, you've got to ask yourself, 'Does my behavior towards those without an address contribute to the invisibility that they face daily?'" (Terence Lester) A: Use your business, church group, or classroom for good. Hire someone from a vulnerable population or do a fundraiser, collect donations, etc.

31

Happy Easter

"Jesus came to reveal and resolve this central and essential problem. I consider it the meaning of the Risen Christ... Jesus hung on the cross and did not return the negative energy directed at him. He held it inside and made it into something better. That is how he 'took away the sin of the world.' He refused to pass it on! He absorbed evil until it became resurrection." (Richard Rohr)

A: Be generous with your time and your gifts. Let go of negativity and rejoice in the good. Practice gratitude and contentment.



THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF PHILADELPHIA

Lenten
Reflections