

Apostolic Reflection - Ecological Virtues

The Advent Season is the time of spiritual preparation for the coming of Christ. It is the perfect season to be in a state of awareness of His constant presence with us. Living in an awareness of creation helps us to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. Ecological virtues relate to our disposition to do the good for our common home. They are fundamental values that can become a habit if we embrace and commit to them as a way to act for more love and justice in God's creation.



Reflection on the ecological virtues during Advent is a way for us to enter into a deeper relationship with the coming of Christ through creation and with creation. In a special way, when we contemplate creation, we cultivate *“the awareness that each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us”* (Laudato Si' 221).

The more time we spend in contemplation, the more we cultivate the ecological virtues of *praise, gratitude, care, sobriety, and humility* among others. Contemplation creates an interior space that allows for the recognition of God's eternal love in creation, leading us to a change of heart that also helps us in the change of lifestyles needed to help care for our common home.

“We are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with serene attentiveness, which is capable of being fully present to someone without thinking of what comes next, which accepts each moment as a gift from God to be lived to the full” (Laudato Si' 226).

Praise: All creation exists to glorify God, and every creature reflects the wonders of His glory. As human creatures, we can voice this cosmic praise. Pope Francis highlights the importance of recognizing God's message in creation, which requires a deep sense of wonder and appreciation. This sense of wonder is essential for caring for our common home, helping to anchor our actions for ecological justice and our sustainable lifestyles as a form of prayer, a form of genuine praise for God's marvelous

works, celebrating all of creation and its beauty.

Gratitude: Humans, called to care for creation, can also live in a eucharistic way, responsibly using natural resources and sharing God's gifts generously. This grateful mindset promotes ecological preservation and communal sharing, integral to a harmonious existence with our environment.

Reflection and Sharing:

- Think about the times that being among the people you serve has raised your awareness of God's presence, especially during Advent and Christmas.
- Reflect on the times that creation has supported and inspired your Apostolic life.

Pray together: *Our ever-present Lord, You constantly come to us at an unexpected hour to pour forth Your grace and mercy into our lives. May this Advent be a time when we form within us a permanent habit of preparedness. Let us be open to You in Your creation that surrounds us with beauty, peace, and messages of hope. Amen.*