



# *Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*



## **A Spirit of Thanksgiving**

As Americans, the holiday of Thanksgiving gives time to pause and show our gratitude for the many blessings in our lives. As Christians, we understand gratitude as a virtue. Gratitude moves us to be ever mindful that the source of all these blessings is Almighty God. Pope Francis reminds us that giving thanks is our response to God’s gift of creation.

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home*, the Holy Father speaks of the beauty of creation. “The entire material universe speaks of God’s love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.” [84] He says, “The world around us is filled with wonder and mystery. Every leaf, raindrop, or mountain trail holds within it the meaning we seek.” (234) We do not separate beauty, awe and wonder from God. God is present in all things noble and beautiful. This is all part of the encounter with God. (235)

God gave us “stewardship” over all creation. What does this mean? In his plan for salvation, God made us protectors of the earth and all who inhabit it. We are called to protect the beauty of this world and teach others to do the same. We are called to

protect all peoples, especially those who most need our help: the poor, the sick, the displaced, the unborn and the elderly. Pope Francis reminds us, “Human dignity rises out of the belief that we are created by God and found by him to be good. We are made in God’s image. Each human life is, therefore, valuable and unique. Each is held in God’s own hand. (66)

Thanksgiving is a perfect response to the gift of God’s creation. We are called to be protectors of creation.

### **GRATITUDE IN ACTION**

Want to develop the Christian virtue of gratitude? Start by keeping a daily “Gratitude Journal” this month in preparation of Thanksgiving. Write down the people and things for which you are particularly grateful to God for that day. Gratitude lists might include family, friends, nature, education, your senses, good health, a special occasion and even situations and people who challenge our good nature. This prayerful exercise will help you to discover the riches that God has bestowed on your life and in turn, create a grateful heart in you. Happy Thanksgiving!

<b>November 6</b> Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time	<a href="#"><u>2 Thes 2:16-3:5</u></a>	<i>How does this reading speak to you of virtue of gratitude?</i>
<b>November 13</b> Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time	<a href="#"><u>2 Thes 3:7-12</u></a>	<i>In order to live a virtuous life, why must you be careful of the friends and people with whom you associate?</i>
<b>November 20</b> The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe	<a href="#"><u>Col 1:12-20</u></a>	<i>How has your “Gratitude Journal” prepared you to be more grateful to God this Thanksgiving?</i>
<b>November 27</b> First Sunday of Advent	<a href="#"><u>Rom 13:11-14</u></a>	<i>Advent is a time of joyful waiting. What can you do to practice the virtue of joy within your family?</i>



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## BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES FOR THE TEACHER

### Monthly Resources:

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the monthly resource will highlight Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si*.

—An encyclical is a letter usually written by a Pope to a particular audience of Bishops.

—Pope Francis said this encyclical was not only written to the bishops of the world and not even just to Catholics but to all people of the world. He said the issue of care for creation is too important to write to only some people when all people are needed to do something about caring for creation today.

—*Laudato Si* are the first two words of the Canticle of Creation, a prayer written by Saint Francis of Assisi. The literal translation from the original Umbrian language is “praise be.” Umbrian is an ancient Italian dialect. In relationship to the encyclical, the official Vatican translation is ‘praise be to you, my Lord.’

### Optional Activities:

— “Gratitude Journal”: See directives in the “Gratitude in Action” box on the reverse side.

— Create a Canticle of Praise.

⇒ go to <http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=183> and review the “Canticle of Creation” by St. Francis of Assisi with students. For the younger learners, there are simpler versions on line.

⇒ Have the students write their own canticle of praise from ideas presented in the “Canticle of Creation.”

⇒ Invite the students to dramatize or illustrate their canticle.

### Other Resources:

—[www.sophiainstituteforteachers.org](http://www.sophiainstituteforteachers.org)

Click Free Resources; then Curriculum Exchange and search *Laudato Si*.)

—*Laudato Si* is posted at: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)