



# Laudato Si, On Care for Our Common Home



## **Incarnation: God Becomes One of Us**

Within all of us, there is a yearning for God. We most especially experience this deep longing when life presents difficult, painful, challenging or fearful situations. The ancient Advent hymn “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” captures this very human desire. Emmanuel means “God is with us.” The lyrics name trying conditions of life such as mourning, loneliness, exile, sin and death which can not be dispelled “until the Son of God appear...to open wide the heavenly home.” Only then can we know true joy for God is made man in the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ.

In this spirit, Pope Francis states that through Jesus Christ, God has entered “created cosmos” and is with us for all times. He is the Divine Word who became flesh (Jn. 1:14) who has thrown “his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the Incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world.”(99) In other words, God is reflected through all creation and even “the very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued

with his radiant presence.” (100)

Jesus lived in harmony with His creation. He loved to eat and drink and to enjoy life with others. He admired the beauty and goodness of the natural world. He respected the human body and healed many through miracles. He spoke lovingly of all creatures.

Pope Francis notes that Jesus was one of us in all of things but sin. He is with us in our joys and sorrows. He beckons us to pray to Jesus for deeper appreciation of all of His created world.

This Advent, when the hymn is sung, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”, know that God is with us in our hearts, mind and souls and throughout all of creation until the end of times!

### **THE CHRISTMAS CRÈCHE**

In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi established the tradition of the Christmas crèche or crib scene.

*What traditions does your family celebrate that remind you of the birth of Christ?*



<b>December 4</b> <b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>	Matthew 3: 1-12	<i>As stewards of the creation, we must protect our natural resources. Name some ways that you can protect nature as a way to prepare the way of the Lord?</i>
<b>December 11</b> <b>Third Sunday of Advent</b>	Isaiah 35:1-6, 10	<i>Isaiah tells us that all the land will rejoice at the glory of the Lord. How can you take care of and add to the beauty of God's creation?</i>
<b>December 18</b> <b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	Matthew 1: 18-24	<i>How are you and your family preparing your hearts for the true meaning of Christmas? Try praying together this week by saying Grace Before Meals.</i>
<b>December 25</b> <b>The Nativity of the Lord</b>	Luke 2: 15-20	<i>How can you be like the shepherds who shared what they had seen about Jesus with others?</i>



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## BACKGROUND FOR THE RESOURCE

### HOW DO CATHOLICS CELEBRATE ADVENT?

The Advent season is meant to be a joyful anticipation of the mystery of the Incarnation. In the Incarnation, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is born of Mary with both a divine and human nature. He is both truly God and truly man. He became one of us to make all things holy, to experience the joys and sufferings of humanity and to die for us on the cross for our salvation.

What are some ways Catholics celebrate Advent?

**Jesse Tree**—a Biblical representation of the life of Jesus from the beginning of creation to his birth. You may find more ideas at <http://www.loyolapress.com/the-jesse-tree.htm>.

**Advent Wreath**—Using a circle of green branches, make the base of the wreath to represent the circle of life. Four candles are placed within the ring of the wreath to represent the four weeks of Advent. You may use the Scripture readings on the other side of this newsletter for the prayer each week.

**Advent Angels**—Put the names of the people in your family on separate pieces of paper. Each person picks a paper and keeps the name a secret until Christmas. During Advent, the Angel does thoughtful acts of kindness for that person secretly. On Christmas, the family discovers who the angels are.

Go to [www.sophiainsituteforteachers.com](http://www.sophiainsituteforteachers.com) for additional ideas.

## What is an angel?

An angel is a pure spirit created by God as a messenger of God.

Guardian angels are angels appointed by God to each individual person as a protector.

Catechism of the Catholic Church #336

Art project: Create an angel by soaking cloth or newspaper strips in a mixture of half water and half flour. Place over a cardboard form that you have made in the shape of an angle. Let dry and paint.

